EAC Diversity Report

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Educational Centres Association

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TPAS

Just Cities Youth Group

Community Environment Associates

Every Action Counts: The Diversity Report

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For further information on Every Action Counts: www.everyactioncounts.org.uk

Copies of this report are available to download at: www.capacity.org.uk

Acknowledgements

The Diversity Report - Executive Summary

The need for engagement and inclusion

Over the last decade there have been a number of reports from government, non-governmental organisations, academics and other agencies stating the need for better inclusion of socially and economically excluded people.

It is widely recognised that the quest for equality, inclusion and social justice is at the heart of sustainable development. There have been various attempts to develop this aspect of the sustainability agenda in the UK including work on:

- Promoting access to green spaces
- Developing the public realm
- Including environmental equality as a national indicator for sustainable development, liveability and well being

Legislation including the Aarhus Convention, the Equalities Bill, the Disability Act, Race Impact assessments, and the Sustainable Communities Act all provide support for ensuring that inclusion, diversity and fairness are at the heart of the environment and sustainable development agenda.

However the findings of this report suggest that support for diversity and participation in practice continues to be weak. There have been research reports, policy statements and a number of active projects and organisations advocating the need for better inclusion of target groups in sustainable development action and decision-making since the late 1990s. But there has been little in the way of a strategic approach by government or non-governmental organisations in the environment or social sector.

Whilst some good practice has emerged, it tends to be in smaller underfunded, short-term non-governmental projects. As such the links between diversity and environmental issues (despite being crucial to inclusion and sustainable development) remain project based and under resourced. There is a risk of 'ghettoising' diversity and inclusion.

A failure to engage?

There appear to be four reasons for the continued failure to move beyond limited good practice:

1.   There is a lack of vision at the outset, compounded by lack of political will to act on and develop diversity policies and projects within government and the third sector.

2.   There is a lack of leadership on this within the social sector working with excluded groups and the environmental sector.

3.	There are priority conflicts. The environmental sector is not seeing diversity and participation as important to environmental action while many social justice organisations still do not consider environmental issues as important to their work on social justice or equality.

4.	Despite some initially promising work by Defra on equality and access to the countryside, the government and funders fail to provide leadership in delivering comprehensive urban and rural policy frameworks, or supporting long term action and resources.

This report argues strongly that the organisations, government departments and community groups established for, or tasked with, delivering sustainable development or equality (such as the Defra, DCLG, Office of the Third Sector, Third Sector Task Force, Ministerial Task Force on Climate Change, Equality and Human Rights Commission) should place diversity and inclusion at the centre of sustainable development and environmental action.

This has not happened so far. For too long there has been no concerted, cohesive agenda focusing on collective and segmented participation and inclusion. At the delivery end, there is the need for a culture change to embed and make clear the importance of diversity in terms of ownership, fairness, participation, and long-term change, moving beyond equal opportunities.

Depressingly, the research, focus group and interview findings presented here mirror the results of similar reports that are over ten years old – that the concerns, needs and actions of BAME communities, older people, young people and disabled people, are still being ignored in much environmental activity.

Key Findings

Socially and economically excluded groups are certainly concerned about the environment
The target groups all showed concern and interest in environmental issues. Many groups had an understanding of environmental issues at both the local and global level. Many demonstrated environmental concerns in relation to equality and fairness.

Environmental issues are closely linked to social and political debates
The concerns about the environment were discussed and often understood within wider social and political concerns. In general, but not always, the target groups perceived the issues in relation to how they defined their group. For example, the environmental perspectives of disabled people were also built around the politics of access.

Economics, Equality, Fairness and personal responsibilities are drivers for action

The issues raised that related to action or inaction were connected to cost, wanting to tackle inequality and to do the right thing. Many participants had a strong feeling of the need for fairness around environmental issues and environmental action.

The factors that affect the engagement of 'excluded' groups in environmental action seemed to be based not on their views of traditional 'environmental conservation' but on access to information, limited choices and the physical environment.

There is a need for a stronger degree of leadership within and outside of the Third Sector

This is not just an issue to be tackled through local action and pilot projects. It needs to be dealt with at the core level of equality legislation, sector compacts, ministerial task forces and parliamentary committees.

Excluded groups (and their concerns) are rarely seen in environmental debates

This lack of visibility means that environmental issues and solutions are being defined and established in ways that exclude significant percentages of many communities. This is likely to mean a lack of ownership of these issues and policies that are not sensitive to negative impacts on specific groups. The integration of a diversity focus as a priority would thus develop interest and engagement with sustainable development and environmental issues. This is also crucial for developing effective evidence based policies and the development of effective public engagement initiatives.

There is a lack of partnership between target groups and mainstream environmental organisations, policy and funding

Many mainstream environmental organisations did not seem to be working in strategic partnerships with organisations representing excluded groups. There is also concern among some of the community groups involved about the difficulties of gaining funding to work on social and environmental issues.

A focus on existing good practice may mask the wider exclusion of many organisations and communities

There is clearly good practice in all these areas. But there still appears to be isolated (and funded) cases that mask the lack of a strategic approach and the continuing low levels of engagement within many communities.

Any development work needs to tackle both strategic and operational issues and constraints

A number of operational issues emerged from this work:

- Smaller organisations may be enthusiastic, often due to one keen person. They may do more with funding, but may well need more ongoing support to ensure that their work has lasting value. Programmes to support those keen individuals are needed at every level.

- Those working on environment / SD may be clear on the linkages between the work of social third sector bodies and SD. Those links may be much less obvious to the socially-focused organisations: (they rightly believe that they understand their issues in relation to their overall mission) and may not be enthusiastic if they perceive others are trying to tell them their jobs.

- Money for one-off projects such as events or workshops may in some cases be a distraction. If there is not enough money to employ someone to run an event, then this will fall to someone who is in all probability already fully employed or even over–stretched.

- Most organisations working on diversity issues have tight and limited budgets. Those budgets are often grants or for specific service delivery: in both cases it is not likely that they will consider reallocating money or staff to work that is not what they are paid for.

- Examples of good emerging practice from within the sector are helpful, but others will often first want to know where the resources came from for the work and how they can get the same resources.

- Individuals within organisations focused on diversity may well have an interest in the environment. They may not necessarily expect 'their' organisation – which they work with on their key 'diversity' issues – to promote engagement on the environment and this needs careful planning. It also needs to reflect the extent to which they may (as a result of previous experiences and historical attitudes) feel that the environment is not an issue that they are likely to be active on.

Towards a genuinely inclusive environmental sector

These findings suggest that there are a number of areas where more action is needed:

- Socially-focused voluntary organisations need to be supported to develop their own ideas on how their mission links to the environment if they are to make this part of their core business. Working to get them to engage with what may be perceived as an 'external' agenda may yield some short-term interest but is unlikely to deliver lasting change.

- Some degree of leadership and even direction will be important. Groups working on diversity have seen the impact of government requirements for equality impact assessment etc. If sustainability and climate change is to become part of a core mission then it needs to be addressed at this level.

- Getting sustainable development embedded as part of the mission of any organisation will not result from one-off events, or unsupported policies and action plans. There are fundamental governance issues to be addressed. Many organisations facing diversity may have senior staff and trustees who will need to be

supported and enabled to accept and embrace this new perspective. This will require long-term work and will need to be incorporated in the same way that any other capacity-building work would be.

- Much environmental work is still on individual and collective behaviour change. Many diversity-focused organisations have identified examples of where work to promote behaviour change has not been targeted effectively at their communities. If such work is to help tackle issues of under-representation, then the expertise of these organisations needs to be mobilised at the planning stage to deliver messages in appropriate ways.

- Every organisation needs support to change. That support will probably involve funding that can be allocated to this work but might also need ongoing support and advice. Mentoring from other voluntary organisations could be a way forward on this and could enable environmental organisations to learn more about diversity.

Key Recommendations

The report sets out a number of ways in which specific actions can lead to long term change, including:

- Environmental Organisations

All organisations should have a diversity policy and develop programmes to work with (and learn with) diverse groups to create joint agendas for action.

- Social & Diversity Organisations

These organisations should develop environmental policies and practice. There should be greater work with environmental organisations to increase and enhance appropriate partnership working, and pursue a joint agenda for action to tackle these issues of exclusion.

- Funders

Funders should ensure 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.

- Local Government

All local government needs to deliver on better engagement and social and environmental impact as part of their legislative duties. Every council should have a clear engagement and outreach strategy to support its work

on environmental and climate change that identifies the diverse communities with whom they should be working and set targets and measures for such work.

- Central Government

There is a need for more research on environmental issues and behaviour changes as they relate to ethnicity, age and disability. A Ministerial Task Force or cross-departmental 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.

1. Introduction: an environment for everyone?

1.1 Background to the report

Every Action Counts (EAC) was set up in 2006 as a three- year, England-wide programme funded by the Department for Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The aim was to bring together the Third Sector to take action on sustainable development, especially those groups and networks with significant outreach that focuses on social development and community engagement.

Charities, social enterprises and community groups from social and environmental backgrounds created an innovative collaborative network to work together on five key issues: save energy, travel wisely, shop ethically, saving resources, and caring for your area. The programme was developed in recognition of the powerful role these organisations could play in supporting actions that benefit the environment and people.

The Diversity Project was commissioned as part of EAC in recognition of the need to develop a better understanding of the role of certain groups and communities within Every Action and of their concerns and the barriers and opportunities that affect their engagement in action on environmental issues and sustainable development.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

There are two key aims to this study: to develop a detailed understanding of environmental and connecting social concerns and interests of four specific groups who were under-represented within EAC; and to provide an overview on their perspectives of taking action as an individual, a group or organisation on environmental and related social concerns. The four under-represented groups are:

1. Young people below the age of 25
2. Older people over the age of 65
3. People with disabilities
4. Black, Asian, Minority, Ethnic Groups and Refugees

The study addresses the following questions:

- What do environment and sustainable development issues mean to members of these groups?
- What concerns do they have as an individual, as a member of a group, or as organisations?
- What are their key priorities for tackling environmental and sustainable development?
- What are the opportunities for developing greater involvement and action on environment and sustainable development issues?

1.3   The structure of this Report

This chapter sets out the background to the study and the objectives and methodology.

- Chapter 2 provides a national overview of the concerns and current issues relating to the four target groups.
- Chapter 3 summarises the discussions with the target groups workshops, focus groups and interviews. It outlines the key themes emerging from those discussions and focuses on environment, inclusion and sustainable development concerns; environmental behaviour – collective and individual; and opportunities and barriers to future action.
- Chapter 4 summarises the group discussions
- Chapter 5 provides conclusions and implications of the study for funders, policy makers, and those working with under represented groups and environmental, regeneration and social inclusion organisations.

1.4   Methodology

The study took part within a wider project to also provide outreach and support to target groups by five project partners:

- Capacity Global
- Education Centres Association (ECA),
- Federation for Community Learning (FCDL),
- Tenant Advisory Participation Service (TPAS), and the
- Just Cities Youth Group

Community Environment Associates (CEA) provided an ongoing evaluation of the work.

The study and the project was carried out in three main stages:

- Desk-based review of studies and projects
- Focus groups and interviews
- Workshops and in-depth discussions

The first stage for the study was a literature review and project partner review to identify the broad range of work and theory on diversity, attitudes and concerns across the four groups. This stage also included talking to key stakeholders from within EAC, the wider Third Sector and government departments. The results of this work is summarised in Chapter 2.

The second stage of the project consisted of workshops and focus groups representing the four main groups run by four of the project partners who had established networks and links with one or more of the groups. These

provided insights that could have been missed if the study relied only on information gathered in stage one. The partners also facilitated the selection of appropriate case studies.

The final stage of the project was to provide advice and assistance to the participants from the four groups involved in the project. This part of the project provided outreach assistance and advice. It also provided another opportunity to feedback perspectives, concerns and opportunities into the study.

1.5   Some key definitions: 'under-represented', 'environment' and 'sustainable development'

'Under-represented groups'

There has been little research into the concerns and actions of diverse and under-represented groups on environment and sustainability in England. As members of these groups are most often likely to suffer from the worst impacts and as they often have networks outside of mainstream environmental issues, they can provide distinctive perspectives and offer innovative approaches to working with civil society.

Widening the understanding of under representation and diversity is at the heart of debates on social justice and social inclusion (JRF 2004). The focus on under representation is linked to principles of social inclusion which aim to identify and define under representation as well as gain a clear understanding on the role, if any, the lack of representation plays on deprivation, lack of participation, community cohesion and inappropriate policy.

'Under-represented' groups are often defined in terms of disparity in access, participation, learning, engagement and support and these issues are seen as the starting points. There are a number of research findings that illustrate under representation in the field of environment and sustainable development (See App. 1). Much of this research has also been critical of the extent to which traditional environmental and sustainable development projects and initiatives have worked with and supported the concerns, initiatives and ideas that come from very different backgrounds.

The overall conclusions suggest that as with other issues under representation of specific groups is closely linked to the lack of funding and support. There is also evidence that the specific concerns of under represented groups have not been taken on board by the traditional green sector. In some cases BAMER (Black, Asian, Minority, Ethnic and Refugees) groups, older people, and disabled people have been directly and indirectly excluded from traditional environmental and sustainable development resources and initiatives.

For the purposes of this study, we have based our definition of under representation on the findings of the equality and diversity review undertaken by Every Action Counts (TPAS 2007). The Review's baseline data

suggested that in broad terms people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds, younger adults, older adults and people with disabilities particularly *'stood out as under represented'* in the EAC project.

However, the review notes a number of data gaps, in regards to equalities monitoring in relation to community trainers, those receiving training, and a lack of standardising diversity and equality monitoring within EAC. The review identified a need for more work with the four groups:

- Young people below the age of 25
- Older people over the age of 65
- People with disabilities
- Black, Asian, Minority, Ethnic Groups and Refugees

It should be noted that in the case of young people below the age of 25 EAC had specifically not included these as target groups. The remit for EAC participants also specifically excluded faith groups as a target group. It is therefore perhaps less surprising that these groups were not visible in the project or that their perspectives were not included.

'Environment' and 'Sustainable Development'

All these words can be defined in various ways. The 'Environment' has to some extent been defined by environmental and conservation organisations so that many think of the environment in terms of global issues, threatened species and the natural environment. A more modern approach to the environment includes a focus on the built environment and sees 'our environment' as being 'where we live'. This may involve issues such as litter and waste, graffiti, lack of access to open spaces, run down neighbourhoods, regeneration and community cohesion, while recognising the critical links with the ecosystems within the environment that keep it inhabitable.

Sustainable Development (SD) came into use in the 1990s and there are many definitions. The 'original' one was set out in the 'Brundtland Report' from the UN World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987. That report sought to resolve emerging tensions between the need for global, social and economic development and protecting the environment. It set out sustainable development as *"Development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"*.

The UN Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 set out this idea in detail in the 'Agenda 21' report: SD was about integrating Environmental, Social and Economic issues. Agenda 21 was signed up to by 197 nations and includes chapters on health, poverty and human settlements alongside issues such as forests and oceans. It also sets out roles for what it defines as the nine 'Major Groups' within civil society (Women, Young people, Indigenous people, NGOs, Trade Unions, Local authorities, Business, the Scientific Community and Farmers).

Sustainable Development is now a key strand in national policy. The current UK Sustainable Development strategy, entitled 'Securing Our Future', was launched in 2005. It sets out five principles:

- Living within Environmental Limits
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- Achieving a sustainable economy
- Promoting good governance
- Using sound science responsibly

These principles shape priority areas for immediate action by the government, private, public and the third sector. They are

- sustainable consumption
- climate change and energy
- natural resource protection and environmental enhancement
- sustainable communities

In essence the definition, guiding principle and key action points illustrate the need to give environment, society and economy equal priority for developing a framework for developing quality of life in the UK and internationally. The environment is recognised as being central to improving peoples' lives.

This study uses the modernised definition of the 'environment' and the broader socio-environmental approach to sustainable development and has sought to identify the perspectives of the target groups on both these issues. The project adopted this approach in exploring key themes for the target groups and the desk - top research of target group national concerns.

2.   The Target groups (1): A national overview of concerns and current issues

Whilst there has been little research to clarify the concerns of the target groups in relation to environment and sustainable development, the studies, reports, projects and initiatives that are available provide a useful overview on the main issues for the four key target groups in this study. This section summarises information gathered around the work done to date on the concerns of:

- Young People
- Older People
- People with disabilities
- BAMER communities

2.1   Young People

'We are fostering a generation likely to face the toughest environmental challenges yet in terms of climate change and the ever increasing pressure on natural resources – this generation more than ever before will need the environmental awareness and citizenship that is instilled through exploration'.
Green Alliance: 'A Child's Place: Why Environment Matters to Children'.

Today's young people and the generations yet to come are those who will have to deal with the effects of environmental degradation, fossil fuel consumption and global climate change. In order to empower them to reduce any further detrimental happenings and to prepare them for those that are inevitable, it is seen as essential that young peoples' concerns about environmental issues are brought to the fore, and that they understand the importance of their involvement in, and protection of their legacy.

Many studies have highlighted the concerns of younger people. These findings often expose the areas where greater attention is needed in terms of policy. Although differences were sometimes notable between the attitudes of the rural/ urban and non-disadvantaged/disadvantaged groups, the overall findings suggest:

- Young people recognize that they will bear the consequences of current environmental policies and thus have a strong interest in protecting and preserving the planet's resources
- Concern about harm to the natural environment translated for some students into a desire to assist with its protection and betterment
- Environmental actions were not seen as necessarily difficult to do things for the environment
- Few are aware of ways to become involved in action groups or know of action groups
- Fewer are actively participating in environmental groups

- Youth activism and citizenship illustrate the potential of youth and young adults to act as leaders of change towards sustainability
- Youth and young adulthood are the periods when the effects of the 'commercialization of childhood' are being seen and lifelong habits of consumption levels and preferences are being cemented
- Young people in particular are taking individual action to help the environment, having little faith in government and business to do so
- Although young people around the world understood the impacts of their use and disposal of products on the environment, very few associate this with their shopping behaviour
- The divide between race, ethnicity, the disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged, the rural and urban often makes it difficult for individuals to act as a unit on issues when there are disparities in terms of need and exposure.

It is important to recognise that many young people are not over-concerned about their environment. A 2007 MORI survey raised this issue: only 9% of those aged 18-24 identified the environment as being a key issue[1].

Another study conducted by MORI in conjunction with TIME magazine related to individuals aged 21 – 35 years and whose subjects, who came from Italy, Germany, France and Britain, showed that although the Environment features as the top issue in every country except Britain where it is ousted by education and healthcare[2].

Issues raised:

- There is a disconnection between individual actions and environmental impacts/ effects.
- Greater awareness is needed of how to become involved in groups and projects in local areas.
- Schools and parents are at the forefront of facilitating environmental educational awareness
- Consumerism can be a valuable way to create linkages between the environment and individual responsibility.

[1]'The Environment: How Important is it Really to the Public?'; IPSOS MORI, 2007, http://extranet.ipsos-mori.com/newsletter/environment/pdf/The%20Environment-How%20important%20is%20it%20really%20to%20the%20public.pdf

 [2] 'Generation Europe'http://www.time.com/time/europe/generatione/moripoll/6.html, Survey for TIME by MORI. Results are based on 1,225 face-to-face interviews conducted during February and March 2007

2.2 Older People

It is clear that although all members of society will be adversely affected by the impacts of climate change, there are those who are more at risk than others. This is certainly true for older people. Help the Aged and Age Concern have done extensive work on the impacts of rising fuel costs and agencies such as NEA are making the links between fuel poverty and climate change.

The following show the increased vulnerability of those members of the UK population who are older than the State Pension Age (65 for men and 60 for women):

- The fastest growing age group in the current UK population are those aged 80 and older. They currently constitute 2,749,507 of the total population. The number of people over State Pension Age is fast overtaking the number of children.[1]

- 2.1 million pensioners are living in poverty after housing costs are taken into account, using the common definition of poverty – households living with 60% median income.[2] 19% of the UK population is at risk of suffering from poverty.

- The majority of older people reported to be living with a long-term illness are 63% of people aged 65 to 74 and 38% are reported to have had that illness limit their capabilities to carry out every day activities. In the over 75s sector this escalated to 50% finding that such illness impaired their abilities to carry out daily activities.[3]

- 73% of all non-decent dwellings lack efficient insulation or efficient heating required to meet the thermal comfort criterion.[4] 11.8% of all those have inhabitants aged 60 and over and 13.3% aged 75 and older. This is compared with the 10% of all households living in energy inefficient homes. Homes are inefficient when they score 30 and under with the Standard Assessment Rating Procedure (SAP).[5]

- In 2006/07 there were 24 000 excess winter deaths in England and Wales, more than 90% of which were people over the age of 65. [6]

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[1] 21 August 2008, http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=949
[2] Department for Work and Pensions, Households below Average income 2006/2007, © Crown Copyright 2008, Table 6.3.
[3] Office General Household Survey: results for 2006, © Crown Copyright 2008, table 7.2
[4] Ibid pg 13
[5] Ibid table E
[6] Office for National Statistics, Excess Winter Mortality Data Set, 2007

Green and Wiser?

Green Alliance recently launched a report *'Greener and Wiser – an older people's manifesto on the environment'*, produced in partnership with Natural England, Age Concern and Help the Aged.

This was led by a task force of 10 older individuals (aged from 52 – 90) recruited from across the UK. They helped develop policy proposals that will make the case for better involvement of older people in the environmental agenda and set out ways in which this can be achieved. Over a series of three meetings they developed a set of recommendations that will help to raise the profile of older people in the environmental debate and to remove some of the challenges that older people face in making greener choices. These recommendations were launched on May 11th at an event with Lord Hunt, Minister of State at Defra.

The taskforce had two key aims. They wanted to increase the profile of older people in environmental decision-making and communication and they wanted to address the practical challenges that older people face in making greener choices. They drew up a set of 'guiding principles' and focused on three specific areas: transport, energy and climate change, and waste and recycling.

The guiding principles include:

- Better communication is critical. Older people often have strong networks within their communities and, with assistance, have great potential to act as environmental advisers. Links could also be built between older people and environmental education in schools, to the benefit of both sides.
- Older people can be role models on green issues. A high profile spokesperson for older people and the environment would help to reach out and spread the message.
- The taskforce wants a greater role for older people in decision making about environmental issues, not just on issues that are specific to older people. They suggest creating platforms for consulting older people on environmental issues in local authorities.
- Lastly, a principle of interconnectedness should guide decision-making.

Specific recommendations include:

- A greener and fairer transport system, with better public transport built into the design of new communities and fairer pricing, particularly for rail journeys.
- Energy companies should develop green energy tariffs that are targeted at the needs of older people and enable them to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Housing associations need to show leadership in delivering energy efficiency and promoting green choices.
- There is a need to reduce the amount of waste generated, and not just increase recycling levels. Retailers should provide clearer information about environmental choices and consider take-back schemes for reusable packaging. Local authorities should 'age-proof' recycling policies, to make sure older people can participate.

The key concerns

It is clear from this and other work that there are very serious environmental concerns that might affect the physical well-being of the elderly. The principal ones are:

• Fuel poverty

Due to a number of global factors, the price of fuel has been on the increase. Fuel poverty is the term used to describe a situation where a household is no longer able to afford the fuel required for heating and other energy requirements. Fuel poverty is said to be caused by the interplay of three major factors:

- Fuel Prices
- Household Incomes
- Energy efficiency

The nature of these 3 factors is cause for great social and environmental concern as it gives rise to issues of poverty, climate change and fossil fuel depletion that ultimately place the aged in an ever-increasing position of vulnerability.

• Excess Winter Mortality

According to the Office for National Statistics, 31,000 excess deaths in England and Wales were directly related to the cold. The UK has a higher number of winter deaths than in comparable European Countries despite having milder winters. Winter conditions are also related to increased rheumatism, respiratory problems, hypothermia, high blood pressure and the spread of communicable diseases, all of which could prove deadly to the susceptible aged. Some academics have argued that much excess winter mortality may be attributed to exposure to cold for brief excursions outdoors rather than to low indoor temperatures[7]. This may to some degree be attributable to poor infrastructure in terms of shops and health care services being located too far from the elderly or poor transport facilities, resulting in older people having to walk some way to their nearest transport routes.

Issues that need to be addressed here include:

- Better insulation and draught-proofing
- Adequate access to health care professionals
- Winter support groups run by the community
- Better researched transport and facility location – informed infrastructure.
- Community education of how the elderly are affected

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[7]   Keatinge WR, Coleshaw SR, Holmes J. changes in seasonal mortalities with improvement in home heating in England and Wales from 1694 – 1984. *Int J Circumpolar Health* 2000;59:216-21. [Medline]

• Heat Waves

Climate change is increasing average temperatures and the frequency of heat waves. In 2003 there were more than 600 excess deaths during the August heat wave. The elderly, as vulnerable members, are once again at most risk and policy must take into consideration the health risks associated with extreme heat conditions. The measures taken must not only serve to prevent further climate change, but must also take cognisance of how communities can adapt to those effects that are at this stage inevitable.

Work in progress

Other recent studies include:

- The Department of Health Administration and Policy, Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston USA conducted a report into *'Elderly Patients and Environmental Health Risks'*. Here the principal findings were that elderly individuals are less likely to identify environmental pollutants (air, water, lead, and workplace pollutants) as harmful to their health and thus be less cautious or not take adequate protective measures. The relevance of the research to policy was that there should be an increase of environmental educational programs targeted at the elderly so as to increase awareness between environmental factors and health risks[8].

- *'The Vulnerability to Winter Mortality in Elderly People in Britain: Population Base Study'* conducted by Academics at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) is one of the first large scale epidemiological studies in elderly people to have examined variation in excess winter death in relation to risk factors defined at the individual level. It took into account factors such as the role of socio- economic status and the role of pre-existing illness as risk factors in excess winter mortality levels in the UK. The study concluded that there was little evidence for vulnerability to death associated with these factors. It also found that winter deaths are widely distributed in elderly people rather than being concentrated in the most disadvantaged groups. A recommendation is that policies to reduce excess winter deaths should be broad based and additional to those tackling fuel poverty[9].

- *'Heat Waves in the UK: Impacts and Public health Responses'* is another project being conducted by the LSHTM in partnership with UCL and the Met Office, funded by the Medical Research Council to evaluate the Heat Wave Plan for England. This takes an epidemiological analysis of temperature affects on mortality and morbidity in order to describe the vulnerability to heat waves in the England and Wales population. The study includes a quantitative study of older peoples' attitudes to heat waves and the Heat Wave Plan and assesses future heat waves in the UK and their impact on health[10].

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[8] http://gateway.nllm.nih.gov/MeetingAbstracts/ma?f=102222123.html
[9] http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/329/7467/647?etoc
[10] http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/pehru/mrcheat/hwmain.htm

- The Mayor of London's report on the 'London Heat Island' phenomenon, led by Kings College. London's temperatures have long been higher (up to 9°C) than those in surrounding areas due to heat being absorbed by and stored in buildings, roads etc. This situation is likely to get worse, and will exacerbate the effects of climate change and heat waves. The study examines a series of ways to help prevent higher temperatures affecting quality of life and also the steps that can be taken to adapt. Vulnerable groups are to be identified from the start so as to ensure health plans are in place and public health and social care professionals are prepared in the event of a heat wave[11].

Issues needing to be addressed

Climate Change

There are likely to be specific impacts of climate change on older people and related human activity. There is a need for better education for older people on the causes and effects of climate change, not only on their physical environment by the changing weather patterns, but also on their health, comfort and well-being. Effective public health intervention policies are needed to support older people so that they can recognize and act when there are signs of heat induced illness.

The contribution of older people

Older people play a key role in local voluntary and community activity. This is partly because many retired people have time to put into these issues, but also because many travel less (notably to work) and are focused more on their immediate local environment. Various pieces of work (notably Defra's market research on segmentation around behaviour change) have identified a strong focus on avoiding waste among older people, which may translate into active support for recycling and campaigns on fly-tipping etc.

However, as with other groups in this study, older people are often close to invisible in images of environmental action, where the focus is on professionals or young 'eco-activists'. This ignores the contributions that are already being made.

These are likely to become more significant as more and more people who were young during the first phases of the development of the environmental movement (and who may have qualifications and specific professional experience) retire and look to new ways to be active.

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[11]   www.london.gov.uk/mayor/environment/climate-change/

2.3   People with disabilities

One of the biggest obstacles in work with 'minority groups' is understanding the definition of the group and who it encapsulates. People who are described as having 'disabilities' show this clearly. Within the current global population of approximately 6.75 billion, 650 million people are living with or affected by disabilities. In the UK 9.8 million adults and 700 000 children[12] are reported as having 'disabilities'. Any work in the field needs to recognise some key underlying issues:

Disability defined

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) of 2005 defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

For the purposes of the Act:

- substantial means neither minor nor trivial;
- long term means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least 12 months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions);
- normal day-to-day activities include everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping;
- a normal day-to-day activity must affect one of the 'capacities' listed in the Act which include mobility, manual dexterity, speech, hearing, seeing and memory.

People who have had a disability in the past that meets this definition are also covered by the scope of the Act. There are additional provisions relating to people with progressive conditions. The DDA 2005 also amended the definition of disability to ensure that people with HIV, cancer and multiple sclerosis are deemed to be covered by the DDA effectively from the point of diagnosis, rather than from the point when the condition has some adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.[13]

Inclusion

Inclusion is a term used by people with disabilities and disability rights advocates for the idea that any person living with a disability should be accommodated by all people, in all aspects of normal everyday life, without any restrictions or limitations of any kind, freely, openly and without pity. It is considered an all-encompassing practice of ensuring that people of differing abilities belong, are engaged, and are connected to the goals and objectives of the wider society as a whole.[14]

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[12]   http://www.politics.co.uk/briefings-guides/issue-briefs/domestic-policy/equality/disability-discrimination/disability-discrimination-$366683.htm
[13]   http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/RightsAndObligations/DisabilityRights/DG_4001069
[14]   http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inclusion_(disability_rights)

Limitations

The practice of 'inclusion' is the ideal, but in reality there are a number of limitations which hamper the ability of a person with a disability to enjoy the same degree of social and physiological conditions that a person without a disability might experience. These are related to, not exclusively and of course relative to the type of disability - health, mobility and accessibility, communication abilities including sight, hearing, speech, social interaction, physical interaction and motor skills. This has lead to discriminatory exclusions of people with disabilities which has been related to blanket perceptions of disabilities generally. It is also the case that although a person may be impaired in a manner that fits the definition of 'disability' this does not make them disabled unless society fails to accommodate them or include them in a way it would those who are 'normal'.[15] Exclusions have related to employment, education, social interaction and policy considerations.

Environmental concerns within disabled communities

Whilst there are many differences between disabled individuals, both in terms of the way in which they are impaired (i.e.; visual, invisible (e.g. epilepsy), physical, mental, illness related, those born with a disability and those impaired in later life), and the way they have adapted in order to live with the impairment, it is clear that people with disabilities experience specific and different issues in relation to the physical environment.

The following studies, research and projects highlight some of these issues and raise areas for further development. It is also important to be aware that there is a developing body of work within local authorities and the third sector on improving access. Much of this is not being written up formally or is described as 'grey literature'; EAC partners including Groundwork, BTCV and Greenspace are all working on these issues, as are local councils delivering their wider commitments under the spirit of the DDA. Specialist voluntary organisations such as Thrive are working with those suffering from long-term mental health issues. The new Lottery programme on 'Access to Nature' may also result in increased good practice.

Access to green spaces and the natural environment:

Research by Natural England – *'A Sense of Freedom: The Experiences of Disabled People in the Natural Environment'* - shows that the outdoors is very beneficial to the health and maintenance of a healthy lifestyle of elderly and disabled people. Exercise helps prevent chronic illnesses, improves physical skills, enhances leg muscle strength, increases the mineral content of the skeleton, reduces triglyceride levels in the blood, reduces the risk of physical disability, prevents cardio-vascular disease and stroke, reduces the risk of dying from cancer and prolongs independence by 5-10 years. It strengthens the skeleton and counteracts osteoporosis, preserves musculature and enhances mobility, reduces excess weight, improves sleep quality, combats depression and anxiety and promotes a good social life. There is also evidence that being outside as a healthcare measure increases a patient's ability to concentrate, has a positive effect on diastolic blood pressure, reduces symptoms in Alzheimer

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[15]   http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_model_of_disability

patients, and decreases anxiety and depression.[16]

The study identifies 3 distinct obstacles which limit access to the outdoors / green spaces / natural environment:

- Psychological: as in insecurity and vulnerability. Fears of being outside or in an open space alone contribute to this. It also relates to vulnerability to crime, and the lack of aid in mobility and in the case of an incident of falling or injury. The attractiveness of the environment also relates to incentive. The greater the care requirement, the more important the nearby environment.

- Physical: distance of green spaces/ recreational areas due to lack of transport or adequate transport. It may even be the lack of such areas themselves. The greater the disability the more important physical accessibility and aspects of design becomes.

- Organisational: poor healthcare resources and routines, healthcare staff not having sufficient time to help patients go outside.

Transport

A report in 2003 - *'An Overview on the Literature on Disability and Transport'* - for the Disability Rights Commission - refers to a range of issues around transport experienced by disabled people. Transport is said to be the single most prominent concern at local level of this group with 67% of disabled people having to rely on others for transport and 41% say they have difficulty with travelling. A lack of accessible means of travel creates social exclusion for many disabled people. The paper takes into consideration a number of government initiatives including the Ten Year Plan and the concessionary fare as per the Transport Act 2000.[17]

Transport is also a big issue for RADAR, who publish *'There and Back'* a guide for disabled people on non-local travel which focuses on links between the different methods of transport, whether by air, rail, road or sea. RADAR state that while the UK is 'still far from having an integrated and accessible transport system, there have been significant improvements over the last 5 years or so'.

Access to environmental services and activities

While there has been significant progress in improving access in recent years there remain a number of ways in which people with disabilities may find it harder than other people to get engaged with environmental activities.

Those interviewed for this work (see section 3.4) made it clear that they did not get much information on these issues and would like to be more involved where this was appropriate. There remains much more work to be done in this field and this is a challenge for all environmental bodies.

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[16] http://www.fhi.se/templates/Page____723.aspx

[17] http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/wilson%20louca/DRCTransportLitreview.pdf

2.4   Black, Asian, Minority, Ethnic and Refugee groups

There has been much work done in recent years with these diverse communities. National organisations such as Natural England and the Council for National Parks have set up substantial programmes building on earlier work by bodies such as the Black Environment Network. National environmental organisations such as Capacity Global, BTCV, Groundwork and Friends of the Earth are now working with ethnic minority groups, as are larger organisations such as the Environment Agency. Innovative work is also being done by some local and regional agencies such as the Yorkshire Dales National Park, who have worked closely with Bradford Council on these issues. As with work on disabilities, much of this is poorly written up or evaluated.

Research also shows that people's willingness and ability to act is intrinsically linked to motivators and barriers that stem from social factors: social norms, 'being part of something', habit, scepticism, life style and self identity are all implicated. In this context it is correct to say that culture and its main facets, ethnicity and religion, can play a major role in shaping behaviours in relation to nature and the use of its resources.
The language used to convey the message of 'green' behaviour uptake should also recognise the distinctions and bridges between groups.

There is extensive evidence around overall current behaviours and a wider understanding of how to support more sustainable behaviour in the future. There is evidence in other countries to suggest that ethnicity and/or religion can shape environmental behaviour (Ashely 2000, Mohai, Paul, and David Kershner. 2002, Seethaler and Rose 2006). There is a clear lack of well-researched, validated information and evidence on existing pro environmental behaviour amongst ethnic minority communities and faith groups in the UK. There is also little evidence or research on the potential for future development of such behaviours with these target groups.

The lack of research evidence on individual behaviour changes within these communities contrasts with the increasingly strong evidence of awareness and actions taken up by many BAME and faith organisations on environmental issues (Black Majorities Church 2004, Environmental Information Network 2004, Capacity Global 2008, Sikh Environment Network 2008).

However, there is also evidence of a number of barriers and opportunities to pro environmental action at an organisational, household and individual level (Capacity Global 2005, 2007). In addition, research suggests that BAME groups may suffer disproportionately from:
- poor environmental services (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2005);
- less access to good quality green spaces (National Trust 2008, Black Environment Network 2003, 2007, Countryside Agency 2007);
- weak environmental policy – both built and natural (Commission for Racial Equality 2007, Capacity Global 2007).

Race, Ethnicity and access to the countryside

The Diversity Review Report and related research[18] in 2002 and 2004 addressed the findings relating to the Diversity Review promised by the Rural White Paper 2000. One of the primary aims of the Paper was the encouragement of BAME groups to visit the countryside and participate in activities.

The purpose of the study was to formulate recommendations for a full review of the diversity of people accessing and enjoying the countryside. The study investigated under – representation in accessing local countryside and green space for enjoyment; the relationship between under-representation, cultural background and social exclusion; and the potential role of countryside and green space to address social exclusion.

The overarching finding was that black and other ethnic minority people participate less in the countryside and related activities in proportion to the percentage of BAME people in the country.

Some of the main barriers here include: financial costs incurred, lack of time and other commitments; lack of appropriate activities to attract excluded groups; lack of initiatives and lack of perceived relevance; physical difficulty of access to sites; lack of confidence and negative perceptions of the environment; lack of (appropriate) interpretive information at sites and lack of publicity; a neglected and poorly maintained environment; previous negative experiences of the countryside; lack of (accessible) transport.

The review of possible projects to increase participation in countryside enjoyment shows that simple provision of new facilities or transport is not sufficient and a more comprehensive and integrated approach is required to address lack of participation, including increasing people's understanding of and sense of belonging in the countryside. A more long-term approach to management and funding is required to enable greater sustainability of initiatives.

Recommendations include:

1) A research Programme that looks at people who are under presented and / or socially excluded, including exploration of their perceptions, needs and preferences. It will also look into providers of services for these groups in England and analyze the extent to which visiting the countryside can address social exclusion.

2) Action based initiatives; some aimed at the general public and some to allow the specific needs of selected target groups, such as people of low income and disadvantaged communities, to be raised.

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[18] OPENspace, "Diversity review – Options for Implementation – Final Report", March 2003, http://p1.countryside.gov.uk/Images/FINALREP260603_tcm2-10084.doc.
The related research note (February 2004) is available at: http://p1.countryside.gov.uk/Images/CRN75(pdf)_tcm2-19011.pdf.

3) Supporting activities for the diversity review should ensure sufficient engagement with clients and target groups. Participation and decision making strategies that adopt an inclusive approach to design implementation and dissemination will be important.

One of the key findings highlighted by the Rural White Paper 2000 is that there are three key groups who are under represented and whilst they share a common perception of the countryside, their specific attitudes to dimensions of this common perception varied significantly. They all thought the countryside would be beneficial to them, but there were significant factors limiting their access and use. These factors affected different groups in different ways and had to be understood in the context of each individual group.

The three groups were:
- People from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, including Indian, Pakistani and black – Caribbean people;
- Disabled people including people with ambulatory problems (all wheelchair users), blind or visually impaired people and people with mental health problems;
- Young people aged 14 – 16 year olds and 17 – 20 year old young men and women.

Representations of the countryside: all opposed the countryside to the city; all construed the environment of the countryside as natural and green; vast and open; pure, healthy and clean; and far away from cities; and all interpreted the way of life in the countryside as slow and simple, based on traditional English values, set in close knit communities and for an elderly and socially conservative population.

Ethnic minorities backgrounds had a stronger attitude to the naturalness, slowness and simplicity of the countryside, which they felt was strongly tied to 'Englishness' and thus felt excluded and conspicuous. There were however positive attitudes towards the perceived health benefits including psychological and emotional well-being. Getting away from stress, relaxing and finding inner peace were all associated with the countryside by this group. Social inclusion and civic participation were also a perception – learning about English society, feeling integrated, respected and empowered as ethnic minorities[19].

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[19] Ethnos, "What about us? Diversity Review evidence – part one – Challenging perceptions: under-represented visitors' needs", January 2005, http://p1.countryside.gov.uk/Images/DR PUBS ETHNOS FULL REPORT_tcm2-27064.pdf .The related research note is available at: http://p1.countryside.gov.uk/Images/DR PUBS ETHNOS FULL REPORT_tcm2-27064.pdf

The *'What About Us?'* Diversity Report review findings suggest the following:

- Service providers identified 3 groups as under represented: black and minority ethnic groups, people on low incomes and disabled people. 97% of respondents stated that in relation to the last group they had addressed the required changes required by the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) but most also appeared to equate disability purely with physical impairment rather than address the requirements of people with other disabilities. Most innovation and contributions of improvements related to disabled groups and little was offered for the other groups – i.e. little proposal for meaningful action
- It was regarded as 'safer' by service providers in terms of avoiding unintended offense and embarrassment to assume homogeneity in their visitor base rather than differentiate between and address the needs of under–represented groups.
- There was ambiguity, confusion and even exclusion in the day-to-day language used to talk about under represented groups and some providers felt a lack of confidence in addressing under represented groups and thus found it difficult to work with them as potential users.
- In designing projects aimed at encouraging new user groups, organisations have failed to recognise or are unaware of previous research, which has shown fear of prejudice and inexperience by target groups are critical barriers to using the countryside.
- Few mechanisms in place to enable any constructive dialog about equality and diversity as communication is typically top – down.
- A number of organizations did not feel there was a need to encourage a more diverse visitor base. Such attitudinal barriers reveal institutional prejudices and are a significant impediment to progress in this area.
- Key areas were identified as needing address if service providers are to improve their awareness of the needs of under represented groups and then go on to devise strategies and practices that meet both statutory obligations as well as issues of equity in encouraging and facilitating access to outdoor recreation:.
  - improve the language of diversity;
  - develop training and awareness programmes;.
  - establish a champion for access - a specific person or team;
  - improve communication and training;
  - awareness raising, and
  - monitoring of user diversity (which should form part of funding requirements)

These findings were also reflected in the projects run by the Black Environment Network, *'Capturing Richness: Countryside visits by black and ethnic minority communities'* (2003)[20] and through their provision of opportunities for visits to the countryside found that common themes included: the exchange of cultural richness; inspiration of landscape; new activities enrich lives; the revelation of richness in what the countryside can offer; creating new

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[20] http://p1.countryside.gov.uk/Images/Capturing%20richness%20-%20Final_tcm2-10023.pdf.

heritage and the fulfillment of working on the land. They also highlighted barriers in accessing countryside including economic circumstances, language barriers and transport. There is also the widespread feeling that they do not have the entitlement to enter the countryside. They also found that for some BAME people landscapes in Britain a re very important: a group of Turkish women found that their trip to Margate reminded them of Cappadocia in their home country and thus gave them a sense of familiarity.

More recently the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) action plan in their report, *"Outdoors for All?"* provided an action plan to increase the number of people from BAME and under-represented groups who access the natural environment" (2008)[21]. The action plan, designed to help Defra achieve the objective that "people enjoy, understand and care for the natural environment, suggested:

- vision is achieved by using cross – government action to ensure that relevant strategies and policies promote equality of opportunity to access the natural environment; by effective championing of the action plan by atural England and by fostering and facilitating a willingness by service providers and the under represented groups to work collaboratively to provide increased opportunities to access the natural environment and to take advantage of those opportunities.
- A number of legislative duties placed on public bodies – Race Relations (Amendment Act) (2000), The Disability Discrimination Act(2005) and the Gender Equality Act (2006) were a significant catalyst for positive, practical action in shifting cultural and organisational attitudes and behaviors in relation to equality
- Voluntary actions should also be developed that are aimed specifically at encouraging people from under – represented groups to access the environment.

In preparing the Action Plan, The Countryside Agency conducted a public consultation on behalf of Defra. Key issues identified were: the need for further guidance and advice and information sharing; the need to make policies and services related to the outdoor recreation sector more coherent; the need for an inclusive network of forums which reflect local diversity; the need for quality, easily available accessible information, and for people to feel ownership of policies and services; the need to establish a baseline picture against which the future can be measured; the need for reliable resources ; the need to identify clear outcomes and the need for strong leadership from Defra and Natural England. Action areas include:

- training and guidance: improving skills of recreation providers, resulting in better delivery.
- Partnerships, forums and networks: sharing good practice on improving delivery.
- plans and strategies: increasing equality in accessibility to natural environment
- information and marketing: raising awareness and confidence
- research: to test different approaches
- funding
- service planning and performance measures to monitor progress
- championing governance and measures: creating a focus for action

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[21]   http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/pdf/access/dap-ofa.pdf.

- volunteering, employment and careers creating a more diverse volunteer base that will filter into the workforce.

Social justice plays a large part in government policy, including environmental policy. Evidence suggests that poverty and deprivation are closely linked to poor environmental conditions. Thus it may be said that addressing lack of access to green space and the countryside might address social and economic deprivation issues. 4 principles of social justice which are clearly intertwined with the objectives of this action plan are:

- Equal Citizenship: where people have an equal set of basic rights and the means to exercise them;
- A minimum of resources: meeting people's essential needs and enable them to live fully;
- Equality of opportunity: so that gender, race and disability do not interfere with people's ability to access what they need;
- Fair distribution: so that resources such as the quality of the local environment are not dependant on family income.

Race, Diversity and Environmental Issues

Other research looking at race and environmental issues has also highlighted key issues creating direct and indirect exclusion to environmental issues within organisations and campaigns in the UK and the US[22].
- Rapid diversification in terms of demographics can be ignored by local and national environmental organisations – leading to failure to take into account or to work with new diverse groups
- Environmental and conservation organisations not mainstreaming diversity or changing paradigm and practice in line with their changing client populations.
- Existing perception, especially, but not exclusively among low income groups and people of colour, that diversity is not a priority for environmental organisations, that the employees in such organisations are predominantly white and upper class people, and this defines both the organizational culture and the cultural approach of such organizations; and
- Existing perceptions by the environmental organisations, their members and employees, that diversity and race are not issues concerning their work and that Black, Asian or Ethnic minority organisations are not interested in environmental issues
- Lack for funding for Black, Asian, Ethnic and minority organisations to work on environmental issues.
- Some initiatives looking at race and environment are assumptive and prescriptive assuming that for Black, Asian, Ethnic and minority groups there is some kind of 'attunement' with the 'natural environment'. This masks the complex reality around environment, race, behavior and politics.

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[22]   A range of publications is available here: http://www.tufts.edu/~jagyem01/publish.html.

There are a number of national projects being run by and for the target groups in this project. Annex I provides an overview of some of the projects in England. The desk top overview of the projects illustrate that many target groups are working on issues around environment and sustainable development issues. The majority of the projects also include a social and economic perspective. A number of the projects whilst working on environmental or sustainable development issues do not describe their projects as such. This may suggest two things:

- the language of environmentalism and sustainable development is one which is seen as specialist or for 'green organisations' with which the group do not identify themselves with;
- the social and economic perspectives of the project are viewed as the major focus of the project.

Studies also suggest that some of the target groups such as Black, Asian, Ethnic, Minority or Refugee groups find or perceive it difficult to get grants from funders for environmental projects.

In many ways the projects break the myth that some of the target groups are not concerned with environmental issues or sustainable development. Rather they show that there is considerable interest in the quality of local environment and in global issues like climate change. In addition they focus on improving the quality of life for them and the wider community and neighbourhood in which they live. At the same time some projects are closely aligned with global environment issues and the social, economic and environmental impact on other countries.

3.   The Target groups (2): Issues arising from workshops, focus groups and interviews

Introduction

The purpose of the workshops, focus groups and interviews were two fold. The first was to gain perspectives from the target groups and policy makers concerns that may not appear in literature reviews. The second was to obtain issues that may be specific to the each target group.

The discussions were held in either workshops or focus groups. One to one interviews were also used to draw out views. All three methods were offered as a means of conducting qualitative research. The methods used with groups were decided according to the needs and requests of those groups These methods allowed participants to express, highlight and explore issues relevant to the targeted groups. The focus groups and workshops were used as a way to gain views from a larger number of people in a relevantly short period of times. Interviews were used where participants were not able to attend workshops or focus groups. The one to one interviews also allowed for further investigation of issues raised by individual participants.

Group Selection

Groups were identified by the partner organisations in the EAC diversity project. Each project partner had experience of working with the target groups and had strong target group networks. The groups and networks further assisted in identifying individuals and organisation and suggested places that would be suitable for each category.

The groups that took part in this work were as follows:

Young people below the age of 25
- Tallo Somalian women's youth group
- Young Parents, Abbeys Ward, Milton Keynes

Older people over the age of 65
- Anchor Trust, Fullwell Court, Milton Keynes
- Asian Elderly Luncheon Group

Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic Groups and Refugees
- Refugee Environment Action London

- Manchester Refugee Support Network (MRSN)

People with disabilities

- DITO - Disability Information Training Opportunity in Tower Hamlets
- Sensory Trust
- RADAR

3.1   Young People

Two workshops were run to inform this work. One was with the Tallo Somalian Women's Youth Group in Ealing, West London and the second was with a group of young parents in the Abbeys Ward in Milton Keynes.

Tallo Somalian Women's Youth Group

The group is based in South Acton in the London Borough of Ealing, which has a number of pockets of high to medium levels of income deprivation and high diversity.
The group is based in Action in the London Borough of Ealing. Ealing borough has had relative decline from the borough's national position in the 2004 indices, where the borough was ranked 94th of the 354 authorities. The extent of deprivation in the borough has grown, with a greater proportion of Ealing residents (22%) considered deprived according to the 2007 indices in than in the 2004 indices (18%). As in 2004, there were no areas in Ealing borough amongst the 5% most deprived nationally. More Ealing areas (14 SOAs) showed in the 10% most deprived nationally than before. These pockets of deprivation are spread across 9 of the borough's 23 wards. Ealing is the 22nd most income-deprived of the 354 local authorities across England. In real numbers, this means that more than 60,000 Ealing residents (over 1/5 of the population) are income-deprived.

All the young women involved were of Somalian descent, aged between 13 and 19 years and are part of a Somali youth club.

They were asked why they thought these issues were important and how they would communicate that message to their peers. After listening to a presentation on some on those issues Energy, Travel, Resources, Ethical shopping and Caring For Your Area the group expressed surprise at not having known or made the connection to between the points discussed. They showed great interest in the issues and declared that they were unaware of the issues presented. They also expressed interest in taking actions to tackle climate change and learning more about environmental justice.

They had never been involved in any scheme where they could receive detailed information about the issues covered in the Every Action Counts programme. These points were discussed further with a younger facilitator aged 14 from the Just Cities Youth Project, who invited the group to comment on each of the issues.

'I thought I really learnt a lot today because I've never had someone talk about it to me and I really enjoyed it. Hopefully I will follow what I learnt'. Dega Musa

Climate change and Energy

There was general agreement that despite knowing that this is an important issue, they do not usually get involved in discussions and see them as 'boring'. They do not normally get involved with energy bills or choice of light bulbs for instance in their households. As such they were often disengaged from issues around energy, cost and environmental impact.

Waste and recycling

The lack of involvement in energy saving was also reflected in the general consensus that they did not take action that leads to saving other resources. A couple of older girls however said that they did recycle at home. They were however very interested in getting more information about ways of becoming more resourceful and bringing the 3 Rs ('reduce, reuse, recycle') into their youth group.

Care for your area

The group view was that the way they were brought up was a big influence on the way they relate to their local environment. They felt families had a strong positive impact on the importance of 'caring for your area' by not throwing litter, putting up graffiti etc. They felt however, that this positive message was acted on more by girls and young women than boys and young men.

Shopping ethically

The group were keen on the idea of organic food. They wanted to shop ethically and buy organic foods but felt alienated because they felt the price was too high for them to afford it. They also seemed unsure on issues of locally sourced food that would allow for Somali as well as English food to be prepared. Some of the younger girls felt that locally sourced English food was important as they eat 'only English food'.

Transport

The group relied heavily on public transport and walking to get to where they need to go. They usually have no other choice. The group also discussed how they would communicate these messages to other young people. Thinking about this helped develop a clearer understanding of the environmental and sustainable development issues. The key points that came from this were:

- Caring for you area was something the group wanted to 'hear more about in the media', as they found it the most difficult issue to act on.
- They would like clearer information on Fair Trade and believed that although people need to change their behaviour, difficulties on shopping ethically often focused on around income or lack of decision power in their households.
- Organic food is seen as food for 'rich people'

- Young people could and would like to get more involved in recyclable bags and reduced packaging campaigns. Some stressed that we need to act now to make a difference and young people "are the only ones who can salve the world's resources'.
- Telling people that they can save money the message will be a good way to reach more people

The group felt that the best way to communicate these messages to young people was to involve them in campaigns starting with ' fun talks' to other groups of young people. In relation to saving energy those that chose to discuss this felt that out of the other five issues it was the 'easiest one to do' as it only required a simple change of behaviour that can be done on a daily basis. The group felt they and others could set an example by taking action and by talking to their families.

Overall the group said there is enough media exposure of those actions but young people would feel more part of the whole picture if they were invited to talk about those issues as they were doing on the day. They believed that young people will get involved if they are made 'to understand that the future is in their hands' and the 3 R's campaign should be also be made fun to reach more young people. The group strongly expressed interest in gaining further knowledge about the issues discussed and taking part in projects and campaigns as well as changing their individual behaviour.

Young Parents, Abbeys Ward, Milton Keynes

Milton Keynes ranks as the 78th most income-deprived local authority across England. Authority Districts (compared to 204th in 2004). In real numbers, this means that more than 29,000 Milton Keynes residents are income-deprived. Six LSOAs are within the most deprived 10% in England in terms of income. Overall there are 28 LSOAs within the most deprived 30%.

Milton Keynes is ranked 84th in terms of the number of people who are employment deprived. There are six LSOAs within the most deprived 10% and 22 areas within the least deprived 10% in England. Overall, there are 24 LSOAs within the most deprived 30%. The number of people claiming jobseekers allowance in Milton Keynes rose by 914 claimants to a rate of 3.6% between December 2008 and January 2009. (This includes 3,930 men and 1,457 women.) This compares to a rate of 2.0% in January 2008. The unemployment rate in Milton Keynes is higher than the UK average of 3.4% and the South East rate of 2.4%.[23]

More than 29,000 Milton Keynes residents are income-deprived. The Abbeys area of West Bletchley where the 10 young parents all live is a relatively deprived area. There is a relatively high level of social housing. Most of the participants were tenants, about a third where in temporary accommodation. The proportion of people on Housing /Council Tax Benefit is nearly twice the citywide proportion on such benefits.

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[23] http://www.mkiobservatory.org.uk/page.aspx?id=1618&siteID=1026.

Despite the good participation level in the workshop the area has a low take up of nursery places compared to the rest of the city council area. The area has a relatively high level of free school meals. All 10 sent their children to the Melrose Pre School and some helped to run it. The playgroup had 30 parents using it on a regular basis. The 30% participation rate was very good. Most of the participants were under 20 when they had their first child.

The aim of the workshop was to get young parents' views on green issues, how they affect peoples' lives and what it means to them.

Food

Food was seen as a priority issue for the group. Good and fresh food was seen as expensive. They all said that they encouraged their children to eat healthily but it was felt that they could not always afford to eat healthily with maybe two meals a week being 'unhealthy.' Promotions such as Jamie Oliver's 'Feed your family for a fiver' campaign were seen as useful. They also shop around the various supermarkets for special offers. Concerns were also expressed about the costs of school dinners for those parents without financial assistance.

Energy

Financial concerns were also central to the discussion on energy and rising fuel bills. Some parents save money by putting a jumper on and turning the heat down and switch it off once the children had gone to bed. Many trained their children to also save energy by switching lights and TVs off. This was a challenge for some and one parent described her house sometimes as looking like Blackpool Illuminations!

Some felt that a pre-pay fuel meter was cost effective. It is more expensive than paying by direct debit but means that they avoid bills that they cannot afford to pay. Many felt whilst energy use could be reduced paying for it was often a problem, and they had to juggle with other financial commitments. Some parents admitted that feeding their family was a priority over paying some bills and they sometimes waited until they were getting red bills before they paid them and on some occasions had had to negotiate with energy companies on payment plans.

Some participants noted that a positive side of this was that they would find other ways to enjoy time together as a family without spending a lot of money. Several of the families enjoyed playing together and that this was a good way to encourage their children to be active.

The group knew about the various ways of getting help to be energy efficient such Warm Front schemes. Those living in social housing had received a survey asking if there was anything the Council could do to help them keep their homes warmer. Those who been assisted with insulation had to find the money themselves first. The financial help tended to be linked to the family rather than their home. Participants raised a concern about the fairness of such schemes including the winter fuel payment.

Many expressed concern that even if their homes were insulated (and some weren't sure if they were) the lack of double glazing, ill fitting doors and windows etc. meant that their homes were draughty and had condensation and damp problems as a result. The general consensus was that their homes needed double-glazing as a matter of priority. One comment was that "Councils have too much money to spend in the wrong places" and tended to only do absolutely essential repairs.

They were aware that older people were given a Winter Fuel Payment which wasn't means tested. They questioned the extent to which it was fair to not provide assistance for winter fuel payments for people with young children. The general consensus was that they would appreciate help with their fuel bills. They recognised however the potential difficulty in decided which households with young children got help.

Transport

As with energy and food a major factor around transport was cost. All except one participant relied on public transport to get around even though they felt that the buses were expensive. Unreliability of the service caused problems getting their children to school on time. Also the buses didn't tend to provide direct routes and took a long time.

There were times when some of the parents felt that for the expense and time on some journeys, it was easier and cheaper to use the car. Others felt that driving gave them considerably more freedom and safety for them and their children was an important consideration. Those who had older children who could go out alone or with friends felt much easier about their safety if they were in a position to taxi them around and were prepared to do this so that they knew their older children were safe, weren't hanging out on street corners and getting into trouble. Only one parent had flown in the last year. It was felt generally that cheaper more reliable buses would make things easier for them.

Care for your area

The discussion moved on to the expense of childcare and the lack of free time they once had. Green spaces and parks were not seen as a key issue for play or leisure activity. Where open spaces were discussed they were discussed in terms of built up areas – and helping to take their children active and off the streets. The general consensus was that finding safe physical activities were easier for boys than for girls.

Some of parents had safe areas close to their homes where their children could play. Others felt safe play areas were lacking. Those receiving benefits were able to take advantage of a 'passport to leisure' scheme if they were and this meant they could take their children swimming. For those who were not these types of activities were expensive.

Waste and recycling

Some participants were concerned about the safety issues that recycling brought up. While many are recycling; they expressed problems with the storage and collection of rubbish with bags being left out for several days attracting rats and other health hazards. Some bags were not collected if they were deemed by the collectors to have not been done properly. This created a feeling that recycling could be complex if you did not know what went where. Space in flats was in some cases a major barrier to recycling and they suggested that block should have communal recycling bins.

Support and information

The group were asked to consider how the flow of information could be improved. Participants felt that places they went to for advice such as the council or CAB did not always have the information they need and were not easily accessible. Some were aware of organisations that could give advice but were not sure where to find them. The playgroup centre was recognised as a place where they could seek help. Those running the group said that they tended to find themselves in a position where they were offering help and advice on more than just childcare and with many other issues. But helpful information didn't tend to get fed through to the play school leaders.

Other issues

For the parents there were other priority issues such as child care support, work and benefits problems, and access to (and the cost of) training and discounted courses while they were on benefits. At the core of much of this were issues around poverty, and benefit payments that vary widely according to family circumstances.

3.2   Older People

Two discussions were run to inform this work. One was at Fullwell Court, a sheltered housing scheme in Milton Keynes; the second was with an Elderly Asian Luncheon Club in Islington in North London.

Fullwell Court

Most of the points here derive from a workshop held at Fullwell Court on sustainability issues with a group of 15 older people. Four participants came from the Anchor Trust scheme; the other 11 came from external housing. The workshop group were well informed and involved in a range of representational and campaigning roles. They ranged from mid 60s through to late 70s and their backgrounds ranged from running businesses to engineering and public services. The social and economic demographics of Milton Keynes can be found above in the section 3.1 with Young Parents from Milton Keynes.

The discussions covered broad but related areas: Energy, warmth and fuel costs, transport, recycling, housing and independence, pension and benefits.

Energy

A key shared concern of the group was rising energy bills. There were three different perspectives on this, subdividing the group into three important communities of interest:

- Those living in their own homes
- Those in private rented accommodation
- Those in social housing (notably sheltered accommodation).

Discussion centred on practical things to be done to keep warm and the effectiveness of initiatives available to older people to help them keep warm.

Home owner were concerned about the costs of insulation schemes: a private pension can take people out of the eligibility criteria for financial support, although there are allowances available which aren't means tested. It was generally agreed that the Warm Front grants were a good service, with adequate payback times for loans. People in Milton Keynes spoke highly of the service from Age Concern and the CAB, including advice on keeping warm and the various grant schemes. Funding for improvements is a step in the right direction but some felt that this did not go far enough. New boilers were not a real solution when homes are not double-glazed and draughty.

There were issues about the amount of form-filling needed to get additional financial assistance. It was stated that older people have a lot of pride, didn't want to be seen to be asking for help with their bills, and didn't like having to reveal their personal financial business. They thought it would be better to campaign for pensions to

be increased across the board

Energy companies were criticised. They were seen as largely unhelpful in assisting older people. Estimated bills tended to cause a problem as the estimation was generally higher than the actual usage and it could be difficult to get money back if an account was in credit.

For those in sheltered accommodation/ retirement homes the housing association arranged for the gas/electricity to be fixed on a three-year period which was ok if it was fixed at the low end.

The group discussed how they might manage to pay for rising fuel bills. The majority said they would consider switching off their heat and risk getting cold for fear of not being able to afford the bills. There was strong support for people remaining in their homes as long as possible. Such homes should be a priority for insulation and other energy saving measures.

The group were aware of the simple practical things that they could do to save energy, e.g. switching appliances off at the wall and using energy saving light bulbs. It was commented that we are behind Europe as a country on ways of saving energy in terms of the quality of build and insulation (including new builds) and slow to implement things like solar panels.

Those living in private rented accommodation found that it was difficult to get landlords to carry out repairs / improvements. The Care and Repair scheme run by Help the Aged was a good service but there can be waits of several weeks. Improving insulation and reducing fuel costs in both owner occupied housing and the private rented sector should be a priority. The Government reduction in Warm Front funding was seen as short sighted if heat loss was to be tackled

It was suggested that rather than paying winter fuel payments direct to older people it should be paid to energy providers to fix older people on a lower tariff and reduce their bills. This would avoid the money disappearing on other things.

Water bills also seem to be increasing with gas and electricity – switching to a meter was suggested as a good way to cut bills while a scheme called 'Solo' allows for older people living on their own to pay a lower rate.

Transport

There was a range of concerns about transport. Some was specifically about what they felt was the poor transport system in Milton Keynes but there were also more general issues. Again there were clear groupings: those who drove and those who did not.

Public transport was the major issue: many of the group relied on their cars but buses were often used to get to places and were the main form of transport for the group. Free bus travel for older people is very popular but not

all services are covered (e.g. Plus Buses). Local concerns included poor interconnection services, reliability and low quality bus stock.

Transport often provides the independence to get around. The group said they tended not to rely on their busy families. Where they could not use the bus, they would rely on taxis, but a voucher / card scheme for older people using taxies appeared to have a several problems.

More older people are driving. 1000 people over 100 are driving and this is likely to still grow with a quarter of everyone born today likely to live to be 100. Driving a car is independence and makes a huge difference to an older person's life. The feeling was that although this added to the carbon emissions problem that the independence obtained was of greater value

Some of the group used railways for longer distance journeys but this was seen as expensive. Coach services gives good discount to people over 60. Several had flown in the last couple of years, but some of the pensioners felt that they couldn't afford holidays on their budgets.

Recycling

All of those at the workshop recycled. One comment was it is the older generation and the people with children at school who recycle: "Older people are saving the planet" The group did not see recycling as either a problem or a big issue. It was the norm in Milton Keynes and had become a fact of life rather than a matter of debate. Those with gardens supported the recycling of green waste. Recycling is seen as a very low level and standard action that has become part of everyday life.

Some felt that the funding from waste recycling should be used to reward older people who recycle by funding services that address their needs e.g. energy saving, improved mobility. It was also felt that the Council and voluntary bodies should promote and reward recycling.

The recession and the loss of earnings on savings caused a heated discussion was had about whether pensioners can afford to live off the basic state pension, which according to government figures is below the line of poverty. There was a consensus, that pensioners could live off the state pension if they had to but could not afford a high standard of living, e.g. have holidays.

The workshop then discussed how the government could better help pensioners without patronising them and increasing administration costs. The group felt that reduced fuel bills should be a priority and that this coupled to fairer pensions would help address low incomes and help improve the quality of life. A number raised the issue of the need for a more redistributive tax system. This would mean taxing more the people who have the most money. There was a feeling that taxation since the late 1970s had become less fair and less onerous on the well off.

The workshop participants were all active people with strong views based on a life of experience, knowledge and commitment. They may not have been fully representative of all older people, yet their arguments were broadly supported within the group. Even amongst the former business people the feeling that older people had a poor deal was strong. They were strongly committed to environmental measures.

Elderly Asian Luncheon Club, London

The Elderly Asian Luncheon Club is run in North London, as part of The Factory Community Project in Islington. Islington is one of the most vibrant and diverse boroughs in London. It is the second smallest borough in the capital, covering an area of under six square miles but with more than 179,000 people living and working there. Although all wards in the most deprived 5% in the country, it is also home to some of the wealthiest people in London. As such deprivation and wealth sit side by side across much of the borough.

Significant deprivation occurs across the borough and there is an increasing concentration of the most disadvantaged households in social housing estates. It is a highly diverse and mobile population, which is very mobile, showing a 10% change in 2000/01. An analysis of output and super output areas (SOAs) shows a very high correlation between the occupants of social housing and the most disadvantaged residents of the borough".

The club is well established and many of its members had been in the UK for much of their lives and have some very clear concerns. Two or three of the participants were also already involved in other environmental projects. Over three quarters of the club were of Asian descent but the remainder were of European descent. The discussion started by focusing on what 'The Environment' meant to those taking part. The key issues that emerged were:

Roads and Transport

The group were concerned about the impact of roads and the use of cars on environment. They were felt that cars created a lot of pollution and that more road building encouraged more car use and greater pollution. The two or three participants involved in other environmental projects mentioned that a good future for them would be place with alternative transport or cars that did not create pollution.

Traffic was also seen as problem for the environment and people as it created noise and was unpleasant if you lived close to roads, but also caused health and safety problems. Some of the roads were very busy causing difficulties in getting across them.

All of the participants stated that they used public transport and non mentioned that they were car owners. They,

like the earlier, older peoples group said they were concerned about bus connections. They felt that connections via bus were at present difficult and did not always make sense, making it difficult, timely and expensive to get to certain places.

Local Surroundings

Many of the issues regarding traffic and safety were also related to the groups' thoughts that the environment should be about improving their 'local surroundings'. The discussion centred on the need to feel safe in their local neighbourhood and have more green spaces. Many of the group said they wanted more and better parks but also places in which they could grow food.

One of the participants mentioned a community garden she was part of which grew fruit and vegetables in the local area. Other participants commented on that there should be more green spaces or land given over to communities for gardening and allotment. They also felt that the ability to work grow your own food was not only economically beneficial but provided mental and physical health benefits as well as opportunities to strengthen communities.

Global Warming

Discussion around land and benefits expanded into a talking about climate change. All were aware of climate change and the impact it had on environment and populations in England and other countries. Whilst the participants felt that climate change was caused by human action there were a number of conflicts however on how climate change could be tackled.

Some of the group felt that climate change needed to be predominately tackled by reducing the population in order to reduce the strain on the world's natural resources. Others felt that the priority was about individual action. It was felt taking environmental action was about understanding that it was morally the right thing to do – and because people 'shouldn't abuse the abundance'.

Energy

Switching off lights and using less energy were understood as a way to help tackle climate change and protect the environment. However, a number of participants mentioned that some choices like cutting down on energy are made by default. For example, less energy was used because it was expensive. Many of the participants were concerned about the cost of fuel. It was felt that tackling costs of heating and fuel poverty were important. Half of the group felt that available grants were not enough and that more assistance was needed on how to claim for state support for fuel costs

Taking Environmental Action

The group felt that older people wanted to and took environmental action as much as they could: like recycling

or using the bus rather than a car. They felt that as older people they have experience of having less and making do and that they also

have knowledge of difficult times and of working without help, finances or assistance. An example given was the use of washing machines and disposal nappies that were not available to them when they had young children.

The group listed a number of actions they took and felt others could take which included: Avoid using cars, Cut back on waste, Plant their own food, Recycle, Avoid using too much water. One participant felt very strongly that cost was sometimes used as an excuse not to take action. She felt that although she was on a 'small' state pension – she felt that she had to make the 'right choices' even if it meant a little more money. Overall it was agreed that individuals need a stronger civic sense – this may come through faith and ethics. This then moved on to discussions of individual responsibility and of the need to 'Get together with government to improve the environment'.

Need for Government Action

This discussion developed into looking at how people get involved in environmental issues. There was a strong initial focus on the role and responsibility of government.

There was a strong feeling that government needs to take a lead on action to improve the environment (with the involvement of everyone else). The idea came through that governments need to be greener in want they do, but also that all government need to get together to work on the issues (it will be *'tragic if they don't')*. With that were calls for improved justice systems to support this.

Barriers to and support for environmental action: community and individual

Participants were then asked about the problems they faced that might stop them from getting involved. The group constantly mentioned the need for training and education to be provided to both older and young people so that they could take more informed action and improve their ability to get environmental jobs. Among the issues raised were:

- Lack of funding - groups need more funds to get involved;
- age as a barrier – lack of physical strength can make it difficult and other peoples' greed (especially the developed world) impacts on the rest.

When asked about what they felt environmental organisations could do the participants stated a number of issues including: work more with children; show more ways to help the environment and save money; provide workshops, education and training; raise awareness of actions to take; come to communities and not expect communities to come to them; and to work with and support community groups and organisations. A number of participants felt it was important that environmental organisations also focused on justice and fairness.

3.4 People with Disabilities

Work with people with disabilities was done in tow ways after it proved difficult to get the active engagement of RADAR, whose staff seemed to be very over stretched. A workshop was run with an active local network, DITO - Disability Information Training Opportunity in Tower Hamlets, and a range of interviews were done with RADAR and the Sensory trust.

DITO- Disability Information Training Opportunity in Tower Hamlets

Background

DITO offers training and support to people with a wide range of disabilities. The workshop took part at DITO's office in advance of their monthly Steering group meeting.

The overall average IMD score for Tower Hamlets is 44.64, making it the third most deprived local authority in England (out of 354) in terms of IMD score. It ranks among the top 50 on all six summary measures (average score, average rank, extent, local concentration, income scale and employment scale).

Tower Hamlets also has the third highest proportion of people living in the most deprived super output areas (SOAs) in the country. There are 130 SOAs in Tower Hamlets, and 72 (55.4%) of those are in the top 10% most deprived. The most deprived SOA in London is in Tower Hamlets, and ranks as the 221st most deprived in England. It is situated in the north part of Poplar, bordering the Limehouse Cut. Further, 22.6% are in the next 10% most deprived.

Tower Hamlets has the highest proportion of its children and older people in income deprivation of any local authority in England. According to the Local Index of Child Well-Being 2009, Tower Hamlets has the second lowest average score (ranked 353) on child well-being. In the IMD 2007, Tower Hamlets' rank of employment scale is 36.

Further, in 2006, there were 140,600 working-age people in Tower Hamlets. In 2006/07, of the economically active population (those aged 16 and over who are either in employment or unemployed), the unemployment rate was 13.4% for men and 14% for women. Tower Hamlets experiences unemployment rates that are not only amongst the highest in London, but across England and Wales.

Unemployment rates vary considerably across the different ethnic groups in Tower Hamlets. Although data is not routinely collected on ethnicity and unemployment, unemployment disproportionately affects those from non-white ethnic groups. According to the 2001 Census, Bangladeshis had the highest unemployment rates,

exceeding 40% in those aged under 25. Of the working age population, over a quarter of the population of Tower Hamlets still holds no formal qualifications. Tower Hamlets' rate of higher-level qualifications (NVQ4 and above) is falling compared to the rest of London and the country.

The borough now has third largest percentage of 20 – 34 year olds (37%) of all local authorities in the country and 59% of the population are aged 15-44 compared to 42% in the country as a whole. Although the proportion of over 65 years olds is increasing, this age group only accounts for 8% of the population compared to the rest of the country's 16%.

The most recent population estimates published by Office of National Statistic indicated that in terms of ethnicity over half of the borough's population (56%) are now from the non-white British ethnic groups and the largest ethnic group is the Bangladeshi community. About 7% of the borough's population is the Black African and Caribbean, of which a significant proportion is Somalian.

The workshop

Eight people attended (people with varying disabilities) and the meeting was positive, well-facilitated (by Michael Shamash, one of the group) and productive.

The meeting started with an introduction by CC to the purpose of the session and an overall discussion about the issues that concerned them. The initial concerns included waste, recycling and litter, and pollution (especially from traffic).

Waste

Initial discussion on waste focused on levels of litter in Tower Hamlets, the need for more recycling bins (alongside kerbside collections) to supplement litter bins. The need for continued education of young people on these issues was also stressed. There was a feeling that there had been more litter bins before the terrorist bombings and that provision should be increased.

Transport and mobility

Discussion moved on to traffic and roads. While there was recognition from some that air pollution has improved in recent years, others were still concerned and affected by this pollution. But the major concern was about high levels of traffic on local roads and the difficulty in crossing busy roads faced by those with limited mobility. The area around Mile End tube and the adjacent main road was highlighted. It was felt that crossing times are too short. Proposals from the GLA to reduce pedestrian crossing times are very strongly opposed by this group.

The biggest concern was the most local, and was about ramping of pavements. This is important for many people with disabilities and not simply those in wheelchairs. While there are many ramps there is not full coverage and many ramps are very steep. This continues to be an issue where action is needed.

This links to the overall state of the pavements. Their focus was Tower Hamlets but they said that these points are issues elsewhere as well. Irregular surfacing, ridges, cracked stones etc. can all affect mobility. While there was a general agreement that main streets are well managed many back streets are neglected. There was a feeling that the 'conspicuous' issues were tackled while others were left unattended for long periods.

There were also issues around parks and green spaces. Some didn't use these at all. Others, especially those with children saw them as important – 'lungs and safety valves'. The focus again was on maintenance, notably of pathways, where potholes are far more common than on pavements. The park by Bethnal green tube was singled out for criticism in this respect.

Other issues around parks included the way in which many toilets have been closed and the lack of drinking water.

Transport was the next focus. There were a lot concerns. Many travelled by bus and saw a range of problems:
- Some bus design (especially older ones) is a problem.
- Bus ramps are important: there is a problem that some of these are defective. These are often broken because the drivers lower the bus, extend the ramp to allow someone to board and then retract the ramp before raising the bus, causing the ramp to drag on the ground.
- It can be a problem to get the ramp lowered for people whose disabilities are not obvious. There should be a clear standard that the ramp should be lowered if requested by someone who may have a disability.
- The attitude of drivers (and their training) is very variable on different routes and across different companies. The overall standard should be increased.
- Doors are often shut too fast for people having trouble entering or leaving buses.

Other forms of transport also have problems. The DLR was seen as being the best and most accessible system. The Underground has the biggest problems.
- Even supposedly accessible sites may include some steps to access lifts or between lifts and platforms.
- New trains (Northern and Metropolitan) are higher than the platforms causing access difficulties.
- Lifts are often poorly signed and isolated. People are worried about being trapped alone in lifts where other people do not use them.
- Curving platforms (e.g. Bank) cause problems with gaps that limit access to the smaller carriage entrances at the ends of the carriages.
- The sheer level of overcrowding makes the Underground frightening to many vulnerable people.

There was extreme concern about the delay in improving accessibility. It was said that plans to make 1/3 of stations accessible by 2012 had been cut in recent months to ¼ and this was seen as a lack of concern about access from the Mayor.

Some stations – e.g. Stratford – show what can be done. This work needs to be prioritised, and the key focus for improvements above e.g. tannoy improvements which are no help to deaf people) should be increasing accessibility. This will also benefit older people and all those with mobility issues.

Energy

Discussion on energy issues focused rapidly on fuel poverty and the role of the utility companies. It was felt that there was poor quality information, even misinformation, for people on lower incomes. One group had been pushed to accept a pre-payment meter and told this would be cheaper (but had fortunately found out in time that this is not the case).

There is serious concern that people who are vulnerable (especially disabled people) are being pressured by door-to-door selling to sign up to tariffs that are not suitable. Companies are not helping people to find the most appropriate deals. Some companies (e.g. those with free-phone services) are better than others. There is often misinformation about the allowances for older people ('the people we speak to don't know the answers')

Improving energy efficiency is also an issue. Many people were in social / council housing. Having improvements made usually means having to wait until a whole block or set of properties is being improved; in some cases improvements are not done in ways that help cut energy bills even though there are ways this could be done. People at risk are often unaware of their rights in terms of adequate housing, repairs etc.

Double glazing sellers are one source of information but of course this is outside many people's finances and in social housing it's not their responsibility.

A linked issue about housing concerned gardens: people with visual disabilities would like to be able to sit out in their gardens but cannot manage them well. The idea of garden sharing was suggested but not popular. Simple better support for maintenance was the favoured option - 'we want to show that we can cope'.

Most people were aware of climate change but didn't see it as an issue for action. There was also a feeling that big problems like this need concerted government / council action. A similar issue came up around water: 'we're encouraged to turn taps off, but million of gallons are wasted in leaking pipes'.

Getting involved

The group was then asked about their involvement in environmental action. They talked about engagement on transport issues, through the 'Transport for All' programme – a GLA funded accessible transport organisation. DITO and some members had been involved in discussions.

There was concern about the variation of 'discretionary' services from borough to borough. One example is Taxicards. People with higher level mobility allowances get these cards which allow them to make a number of taxi rides each year, but the support varies (80 in one borough, 120 in another). Similarly Dial-a-ride criteria vary. The experience of using these services was also an issue: there were often long waits or booked taxis were cancelled at very late notice. It was felt that there should be one standard for the whole of London: the previous Mayor was committed to that but 'we believe that this is now not going to happen'.

The group also had some very local involvement through their gardening club, which looks after the flower beds around the building where DITO is based..

They were unaware of other options to get engaged. As one said "we've got no idea what is going on about this around here". They said that there never seemed to be anything in the local papers. Some would welcome an opportunity to get involved on conservation work ("Make it fun!") though projects would need to plan for the engagement of people with disabilities.

There was a feeling that for the environment to be tackled effectively "communities have to work together". This was seen as an issue where more social cohesion was needed.

In summary the key issues for a better environment were around transport and mobility, including better street and pavement quality (including repair of street lights – dark streets is a real problem). Councils (and RSLs) need to commit to good maintenance of the local environment. They need to be 'more upfront and active, and not just put it on leaflets'.

Councils and companies should also be obliged to make clear the level of service to which people are entitled, and to show how they are delivering on this.

DITO cannot often take the initiative but need and would like to be kept 'in the loop' so that if there are opportunities for involvement they can identify the ones that are appropriate.

The Sensory Trust

The Sensory Trust promotes and implements:

- an inclusive approach to design and management of outdoor space
- richer connections between people and place
- equality of access for all people, regardless of age, disability or background

The Trust advises on issues, influences policy, assists professional practice, showcases good practice, organises user-testing by disabled people, provides training and education and develops design and management projects.

They have worked hard to incorporate diversity into wider issues about space and place. This was certainly not 'mainstreamed' when they started and early work focused on basic access issues such as disabled toilets.

While things have clearly moved on they feel that disability issues and people with disabilities are still often invisible to environmental organisations. Many NGOs do not cater for people with disabilities nor do they understand the politics and policy issues around disability.

The Trust point out that this is not just about physical disabilities. There are also many problems around the failure to provide accessible information for people with learning disabilities.

The Trust has been running for twenty years and this is still a hard issue to work on. Many of the problems that led to the formation of the Trust are still same the same problems today. In terms of engagement with the environment, one of those major problems is the lack of work by many environmental NGOs to actively work to include disability groups / individuals

RADAR

RADAR is the UK's largest disability campaigning organisation, with a membership of over 900 disability organisations and individual campaigners. They provide a wide range of services for their members and others. Their vision is "a just and equal society whose strength is human difference".

The main interviewee was a policy worker relatively new to organisation. At one level a focus on environmental issues clearly fits in with their developing work on sustainable development. However that work is one of several

priorities: she would like to do more around environment and sustainability but has very limited time at present. This was one main reason why RADAR was unable to organise a larger workshop.

Along with the need concentrate on priorities there was some uncertainty how far RADAR had develop this work. A previous policy Director had started work on this issue but it was not clear how far that work had progressed.

While longer-term policy is needed there are a number of immediate concerns. The main issues are common to most work on disability.

Access to green spaces is a continuing problem. RADAR has a long history of promoting accessible holidays within the UK so is well informed on countryside issues. Their website promotes a guide to 'Accessible Scotland' with three levels of accessibility for tourist attractions (although this guide proved very difficult to find on the Scottish Tourism site to which RADAR was linked).

They feel that some environmental solutions are specifically not inclusive. The most obvious of these would be the way in which cycling and walking are the most promoted forms of sustainable transport.

Their underlying concern was shared by the other interviewees and is about the way in which disabled people are frequently invisible in terms of provision of facilities above the minimum and in discussions about planning and development.

Summary: Environmental priorities for people with disabilities (arising from discussion with DITO members)

The principal concerns are about transport and mobility. A major issue is high levels of traffic on local roads and the difficulty in crossing busy roads faced by those with limited mobility. Crossing times on major roads are too short. Proposals from the GLA to reduce pedestrian crossing times are very strongly opposed by this group.

The ramping of pavements is not always adequate - there is not full coverage and many ramps are very steep. This is important for many people with disabilities and not simply those in wheelchairs. The overall state of the pavements is often poor especially on back streets. Street light repairs are slow.

Bus travel has a range of problems. Bus ramps are sometimes defective and the attitude of drivers (and their training) varies on different routes and across different companies.

Other forms of transport also have problems. The DLR is seen as being the most accessible system and the Underground has the biggest problems. Some stations – e.g. Stratford – show what can be done. Even supposedly accessible sites may include some steps to access lifts or between lifts and platforms. Lifts are often

poorly signed and isolated. People are worried about being trapped alone in lifts where other people do not use them.

There is extreme concern about the delay in improving accessibility. It was said that plans to make 1/3 of stations accessible by 2012 had been cut in recent months to 1/4 and this is seen as a lack of concern about access from the Mayor.

There is poor quality information, even misinformation, for people on lower incomes on energy issues. There are serious concerns that people who are vulnerable are pressured by door-to-door selling to sign up to tariffs that are not suitable. Improving energy efficiency needs to be prioritised in social / council housing. In some cases improvements are not done in ways that help cut energy bills even though there are ways this could be achieved. People at risk are often unaware of their rights in terms of adequate housing, repairs etc.

The group has some involvement in environmental action such as through the 'Transport for All' programme – a GLA funded accessible transport organisation. There was concern about the variation of 'discretionary' transport services (Dial-a-ride, taxicards) from borough to borough. It was felt that there should be one standard for the whole of London.
The group were unaware of ways to get engaged in environmental action. Some would welcome an opportunity to get involved on conservation work ("Make it fun!") though projects would need to plan for the engagement of people with disabilities.

There was a feeling that for the environment to be tackled effectively "communities have to work together". This was seen as an issue where more social cohesion was needed. DITO cannot often take the initiative but need and would like to be kept 'in the loop' so that if there are opportunities for involvement they can identify the ones that are appropriate.

3.5   Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee communities.

Two groups were targeted for this work. One was REAL (Refugee Environment Action London), focusing on young people; the other was Manchester Refugee Support Network, who worked with other organisations through the Federation for Community Development and Learning (FCDL).

REAL (Refugee Environment Action London)

REAL is at an early stage in development, but the potential creation of an environmental network based in and drawing active support from refugee and asylum seeker communities means that this was a unique opportunity

to explore the support that could be given by outside agencies. The group's co-founder continues to work closely with Evelyn Oldfield Unit an established charity working with refugee and asylum seekers.

REAL is a pan London organisation with community members living in London and Greater London.

Two workshop / discussions were held with the 'Leaders' of this group at Refugee Youth. The workshops were facilitated by a founding member of the group. These took a rather different path to the other discussions. The group were keen to work on environmental issues: for them the discussion to be had focused on how this could be done and how they could involve their targets – people from refugee and asylum communities.

The focus group discussed environmental issues with the aim of developing its future programme of work and action plan. As such the focus of discussion was not on specific environmental issues like energy, transport or pollution but rather as how to use environmental issues as a conduit for improving increasing confidence and developing skills.

Engagement

Environment was seen as an issue that could potentially engage and maintain the interests and involvement REAL members an their client groups. There has been a number of small discussions and ideas around facilitating and developing REAL into an environmental group specifically aimed at working with asylum seekers.

However it was recognised that there would sensitivity would be required to meet the needs of people who may already face a process that can be an extremely harrowing and very time consuming when they arrive in the U.K.

Access to Information

The facilitator noted that when talking to youth group members of REAL that whilst there was some interest in environmental issues the biggest request was for more information. The group asked for information that would be accessible to them that would allow them to learn more. They felt unable to make any further decisions on what kind of work the group should do without further advice, information and assistance.

Much of the information that was available was not seen as accessible to a very specific circumstances of refugees, neither were they seen as accessible to young refugees who like other young people may prefer information through 'new media' of social networking, text messages, television, music, the arts and the internet.

New Skills and Jobs

The facilitator raised the issue of the potential to assist its members enter the 'green jobs' market. This was discussed as environmental concerns bringing real individual and collective economic benefits to REAL members. A number of the participants he spoke to could see the connection between job creation and

developing skills to work in a green industry. The participants felt that more information was needed in order to see concrete examples of green jobs and training.

Funding, resources and staffing

The participants of the workshop identified a number of factors that they felt were important to supporting their work. One solution was seen as the need to identify translators and leaders, from within the focus group, who would work with REAL to help create marketing material. They also felt that there is a major challenge to overcome in presenting action plans and producing outcomes that will enhance and benefit the work of the intended diverse clientele.

Other issues that will probably need to be addressed were seen as core support for ongoing problems of under staffing and minimal resources that are commonly found in voluntary sector groups. This was seen as part of the challenge of coping with the growing needs of their client group. It was noted that without gaining funding, resources and staffing for the core of the project it was very difficult to set up or focus on alternative, meaningful and self-sustaining projects.

Manchester Refugee Support Network

MRSN is a Manchester network working with a number of refugee groups. Their work for this project took the form of a two-day workshop in Bristol, which was part of an exchange programme looking at food, health and environment.

Manchester's population is 452,000 and the city as a whole ranks 37 on the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007. Manchester's inner city district is a multicultural centre with a significant ethnic minority comprising 12.6% of the district population. The largest group is Pakistani (5.9). Sizeable Pakistani populations are also to be found in the neighbouring districts of Oldham (4.1%) and Rochdale (5.5%). A large Indian population (5.2%) lives in neighbouring Bolton. One in eight of all Pakistanis and one in twelve of all Bangladeshi in Great Britain are Greater Manchester residents.

In Manchester 5.0% of its active population are unemployed. 4% of the population hold qualification at degree level or equivalent. 34.0% of the population have no qualification.
Manchester general health is considered 'not good' for 12.5% of the population, with 21.5% suffering from a limiting long-term illness.

Easton, the area visited in Bristol, is one of the most deprived areas in the south west of England. It is a inner city area bounded by the eastern edge of Bristol city centre and the M32 motorway. 20% of the resident population aged 16 or over is on income support. The most deprived area in Easton is St Marks Road, which is ranked within

the most deprived 10% nationally Super Output Areas in addition to the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation. 4 out of 7 SOA's in Easton are in the worst 10% nationally in terms of crime. The majority of the population (66%) live in houses of private tenure.

The level of teenage pregnancy is considered high if compared with other wards in Bristol. The area has an average number of people living with limiting illnesses. The great majority of the population cite their religion as Christian or non religious: Easton presents a mainly white, adult demography, with 75.1% of white people and 24.9% of BAME persons.

This workshop was organised with the Federation for Community Development Learning. Participants also included people from the Brighton refugee groups (who came to Bristol for this event), the Hartcliffe Health and Environment Action Group from South Bristol, and Transition Easton in Bristol (who wanted to explore approaches to engaging marginalised and excluded communities in environmental projects).

The MRSN approach is to run events which give participants time to tell their stories and take part in visits where they can learn from community groups already taking part in actions linking environmental actions and community needs. Issues such as poverty, the need for jobs, activities for different generations and opportunities to learn both informally and formally were identified by participants.

A focus on food

The first stage of the visit was to the Midnimo Centre in Bristol. The centre's main focus is on the young Somali community in the St Pauls area but is used by a variety of organisations. Visitors from both MRSN and Brighton were inspired by the fact that the centre had been set up by young people from refugee communities. Such a project was seen as a good way of encouraging community members to believe that it is possible to set up and maintain projects linking environment, food and health. The Midnimo centre building was seen as a good prototype for providing a friendly and accessible place for local people to enjoy education, sport, music and arts and learn about issues like local food and the environment.

The workshop began over a joint lunch. A number of issues were discussed starting with leadership and community examples. The vegetarian lunch was provided by a food co-op linked to the centre. The menu and the mixed feelings about it began a discussion on food, cultural experiences and the connection between food and health. The group discussed two specific food projects: the Tuesday organic food day (local firms donate organic produce to be sold at costs to local people) and the Sunday community vegetarian meal.

Future plans for Midnimo include cooking and food sharing workshops as part of the food programme. Existing links to local farms provide both fresh supplies and mutually beneficial business ties. As part of various programmes the centre also organise educational visits to these farms.

They were interested in developing the community allotment, food coop and café projects learning programmes to help keep the group to develop the projects successfully.

The wider focus of this discussion was about bringing together different people from all walks of life, and communities could break down social and cultural barriers through socialising in a safe environment.

"*One of the key things about Midnimo is that we use art as one the key processes of getting people together at the Centre***"**

Wellbeing, Health and Community Cohesion

Workshop discussions on food raised links to information sharing and the links between food and wellbeing. This linked to the work done by the Hartcliffe Health and Environment Action Group. The Hartcliffe project has built useful links with public bodies such as the Primary Care Trust, (PCT). Working links to the PCT is one of the ways they access current information about health and well being. PCT workers have contributed to some of the sessions of food preparation, growing vegetables and affordable menu planning.

Participants from both Bristol and Brighton thought building links with their own local PCT's would be a good thing to do if it brought in free information about food, health and environment. One point of concern was that the information wouldn't be accessible if PCT workers didn't speak in any of the languages of community or group members.
This raised the issue of the need train refugee 'champions' who could then offer support in the appropriate languages in the places that feel safe and open to refugee community members.

Participants from MRSN thought this was a good way to make sure that the projects they are developing are supported by public sector bodies and partners from larger voluntary organisations. Those from Brighton thought that sessions on health would be a good way to explore the level of experience, understanding and interest in further development around environmental projects with their group members.

Skills, Mentoring and Participation

Some of the questions focused on 'how do people get the confidence, skills and knowledge to know how to take part in different parts of the project that include the need to take part in decision making and planning?'. Hartcliffe provides different means of supporting people. One to one support and training is offered for those new to decision making and planning. Mentoring happens informally and helps people with past management committee experience to help those new to such roles.

Those new to decision making and planning often ask questions that highlight things experienced people don't see or overlook. This is similar to the experience of questions being developed and used by those visiting from MRSN and Brighton. The questions asked can often highlight themes about including refugees which existing groups may not be aware of.

One of the overall aims of the project is to improve the lives of local people by getting local people involved in deciding what kinds of projects and resources are needed for health and environmental projects.

Projects and enterprise

The third project visit in Bristol was to the Eastside Roots community allotment -
the place where participants got a chance to 'get their hands dirty' and discuss issues such as composting and recycling.

One of the main values of this visit was to get to hear about how the project build a natural the link between a community allotment and a food coop, where affordable healthy food and cooking sessions are available. Each part of the project offers different kinds of opportunities for people to build skills, socialise and get ideas that are transferable both in the home and within community groups.

Inclusion and Next Steps

The exchange visits produced a range of good ideas about the specific challenges facing marginalised and excluded groups and ways forward.

An ongoing challenge was to be mindful to explore approaches that continually asked "who isn't included at the moment and what would we need to do to include those who we want to attract? " Ideas were developed by MRSN members taking part in the two day workshops were to develop three separate but linked projects; a community held and managed allotment; a Community Café and a Community Cooperative. Members wanted to be able to continue to develop plans which start from where they are and relate to issues that would encourage participants and the wider communities they are part of to get involved, plan change and keep such projects going.

Some key points included:

- Two way communication and active listening and question building was an essential part of the process. Although the visits were only really able to engage in the first stage of such processes they were seen as useful by participants in building their confidence.
- Development work and ongoing support was seen as an essential part of any programme that was going to

be able to be set up and sustained in a way that it feels owned by the community. Giving people a chance to think about what they already know, what affects their views about environment, health and wellbeing is important but hard to get due to the limited amount of generic community development workers.

- Building partnerships with existing organisations and public services can be an important way to support the ongoing and mutual sharing of good practice.
- Building working and mutually beneficial links with national voluntary organisations around good practice and emerging needs can inform the learning and development of a wider range of groups and organisation. Links with networks s such as the Federation of City Farms & Community Gardens (FCFCG) was seen as helpful. Everyone who took part in the exchange was given a FCFCG leaflet along with other ideas for linking in with existing community led environmental projects.
- Funding needs to be released for trying new ways of doing things and developing new skills. Innovative way of supporting community groups to share resources and continue developing capacity was also seen as key.

It is important that when new approaches to inclusion are identified they are disseminated and used to inform the practice of mainstream programme development and planning. Part of such partnership work needs to involve community groups being listened to by mainstream decision makers who can complement the work of community and voluntary organisations.

4. Supporting diverse communities – the role and perspective of national organisations

This project was based on the work done by the various partner organisations

- Capacity Global
- Education Centres Association (ECA),
- Federation for Community Learning (FCDL),
- Tenant Advisory Participation Service (TPAS), and the
- Just Cities Youth Group (Annex IV)

Two national voluntary organisations with a specific issue focus also took part:

- RADAR
- Help the Aged.

In the event there proved to be varying degrees of involvement, and discussions during the evaluation revealed a range of issues that influenced the extent to and ways in which they engaged in this work.

There appeared to be four important variables that affect successful engagement:

1. The degree to which this work on environmental issues was linked to their core mission

All the organisations had different takes on these issues:

- Capacity Global focuses on ethnicity, diversity and inclusion in environmental participation and policy;
- ECA have taken on sustainability enthusiastically during their involvement with EAC;
- TPAS have a strong focus due to their work within the built environment but work primarily around participation;
- FCDL have led the work on training community workers for EAC but have many other issues to deal with;
- Just Cities is focused very much around certain environmental issues;
- RADAR and Help The Aged both have environmental angles to their work but these are quite specific (e.g. fuel poverty, access).

2.   The extent to which the funding added value to their work

This appeared to be a factor in some cases: smaller organisations that valued the extra funding made sure they did the work as far as they could. For larger organisations this work was in some cases less of a priority, and the funding was not a significant incentive.

3.   The range of other pressures

Some groups faced this more than others. Some had funding issues; one was, at the time this work was being done, deep in negotiations over a merger with another large organisation.

4.   The extent to which their constituency see 'the environment' as an issue

It seemed that there were some cases where there was only limited interest in this issue and that organisations had to work hard to recruit (in some cases with little success).

All these issues will inter-relate and can be mapped against each other. If a group is committed then evidence suggests that a lack of resources will not put them off engagement, and a small grant may yield big results. But if external pressures are high then even some enthusiasm and funding will not be enough to deliver meaningful change.

There are lessons here for work on Diversity and Environment linkages, and some of the limitations can also be seen in the ways and extents to which different national organisations what joined EAC worked to get their members actively involved in this agenda. Some of the most relevant issues are:

- Smaller organisations may be enthusiastic, often due to one keen person. They may do more with funding, but may well need more ongoing support to ensure that their work has lasting value.

- Those working on environment / SD may be clear on the linkages between the work of social third sector bodies and SD. Those links may be much less obvious to the socially-focused organisations: (they rightly believe that they understand their issues in relation to their overall mission) and may not be enthusiastic if they perceive others are trying to tell them their jobs.

- Money for one-off projects such as events may in some cases be a distraction. If there is not enough money to employ someone to run an event, then this will fall to someone who is in all probability already fully employed or even over–stretched.

- Most organisations working on diversity issues have tight and limited budgets. Those budgets are often grants or for specific service delivery: in both cases it is not likely that they will consider reallocating money or staff to work that is not what they are paid for.

- Individuals within organisations focused on diversity may well have an interest in the environment. They may not necessarily expect 'their' organisation – which they work with on their key 'diversity' issue – to promote engagement on the environment and this needs careful planning. It also needs to reflect the extent to which they may (as a result of previous experiences and historical attitudes) feel that the environment is not an issue that they are likely to be active on.

These issues suggest that there are a number of areas where more action is needed:

- Socially-focused voluntary organisations need to be supported to develop their own ideas on how their mission links to the environment if they are to make this part of their core business. Working to get them to engage with what may be perceived as an 'external' agenda may yield some short-term interest but is unlikely to deliver lasting change.

- Examples of good emerging practice from within a certain sector are helpful, but others will often first want to know where the resources came from for the work and how they can get the same resources.

- Some degree of leadership and even direction may well be important. Groups working on diversity have seen the impact of government requirements for equality impact assessment etc. If sustainability and climate change is to become part of a core mission then it needs to be addressed at this level.

- Getting sustainable development embedded as part of the mission of any organisation will not result from one-off events, or unsupported policies and action plans. There are fundamental governance issues to be addressed. Many organisations facing diversity may have senior staff and trustees who will need to be supported and enabled to accept and embrace this new perspective. This will require long-term work and will need to be incorporated in the same way that any other capacity-building work would be.

- Much environmental work is still on individual and collective behaviour change. Many diversity-focused organisations have identified examples of where work to promote behaviour change has clearly not been targeted at their communities. If such work is to help tackle issues of under-representation, then the expertise of these organisations needs to be mobilised to deliver messages in appropriate ways to encourage engagement as a first step.

Every organisation needs support to change. That support will probably involve funding that can be allocated to this work but might also involve ongoing support and advice. Mentoring from other voluntary organisations could be a way forward on this and could enable environmental organisations to learn more about diversity issues.

5.   Conclusions and Implications

The need for change

Socially and economically focused environmental action

The project found that there was no evidence to suggest that people from the target groups are any less interested in sustainable development and environmental issues than mainstream groups. All the target groups had participants that took environmental action via recycling, reducing waste, using less energy or buying green products.

The focus groups and interviews suggested that the entry points for many of the groups were through social and economic concerns around fairness. Whilst each target group illustrated different focus points all the groups were concerned about the environment. They also expressed concerns about the lack of fairness. An example is the perceived inability to make 'green' choices because of cost rather than the lack of desire to take environmental action. A driver for action that closely relates to fairness is the desire for everyone to have a clean and healthy environment – locally and globally.

'Big' issues such as climate change and sustainable travel seem to be no more effective as drivers for action than work to improve the built and natural environment of the neighbourhoods where the target groups live.

These findings highlight that environmental action and policies, both globally and locally, need to have a strong social and economic focus.

Politics and the language of environment

The factors that affect the engagement of these groups in environmental action seemed to be based not on their views of traditional 'environmental conservation', but on access to information, limited choices and the physical environment.

Few of the focus group participants described themselves as environmentalists and they did not use the language of sustainable development or environmentalism.

Despite this the focus groups of young people illustrated a sense of frustration of how environmental issues had excluded the social connections. They were keen to have more information about the link between the two that was aimed at young people like them. Similarly the people from the disability focus groups were concerned

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about the lack of information that was accessible to a pan disability audience.

In many ways the politics of environment and sustainable development needs to appeal outside of the traditional environmental sector. The language needs to focus on how the environment and access to environmental information can enrich people's lives, especially in an urban context. This would support the suggestion from some political commentators that the popularisation of environmental issues involves 'ungreening' the 'environment'. Building the support of a diverse non-traditional audience requires the socialisation of green issues. In other words it needs to hear and include social concerns around inclusion, equality and access. This has proved to be successful in countries like the US, South Africa and India which have had a powerful political grassroots made of non traditional environmentalists.

Lack of visibility

All the target groups – for disability, age and ethnicity - expressed indirectly or directly that concerns specific to them are not tackled by environmental policy or projects by non-governmental organisations or government.

There remains low engagement and low visibility of these groups within environmental action even though evidence suggests that people from those target groups are more likely to pay the price for unsustainable behaviour. Research illustrates that it is the poor who are more likely to suffer the effects of pollution and that large percentages from the poor are more likely to be disabled, children, older people, and or Black, Asian or from an 'ethnic minority'.

It is striking that whilst there have been initiatives in the environmental sector to encourage diversity within their organisations and membership the evidence strongly suggests that this has been piecemeal and has made little difference if any to the people from the target groups this project worked with.

It is disappointing that while it is twenty years since the first reports were published on diversity and the environment in the UK, the need to understand diversity and hear the voices of diverse audiences still seems woefully low on the agenda. Many diversity-focused organisations have identified examples of where work to promote environmental behaviour change has clearly not been targeted at their communities.

The lack of visibility means that environmental issues and solutions are being defined and established in ways that exclude significant percentages of many communities. This is likely to mean the lack of ownership of these issues and policies that are not sensitive to negative impacts on specific groups. The integration of a diversity focus as a priority would thus develop interest and engagement with sustainable development and environmental issues.

Leadership and partnership support is needed

Getting diversity and or sustainable development embedded as a core part of the work of any organisation requires sustained funding and support. It is unlikely to happen with one-off events, or unsupported policies and action, yet these measures seem to be predominately how these issues have been tackled so far.

There is a need for a stronger degree of leadership within and outside of the Third Sector. This is not just an issue to be tackled through local action and pilot projects. It needs to be dealt with at the core level of equality legislation, sector compacts, ministerial task forces and parliamentary committees.

Both social and environmental organisations need support to change from the present status quo which lacks leadership and effective cross sector partnerships. This will require not only political will, but long term funding, advice and support. The Third Sector can also initiate and maintain partnerships for example, through mentoring between environmental, social and diversity organisations.

Given the need for development across the sector it may also be appropriate to develop one-to-one relationships between specific environmental and social justice groups to allow for 'buddying', joint project development and mutual learning.

Next Steps

The EAC diversity project has looked at the concerns of the four specific groups. Many of their concerns were similar – the cost of environmental choices, the need to take environmental action, the use of sustainable transport and the need for everyone to have access to a clean and healthy environment.

There was a different emphasis on theses issues within each target group, notably around physical access, moral imperatives to protect the environment, more appropriate and accessible information, fuel poverty and better access to public transport.

Each target group is not homogeneous and is diverse within itself. The project did not seek to examine attitudes and research around this potentially complex segmentation; but as other reports have suggested, further research on this would provide additional baseline information for understanding environmental behaviour change and developing effective environmental policy.

It is also the case that people within each of these groups are found within every place-based community. Any strategy for community engagement needs to set out clearly how these groups will be included with such work, and the extra work needed to do this should be funded and resourced from the start.

The findings and conclusions of this report suggest some key recommendations and messages for environmental organisations, social and diversity organisations; government (local and central), funders and policy makers.

Key Recommendations

On the basis of what we have learnt from this work there are a number of ways in which specific actions can lead to long-term change:

- **Environmental Organisations**

All organisations should have a diversity policy and develop programmes to work with (and learn with) diverse groups to create joint agendas for action.

- **Social & Diversity Organisations**

These organisations should develop environmental policies and practice. They should develop work with environmental organisations to develop appropriate partnership working and a joint agenda for action to tackle these issues of exclusion.

- **Central Government**

There is a need for more research on environmental issues and behaviour changes as they relate to ethnicity, age and disability.

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

- **Local Government**

Local councils should consider how national indicators on environment and diversity link and are included in impact assessments.

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

- **Funders**

Funders should ensure 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 for environmental projects should include assessment of the involvement of, management by,

impacts on and benefits to BAMER organisations, older, young and disabled people.

Funding criteria should encourage diversity and social inclusion organisations to develop environmental policies.

- Policy Makers

There should be a clear assessment of new environmental policies to review their potential impacts and benefits on BAMER organisations, older, young and disabled people.

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