

Maxwell Omondi, 1st Year Civil Engineering

The Charity:

[Riana Development Network](#) (RDN) is a non for profit charitable organisation that promotes programmes within the BAME community. Their mission is to build the capacity of vulnerable people to enable them to become self-reliant and restore their hope for the future. Their programmes aim to build the capacity for self-reliance through direct work with young people in the UK and overseas.

The Project:

The project I worked on was to create new, vibrant gardening spaces for client groups that RDN work with in the London Borough of Hounslow. These clients are; William Hogarth Primary School, Cranford Primary School and Community groups in Waye Avenue, Cranford.

The project was split into three sub-projects:

1. A new nature reserve in William Hogarth Primary School
2. Enhancement of the existing garden space in Cranford Primary School
3. A new gardening demonstration space for communities to use in Waye Avenue

My role on these projects was to be the lead designer which involved:

- Meeting with stakeholders to create a design specification for each sub-project
- Producing sketches and designs for each sub-project
- Conducting the risk assessment for each site
- Working to a budget and organising the logistics of any manual labour that will be done during the project



The gardening project raised the profile of Riana Development Network (RDN) in the local area and strengthened relationships with local businesses and primary schools in Hounslow. One of the companies that provided volunteers to help with the Waye Avenue Community Allotment and Cranford Primary School are now happy to send company staff for future volunteering opportunities. This is a welcome boost for the organisation as RDN rely heavily on volunteer support to deliver projects.

The project has allowed the stakeholders that we work with to have a major role in shaping the activities that they want to take place in these gardening spaces. Cranford Primary and William Hogarth Primary plan to extend the reach of their school clubs so that more children can benefit from learning about their environment, healthy eating and sustainable growing. An aspect of the charity sector which I have enjoyed the most in my time here so far is that you are able to see first-hand the impact that you have on stakeholders when delivering projects.

Highlights:

- Having the freedom to design and bring new ideas to the organisation has been a great experience and my colleagues valued the contributions I make.
- Learning how to use Google SketchUp to create 3D models of designs for the gardening projects.
- Delivering my first ever health and safety document and briefing, it was a great experience for me to take that level of responsibility on board.

