# capacity global

living in a clean and healthy environment is everyone's right

# Hard to Reach?
# Diversity and Environment

living space project

# Preface

We have written this pamphlet for three reasons. Firstly to salute the work done by some organisations, community groups and individuals to create a diverse environmental sector and secondly to present some of the findings of the Every Action Counts diversity project report[1] commissioned by the Community Development Foundation. Lastly we are hoping to see more action and support for developing a sector that truly reflects the communities it works amongst.

Too often there has been a presumption within much of the environmental sector that the block to having a diverse sector is that ...well some people are just too 'hard to reach'. But the reality is that this is an excuse for not changing the way work is done.

This pamphlet sets out why it is important that the environmental movement within the UK develops to become genuinely inclusive. We look at some of the initiatives that have been taken, at the reasons why this makes good sense (and at the reasons often given for a lack of inclusivity) and make some practical suggestions for action.

This is a not a problem that can be solved overnight. Changing the culture of a large and widespread movement will take time and commitment. But the benefits, as this report sets out, will be critically important in the long term.

A wide range of diversity and environment reports, books and other materials are referenced in this report. A full set of links to all these reports are available on the Capacity Global website: www.capacity.org.uk

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[1]    Every Action Counts Diversity Report, Community Development Foundation, 2009

## Why is diversity an issue for the environmental sector?

The environmental movement can be dynamic and powerful, and has the ability to change the way the public think, feel and act. It has the potential to call people to action right across this planet to ensure everyone has a clean and healthy environment. The movement now faces huge challenges in climate change and the need for a fair 'green deal' to help develop resilient and prosperous communities (particularly vulnerable communities).

To meet those challenges the environmental sector needs to be trusted, listened to, and be guided by all parts of society, including the people who have felt invisible to environmental organisations.

*"The movement now faces huge challenges in climate change and the need for a fair 'green deal' to help develop resilient and prosperous communities (particularly vulnerable communities)."*

We share a common fate if we get this wrong – a weak and marginalised movement, open to ridicule and dismissed for only caring for the concerns of the white, able-bodied, and middle class, with campaigns that do nothing for social justice and inclusion, and the fracturing of the sector between traditional conservationism and modernist socio-environmentalists.

There are many sensitivities about 'them and us', a lack of trust and the politics of race, gender, disability, class and age. These are not easy issues, especially for those with many other priorities. The movement has acted on these issues but the impact to date on how we work and who we work with is debatable. One thing that we can be sure about is that twenty-one years after one of the first conferences on participation (in this case ethnic minorities[2]) many people still feel excluded, invisible and not heard by the sector. This begs the question - who really is *'hard to reach'*?  How far would it be truer to use the phrase *'not trying very hard to reach'*?

This pamphlet was stimulated by the debate on 'ethnicity'. This is a starting point but to create a truly diverse sector we need to consider a wider range of groups. This will involve work with:

- Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BAMER) groups

- Disabled people

- Older people

- Younger people

## 1.  Why should we care?

Research and twenty one years experience suggests that there is little doubt that many people from different parts of civil society feel disconnected or excluded from environmental action and discussion at just the time when the environmental sector is working to develop and expand engagement. There is is a need on both sides to be heard, listened to and understood.

Despite this there is woefully little work done to date on behaviour change and mobilisation within diverse groups, specifically in relation to ethnicity and disability. Work on behaviour change by Defra and others rarely looks at diversity beyond traditional income and class segmentation.  Defra's Framework and Strategy for Environmental Behaviour Change[3]

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[2]   Ethnic Minorities and the Environment Report, A One Day Conference to Discuss Positive Action, University of London, 1988

[3]   An Environmental Behaviours Strategy for Defra, Scoping Study, Defra, 2006; A Framework for Pro Environmental Behaviour, Defra,  2008

reports of over 100 pages barely mention ethnicity and make no references to disability or age.

It has also been suggested, that there is an urgent need to engage with the high consumers, and that therefore focusing on poorer and excluded communities, the so called 'hard to reach' may not deliver the highest possible level of cuts in carbon emissions for every pound expended. This raises several questions:

- Does exclusion matter?

- Is investing time and resources in creating a genuinely inclusive environmental sector well spent and why?

- How can this transition to an inclusive sector best be brought about?

It is certainly easy to suggest, as has happened in some discussions that working to engage those people described as disengaged or 'hard-to-reach' does not need to be a priority when so much else needs to be done as well.

But this ignores some key issues. There are clear reasons, moral and practical, for investing in diversity and engagement.

**Moral and ethical values shape fair environmental and social change**

Equality and the human right to a clean and healthy environment are ethical and moral values that must help shape the environmental sector. The need to protect this right is a moral and legal obligation. This was recognised in the original blueprint for sustainable development – the 1987 report 'Our Common Future'. Here the World Commission on Environment and Development show how the global environmental challenge needs action on economic and social issues such as poverty and discrimination.

In their words *"it is futile to attempt to deal with environmental problems without a broader perspective that encompasses the factors underlying...poverty and ..inequality'* [4]'

Recognising this right requires that action is taken to ensure that excluded groups or individuals get to take part in decisions that affect their environment and quality of life. With that right to be involved comes a responsibility to protect the same rights for other people. The European 'Aarhus Convention' also sets specific duties for the government to provide rights to environmental information and the participation and involvement of people in environmental decision making[5].

Findings from the EAC Diversity Report and other sources suggest that the notion of fairness and justice within environmental action is very important to excluded groups. This needs to be built into policy

*'it is futile to attempt to deal with environmental problems without a broader perspective that encompasses the factors underlying...poverty and ..inequality'*

and strategy development at every level.

Above and beyond this fundamental point there are the practical reasons why a diversity-based approach will benefit any organisation:

**Decisions are more likely to be informed and effective**

The new statutory duty to involve on public authorities can provide opportunities for developing new and better ways of engaging people from diverse communities. The duty requires authorities to: inform, consult and involve for routine and significant issues: *'This requires sharing of information and intelligence on*

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[4]   Our Common Future, The World Commission on Environment and Development, Oxford University Press, 1997

[5]   Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, UNECE, 1998
http://www.unece.org/env/pp/documents/cep43e.pdf

*local community issues and decisions about where to focus shared activity to improve outcomes for ..people[6].*

Working with organisations that represent excluded communities can help ensure that their voices are heard in these processes and that the results meet the needs of all parts of a community.

**Getting people engaged is not just about behaviour change.**

Government, local councils and businesses and environmental organisations are all going to need to make difficult decisions leading to major societal

*"The inclusion of broader perspectives and actions can also significantly build political pressure and widen public support for environmental action."*

changes as we tackle climate change. We need to ensure that there is active support for these changes from all parts of society.

**We need to find new ways to meet aspirations and needs**

The poorest communities in the UK emit less than half the $CO_2$ per capita of richer communities. We need different and low-carbon ways to develop prosperity and meet the aspirations of these communities as part of a strategy to tackle poverty and inequality. It will be essential that those suffering the effects of poverty and those who represent their interests are involved in this work.

**Strong collective action can increase pressure and deliver change**

Damage to natural resources, poor urban environmental infrastructures, the lack of green spaces, and the siting of polluting industries in poorer neighbourhoods are all important issues for excluded communities. Collective action on these issues is a

proven alternative to alienation and such action helps moves to a fairer, greener and prosperous society.

**'Community action' needs to involve the whole community**

Commentators including Sir Nicholas Stern[7] have identified the need for more community-focused and collective responses to climate change. A shift to Car Clubs and public transport is one example – others include community energy schemes and local food co-operatives. But if the future is to be 'community-shaped' then it needs to involve and truly reflect the whole community and not just the 'positive greens'. The inclusion of broader perspectives and actions can also significantly build political pressure and widen public support for environmental action.

**A focus on diversity can help build trust and engagement**

There is a serious lack of trust in many sources of environmental information such as politicians and government agencies. Many people will have greater trust in sources of information within their community or neighbourhood, such as charitable organisations and places of worship. Organisations that work with or for excluded groups can play a crucial role in providing such information. Strategic partnerships with environmental organisations and increased resources would help build trust and engagement.

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6    The Duty to Involve, Making It Work, Michael Pitchford, Tom Archer and Sally Ramsden, Community Development Foundation, 2009

7    A Blueprint for a safer plan, How to Mange Climate Change and Create A New Era of Progress and Prosperity, Nicholas Stern, 2009, Bodley Head

**Mobilisation can be better recognised and supported**

Mobilising behaviour change and environmental action is a key government and sector target. Defra and others have invested heavily in understanding behaviour change through funding academic research and funding streams such as the Green Living Fund. The EAC Diversity report, amongst others, suggests that diversity-focused organisations have identified various examples of where work to promote behaviour change has clearly not been targeted at their communities. The knowledge and expertise of these organisations should be learnt from in order to develop effective ways to support and mobilise excluded groups.

**Better engagement will be important for long-term funding**

Funders are increasingly expecting those they fund to have a clear strategy for effective engagement of excluded groups and to demonstrate how they have met these goals.  A clear understanding of the 'base-line' – about the current level of engagement – will not only help with monitoring and evaluation, but the process of developing this can be a means to work with and engage key organisations.

Taking diversity seriously will require time and money but any organisation should also understand the cost of doing nothing. Changing demographics are likely to mean that organisations

*"Changing demographics are likely to mean that organisations failing to reflect the concerns of an increasingly diverse society are going to lose members and with it a crucial proportion of their"*

failing to reflect the concerns of an increasingly diverse society are going to lose members and with it a crucial proportion of their income. Failure to engage may become a failure to raise funds.

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# 2.  What has happened so far?

There has been a lot of action since the 'benchmark' one-day conference  *'Ethnic Minorities and the Environment* , 21 years ago in September 1988. It looked at one aspect of diversity - in this case race. That event asked some key questions for the first time, most notably "Why is it difficult it involve members of Black and Ethnic minority communities in the work of the environment movement?" The answers, reasons and even excuses for the lack of inclusion are still being used today. (See Appendix 1.)

The key outcome of the day was the decision to set up the Black Environment Network (BEN).

In 1999 the Community Development Foundation ran an event entitled '*Down to Earth – environmental action and sustainable development in a multi-cultural society'*. Wider support was apparent in the partnership with Black think-tank 'The 1990 Trust' and support from the Commission for Racial Equality and a Government Minister. Some of the conclusions from this event had moved on from 1988, but again many of the same issues came up, and are still very relevant today.

**Legal frameworks**

One thing that has changed over the last 21 years is the development of legislation to support and promote opportunities for all sectors of the community. This includes, amongst others, the Disability Act, the Equalities Bill, and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act and as already mentioned the Duty to Involve.

In essence this legislation seeks to stop second-class treatment of individuals because of their physical, mental and/or emotional disabilities, class, race, gender, sexuality, religion and age  by making discriminative actions or omissions inappropriate and in many situations illegal in the United Kingdom.

Many of these laws have been amended and extended increasing minimum standards and duties and in many cases require impact assessments to be carried out on existing policies and functions. They are used to review equality objectives as part of the organisations' performance management process.

Assessments are carried out on policies, procedures and functions and are a core part of the UK's modernised equalities legislation alongside the Disability Equality Duty and the Gender Equality Duty.

Crucially the recent Equality Bill further supports diversity and equality by the introduction of a new duty to reduce socio-economic inequalities.

The aim of such assessments is to cut out the risk of direct and indirect discrimination, and where possible develop positive action measures. Whilst the impact assessment duties are mainly a specific duty for public bodies or organisations with public body duties they create a wider culture shift and develop expectations. The expectation being for organisations without public duties also to develop their standards and strategic assessments in relation to diversity.

At a campaign level these duties provide the environment sector (and others) with new tools to challenge environmental decisions or omissions that have an impact on specific groups. A report on the environmental justice and race equality highlighted how discrimination law such as the Race Amendment Act could be used to ensure fairness of environmental policies[8].The Race Amendment Act has since been used to successfully challenge a local authority to provide a Race Equality Impact Assessment of a proposed new airport runway.

**Different perspectives**

One key to successful engagement must be understanding those with whom we wish to engage.There is a greater understanding now of the different perspectives, concerns and impacts relating to BAMER, youth, older people and disabled people. The key issues are summarised in the diagram below, which shows some of the common concerns as well as specific interests and issues.

*"One key to successful engagement must be understanding those with whom we wish to engage."*

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8    'Environmental Justice and Race Equality in the European Union', Capacity Global (2007)
     http://www.capacity.org.uk/downloads/CC-EJ%20in%20EU.pdf

**Older People:** high energy prices, fuel poverty, lack of access to public transport, better information on environmental choices, need to reduce consumption, accessbile financial support for greening homes, impact of heat waves, age proof environmental services, low priority of older peoples concerns

**BAMER:** disproportionate percentage of BAMERs living in the worst environments, training and employment opportunities, impact of climate change on countries of 'descent', environmental racism, low regeneration investment in BAMER areas, low priority of BAMER concerns

**Common Concerns:** fairness, urban environments, indirect discrimination, exclusivity of environmental NGO's, lack of funding, lack of visability, need for diversity, poor environmental services

**Young People:** failure to engage with young people, lack of 'youth' friendly campaigns, more information for younger people, poor state of the environment left to the next and future generations, improving employment propsects, low priority of young peoples concerns

**Disabled People:** access to public transport, financial support for greening homes, inaccessible information for people with learning disabilities, hearing or visual impairments, lack of green space sensory interpretation, low priority of disabled peoples concerns

Diagram 1: Perspectives and concerns raised:

1988 – 2009

# 3. Who's been doing what?

Over the last 21 years there have been plenty of organisations, often small and innovative, that have addressed this work through a range of projects. The cases listed here show some of the range of responses to this challenge but there are many more.

**Black Environment Network (BEN)** have developed a network of people and organisations working on ethnic participation in the environment. It runs projects on improving access by ethnic minorities to both the historic and natural environment, along with a range of regional initiatives [9].

**Capacity Global** are a not for profit organisation and think tank focusing on environmental justice. It has published a series of research reports on environmental justice and diversity and runs a number of projects, specifically in urban areas, with low income communities, young people, and Black, Asian an Ethnic Minority Groups.[10]

**Sensory Trust** is a charity that works to improve access to the outdoor environment across the UK for those with disabilities. They run several projects and have produced guidance on access for bodies such as English Heritage and the Countryside Agency[11]

**'Mosaic Partnerships'** is a national project, led by the Campaign for National Parks to build links between Black and Minority ethnic communities and the National Parks and Youth Hostels Association. Even though around 10% of the population is of an ethnic minority background, only about 1% of visitors to National Parks are from ethnic minorities[12].

**London 21** ran a three year programme, funded by the National Lottery, to provide support and mentoring to Black community organisations that wished to run environmental projects. This helped show that there is no shortage of interest or action on these issues among black organisations in London.

**SHEBEEN** - Sheffield Black and Ethnic Minority Environmental Network – is one example of various local black environment networks. They say that "a positive experience of our immediate environment is everyone's right and everyone's responsibility" and run a range of local activities[13]

*"Over the last 21 years there have been plenty of organisations, often small and innovative, that have addressed this work through a range of projects."*

**The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens** has developed extensive experience of working alongside minority ethnic communities on local food and green spaces. Their publication 'Chillies & Roses' highlights the good practice and innovative ideas emerging from that work[14].

**The Green Alliance** set up a task force of ten older people and worked with Age Concern and Help the Aged and Natural England to develop a positive manifesto on the role of older people in environmental change[15]

Space does not allow us to cover the work done by others including BTCV, Groundwork, the Countryside Agency, Natural England, Womens' Environment Network, the Eden Project, RADAR, TPAS, FCDL, Ubuntu, the National Childrens' Bureau and many others locally and nationally.

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[9]   www.ben-network.org.uk/

[10]   www.capacity.org.uk

[11]   www.sensorytrust.org.uk/

[12]   www.sensorytrust.org.uk/

[13]   www.shebeen.org.uk

[14]   www.farmgarden.org.uk

[15]   www.green-alliance.org.uk

In some ways we have come a long way. Major environmental organisations are running projects specifically working with Black, Asian and Ethnic communities. There are Black led environmental organisations. Government agencies provide some funding to specifically support participation of under-engaged communities. There are think tanks working on older people and the environment, and disability groups and young people tackling transport and regeneration.

Mapping just some of the work being done illustrates a presence that certainly wasn't visible or in existence 21 years ago. It looks positive. Or does it? The sector may have come some way but issues about scale, the level of support or funding provided, the balance of power, the extent of the debate, and the extent to which some communities or groups still feel excluded suggest that the glass is half empty rather than half full.

There is much more to be done if the environmental sector is to reflect our diverse society. Much of the work done by environmental organisations has involved growing outward from the edge of their support bases. Twenty years on this has helped increase the number of positive greens but it has not made adequate moves towards wider engagement.

The more the green message is focused at those on the edge of the sector, the greater the risk that this message will not be seen as relevant to those well

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outside it. The success stories above show the need for communications to be rooted in and linked to the concerns of the communities being targeted.

# 4. Conclusion: a manifesto for action

Almost seven billion people need this crowded planet to support them[16]. In the UK as elsewhere quality of life is directly related to the state of the environment. The constant striving for economic prosperity (whether we agree with it or not) is having massive impacts on the planet, the ecosystems, our neighbours and us. The threats now posed by climate change show just how far we have over-stepped our limits.

Our society is increasingly diverse, and environmental and sustainable development concerns are reflected within those diverse communities and groups. But research and experience show how many ethnic minority groups still, feel and are under represented in the sector. This experience is also shared by disabled people, younger people, the elderly and the poor.

*"The drivers for engagement are not just about basic human rights but also about the need for community cohesion and security; the impacts of climate change, the building of resilient communities…"*

Many environmental problems have disproportionate impacts on people on low incomes and a disproportionate number of people from excluded groups are in low income households.

Despite the environmental sector's view of itself as being progressive and leading the way on environmental issues it has not been so quick off the mark on diversity and engagement with people they (as well as others) have termed mistakenly termed the 'hard to reach'.

The findings of the EAC Diversity Report, amongst others, suggest that action and change is needed in the environment sector. Reasons given by some in the sector for their lack of success on inclusion and diversity are not new: *'they have other interests'*;

*'everyone's welcome – anyone can join us if they want to'*; *'we have too much to do saving the environment'*; and *'we do the best to promote our meetings but they just don't come'*.

These may have had some validity 21 years ago. But now they suggest that excluded groups are not hard to reach, but 'hard to hear' and that many organisations need to find better ways to listen and engage.

Dealing with the global environmental challenge will need action at every level. But it will also require trust in the environment sector and everyone's cooperative engagement. The changes must be linked with delivering the rights of people, particularly the right to a clean and healthy environment.

The drivers for engagement are not just about basic human rights but also about the need for community cohesion and security; the impacts of climate change, the building of resilient communities and equality, policy and law. All provide a moral, legal, environmental and political context for action on diversity and inclusion within the environment sector.

## Towards an action programme

There is an urgent need to focus on and develop an action plan or a more inclusive sector. The key driver is fairness and social justice. As a starting point the sector needs to finally abandon the myth that 'excluded groups' just don't care about the environment and have at its heart the twin track of concern for the planet and people. In seeking to protect the environment there is also the need to ensure everyone gets to benefit from this activity.

Here we make recommendations for specific actions that can lead to lasting change. These recommendations will support and be part of a cultural shift that is needed across the whole sector: non-

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16    Common Wealth, Economics for a Crowded Planet, Jeffrey Sachs, 2009, Penguin Books

governmental organisations, government (local and central), and funders.

**Action by civil society**

There are examples of good practice within voluntary and non-governmental organisations but these are not yet common practice. The scale and balance of power needs to shift and resources found to develop this work as part of a core purpose.

- Alliances need to be made through formal or informal partnerships between environmental, social and community specific NGO's.

- Any project or programme that may impact on or can work with minority or excluded groups should be preceded by work to identify and make links with the key organisations that represent those groups

## Environmental Organisations

There has never been a better time for any environmental organisation to commit to improving and resourcing work on diversity in all aspects of their work. They can:

- Build on work to improve and value diversity into business, campaign and personnel strategic plans and policy, and is so doing move beyond a basic equal opportunities policy. Plans should have specific timelines and targets be reviewed on annual basis and made public to illustrate intent and transparency. Larger organisations should have a specific diversity action plan and should monitor and review progress annually.

- Collectively and individually identify barriers to mainstreaming diversity across the sector and within organisations and 'target' the removal of those barriers with consistent and measurable action.

- Support collaborative action and programmes that strengthen race, age, gender and disability alliances with mainstream environmental action. These could include setting up one-to-one collaborative work with specific diversity groups. Work to develop diversity should be organised *with* diverse communities rather than being aimed *at* them.

- Increase staff, volunteers, trustees and local groups from diverse backgrounds and ensure support is provided.

## Social & Diversity Organisations

Many such groups work closely with diverse communities. Helping those communities to improve their environment locally and globally can help create fairer and healthier communities. They need to:

- Work with and act as a critical friend to environmental organisations, while developing and implementing their own environmental policies. They also need to encourage and support environmental organisations to mainstream diversity in the sector, where possible through joint action to tackle issues of exclusion, secondments and campaigns.

- Mainstream and build environmental actions and concerns into their work and target the removal of barriers with consistent and measurable action.

## Action by funders

There have been a number of funders (private foundations, philanthropists, government) which have acted as pioneers in supporting diversity. However, the funding and resources for work on diversity and the environment remains low. This limits the ability of

many organisations and initiatives to deliver on commitments in the longer term. This is particularly important in the present economic recession.

- Funders need to increase and target support for environmental projects run by BAMER organisations, older, young and disabled people, and recognise the additional value that may come from such work.

- Funding criteria should encourage diversity and social inclusion organisations to develop environmental policies, and environmental projects to include assessment of the involvement of, management by, impacts on and benefits to excluded groups.

- Support and highlight the importance of diversity in the sector and projects that address this.

## Action by central and local government

The government has various legislative and policy commitments to diversity and equality. These need to be enforced vigorously within environmental policy and initiatives. Whilst government cannot create the changes required to mainstream diversity in the environment sector on their own, they can play a powerful role in shaping and supporting the change required. The DCMS work on diversity and engaging a wider audience, and work by Defra on inclusion and access to the countryside have provided positive examples of how governments have a role in informing policy decisions, developing objectives and creating drivers for action. Local and central government need to deliver on better engagement and social and environmental impact.

**Local Government**

- Every council should have a clear diversity engagement and outreach strategy to support its work on environmental issues and climate change that identifies the diverse communities with whom they should be working and sets targets and measures for such work.

- Councils need strategic diversity action plans that link directly to environmental programmes and policy. These should be shaped by the duties imposed by discrimination and equalities law and policy. As such all local authorities should seek to carry out equality impact assessments as well as duty to involve plans. The plans should be regularly reviewed and made public.

**Central Government**

- Defra and the DCLG need to help set a lead on understanding and helping other government departments to understand diversity and how it relates to theirs and cross departmental strategies, spending reviews and Public Service Agreements.

- Defra should support an extensive programme research and consultation with the sector and social sector to help set key principles for understanding diversity and engagement as it specifically relates to environmental issues and behaviour changes as they relate to ethnicity, age and disability.

- A Ministerial Task Force or cross sector committee should look to develop the links needed for this work and set out how joint working can enrich this agenda and bring mutual benefits.

## Political Parties

At the time of writing this report, political parties are developing their new manifestos. All the major parties have stated social justice, inclusion and diversity are central to their political ideology. Environmental issues are also likely to be one of the main concerns for the major parties. It is therefore important that all parties embed diversity and equality not only in their full manifesto but also within their environment commitments regardless of whether they are in government or opposition.

## Other agencies

There are many others who can play important roles, including the private sector, national agencies and public bodies, academics and researchers. All can help develop a more diverse environmental sector, with long-term benefits.

## Appendix: Setting the scene – two early events

In 1988, 21 years ago, Friends of the Earth ran a one-day conference on 'Ethnic Minorities and the Environment'. This was the first major event to tackle this issue and raised some key questions for the first time, most notably "Why is it difficult it involve members of Black and ethnic minority communities in the work of the environment movement?" (the opening line of the conference report). Answers were offered: some positively and some defensively. Those on the defensive tended to be those who recognised this was an issue they should be tackling, but were unhappy at being criticised for not yet doing so. The key reasons and excuses for non-involvement are still being used today:

- Creating a broader base will, for a time, make organisations 'less efficient, less effective'.

- These are issues of universal importance so why focus on any one group?

- Environmental organisations can only do so much, and have other priorities

- Black communities have other interests

- It is not our job as environmentalists to right all the wrongs of the world.

This was at a time when the 1992 UN Earth Summit was still four years in the future, and issues such as the integration of environmental and social goals, global inequities and western over-consumption were new to many in the green movement. But these same points being made in 2009.

The conference made specific recommendations. The aim was to move beyond the most basic attempts to increase BAME engagement (typified by the practice of advertising jobs in The Voice, a leading Black newspaper). Action points included:

- Simple guidelines on good practice to be produced and circulated widely;

- An awareness-raising event aimed specifically at senior managers

- Seminars and briefing materials on these issues for a wider audience

- Training inside and outside organisations

- 'Events based on environmental issues, aimed specifically at black people'.

This last point perhaps sums up the situation then: events 'aimed at' Black people rather than organised by or with them. Despite much learning and good practice this 'aiming at' approach is still with us today.

The key outcome was the decision to set up the Black Environment Network (BEN). In addition, the conference also suggested a larger follow-up event on national policy, which unfortunately never happened.

## Ten years later…

Slowly but surely this agenda had taken root. In 1999 the Community Development Foundation ran an event entitled '*Down to Earth – environmental action and sustainable development in a multi-cultural society'*. Wider support was apparent in the partnership with Black think-tank The 1990 Trust and support from the Commission for Racial Equality and a Government Minister.

The event reported on a survey of how local councils' work on the Local Agenda 21 programme had engaged with BAME communities. The results were varied. There was good practice (from 14 of the 160 councils responding). At the other extreme, when asked how they had looked to engage BAME communities, one council answered *"We sent them some leaflets"*. The good practice showed things changing as did the tenor

of the main speeches which included analysis of the overall environment experienced by Black communities including issues such as racial violence, housing issues, crime and other areas of inequality.

The conference made one key (if obvious) point: "A highly White environment does put Black people off." The key conclusions were a step on from 1988:

- The lack of involvement appears to be primarily due to lack of well-planned activity by those seeking to engender involvement rather than lack of interest

- A solid body of work is emerging, notably where there is clear policy-level interest, but those doing it are isolated and under-supported.

- There is a need for a more strategic approach to this issue from local government.

Once again, the same points are being made today.

# The authors

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Maria Adebowale is the Founder and Director of Capacity Global. Capacity Global is the only non-governmental organisation and social enterprise in the UK focusing specifically on environmental justice and equality.

Maria is co-founder of the UK Environmental Justice Network and also the main author of the 'Third Sector Climate Change Declaration'. She has a Masters in Public International Law (human rights and environmental law) and has written a number of publications on environmental justice, diversity, social inclusion and regeneration. She is a former Commissioner for the UK Sustainable Development Commission and a former Director of the Environmental Law Foundation.

She is a Commissioner for English Heritage, the Chair of Waterwise, a Matron of the Women's' Environment Network and on Natural England's Access to Nature funding panel. Maria was also listed in the recent Independent on Sunday's Top 100 Green List as one of the most influential environmentalists. She is an experienced policy advisor, researcher, and campaigner on environmental justice, diversity and inclusion.

**Chris Church**

Chris Church has worked in the environmental sector for over 25 years. He is Director of Community Environment Associates and an Associate of Capacity Global. He managed local and regional development for Friends of the Earth from 1984 – 1990 as their staff numbers grew from 12 to over 100. Since then he has worked closely with the Community Development Foundation on links between environmental action, social justice and community development.

While working as a consultant Chris has been heavily involved in the voluntary and community sector, working for organisations including Groundwork, the National Trust, BTCV, bassac, and the Wildlife Trusts as well as advising many local councils. He is a former Chair of the London 21 network, is co-Chair of European NGO network ANPED and has been a Trustee of Surfers Against Sewage and the Environmental Law Foundation.

He is an experienced trainer, currently working with the Climate Outreach Information Network and Talk Action. He is also a Director of social enterprise Mapping for Change, a Capacity Global Associate and an Honorary Research Associate at University College London.

# The EAC diversity project partners

**Capacity Global**

Capacity Global is the leading non goverrnmental organisation and think tank focusing on social and environmental justice. It runs six programmes: research; policy and advocacy; consultancy; jobs and training and community outreach. It has a wide network and focuses specifically on inclusion and participation of diverse and excluded communities .

*www.capacity.org.uk*

**CEA** *(Community Environment Associates)*

CEA is a consultancy based in east London which specialises in work on involving local communities in changing, developing or sustaining their environment and in helping them make the links between their local problems and bigger national and global issues.
*www.cea.suscom.org*

**ECA** (Education Centres Association)

The ECA is a practice-based organisation concerned with adult education and lifelong learning. Its work in the arts and cultural sectors complements the role of its constituent institutions and organisations. These extend across the range of Adult Community Learning, FE Colleges and HE. The ECA also supports life long learning organisations and groups make environmental choices to safeguard the future of our planet.

*www.e-c-a.ac.uk*

**Just Cities Youth Group**

Just Cities is a new youth led group set up to help young people around the world share concerns and thoughts about their environment and discuss options for improving, engaging and participating in decision making. It aims to champion political participation; campaign on issues that effect young people's lives, provide inspiration, training and tools for change.

*www.capacity.org.uk/communityprojects/justcities.html*

**FCDL** (Federation for Community Development Learning)

FCDL is the national network for community development training; supporting the development of communities through advancing and promoting community work learning at local, regional and national levels and the creation of appropriate opportunities for training and qualification. It also hosts special interest groups to share practice around particular perspectives and issues, including Ubuntu for Black community development workers and activists.

*www.fcdl.org.uk*

**TPAS** (Tenants Participatory Advisory Services)

TPAS's aim is to extend the reach and quality of tenant influence by working with social housing residents and landlords to develop successful partnerships and supporting tenants and community groups to take on a more representative role. TPAS is a not for profit membership organisation that provides information, consultancy, training and conferences. It's members are made up of tenants' groups and social housing landlords.
*www.tpas.org.uk*

# capacity global

living in a clean and healthy environment is everyone's right

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