



**London Wildlife
Trust:
Case Study**

Summer 2009



**Enric Cucarella, is the Outdoor Environmental Skills Project Coordinator,
London Wildlife Trust**

North London Muslim Community Centre - Wild About Bushcraft

London Wildlife Trust worked in partnership with North London Muslim Community Centre to deliver a bushcraft project, following the structure of the John Muir Discovery Award. Wild About Bushcraft is funded by the Home Office Community Fund. The project aims to tackle gun, gang and knife crime by engaging young people in outdoor activities.

Why get involved in the John Muir Award?

- The project met the criteria of the Award.
- The aims of the project fitted with the principles of the John Muir Trust.
- Partners wanted external, national recognition for the participants' achievements on the project.

Project outcomes

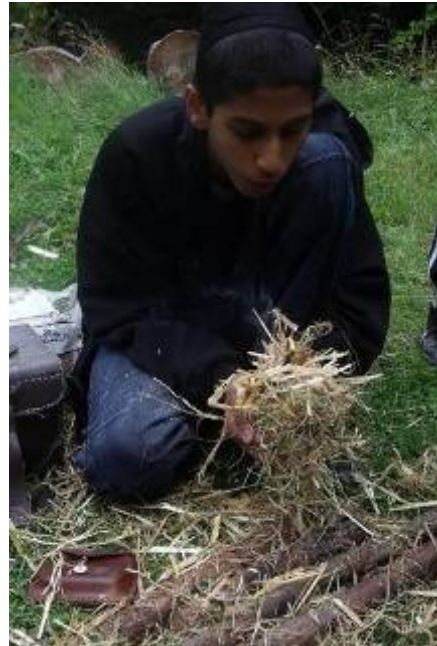
'A better understanding and respect for nature, the teamwork values passed to the young people and all the knife crime issues debated during our workshops are the main benefits of this John Muir Award. The fact that this group of young people come from an urban background made this a unique hands on experience in a wild place.' Enric, London Wildlife Trust

Location

Activity took place close to the heart of Greater London, four days at East Reservoir Community Garden, and a residential weekend at Chase Nature Reserve in Dagenham.

"Never carry a knife with you as if you get into an argument you might stab someone which will make you regret what you've done for the rest of your life."

Musaib, Participant



What did London Wildlife Trust say?

This was the first time the London Wildlife Trust had worked with a group of young Muslims from Hackney. It was also the first time these young people were trusted using a knife and other cutting tools like saws and chisels. The fact they learnt how to light camp fires and manage them responsibly was a big outcome. Having the whole group preparing meals together, cleaning the pots and plates made them work as a team, a main target for the Wild About Bushcraft project.

For twelve out of the fourteen participants, this was their first experience camping in the wild. They all want to repeat it next summer!

"The project gave the young people a better understanding of the natural resources surrounding them and a more respectful approach towards nature."

Haroon, North London Muslim Community Centre



“This activity was very enjoyable. I learnt to make fire, crafting, camping & other things.”

Mohammed, Participant

Making a difference

The participants improved biodiversity at East Reservoir Community Garden by clearing invasive species such as bramble and dogwood. They also helped create a more manageable bushcraft area by digging a specific fire pit.

“It was a good day and night out with friends. I will love to do bushcraft again and to work with the others.”

Yusuf, Participant

Conclusions

Bushcraft is a unique way to engage young people from many backgrounds. Most young people enjoy the outdoors, especially when they are allowed to take part in activities involving fire, the use of knives for crafting, and cooking and camping in a wild place.

“The leaders linked all values of nature conservation and what John Muir encouraged himself, with the values the young people are taught within their community and by the Quran.”

Enric Cucarella, Outdoor Environmental Skills Project Coordinator

The fact that these young people were from an urban Muslim community made no difference to them exploring nature, it was even more of an advantage since for most of them this was a first time experience. Even though the activities were led by a non Muslim practitioner, the young people made no differentiation.

The future

The North London Muslim Community Centre are delighted with the success of this Bushcraft Skills course and will like to take it to the next phase enabling the young people to progress towards their John Muir Explorer Award.

‘The Quran explains that all natural resources should be treated with care and respect.’ Hamza, Participant

Links

London Wildlife Trust - is the only charity dedicated solely to protecting the capital's wildlife and wild spaces. A short film of the project can be viewed at <http://tiny.cc/JhBML>
John Muir Award – main educational initiative of the John Muir Trust – encourages people to connect, enjoy and care for the planet’s wild places. www.johnmuiraward.org

What did North London Community Muslim Centre say?

Having an experienced bushcraft instructor was great, the young people learned the different type of plants and fungi and the useful purpose of them.

Many of young people were strangers to one another before the project. This gave them the opportunity to make new friendships, and by the end of the week they all felt more confident amongst themselves as well as with the instructor.

They all had fun in almost all the different aspects of the project. It was also good to record experiences in their John Muir Award Record Books.



All images courtesy of London Wildlife Trust