



# Environments for All Conference

## 25<sup>th</sup> March 2004

### Contents for Workshop Sessions:

	Page Number:
• Speaker Biographies.....	2
Workshop Speakers.....	2
• Organisational Change Workshop.....	6
• Youth and the Environment Workshop.....	12
• Marginalised Communities Workshop.....	21
• Health and the Environment Workshop.....	26
• Faith and Communities Workshop.....	33
• Summary of Key Action Points from the Workshop Sessions.....	45
• Roundup of Key Ideas of the Day.....	47
• Delegate List.....	48

# Speaker Biographies



## Workshop Speakers

### **Health & the Environment Workshop Speakers**

#### Dr. William Bird – Green Gym pioneer

Dr Bird is a GP who worked with BTCV to develop the Green Gym concept. The initial trial took place at William's South Oxfordshire Practice. He is the prime mover behind the successful 'Health Walks' concept. He is currently working at the Met Office involved in researching links between weather and health and with The British Heart Foundation in promoting exercise in general practice.

#### Sally Huband – Chief Officer, Age Concern, Dudley

Age Concern is the UK's largest organisation working with and for older people. It provides vital local services as well as influencing public opinion and government. It enables thousands of older people to make more of life.

#### Jane Stoneham – Director of the Sensory Trust

The Sensory Trust promotes and implements inclusive environmental design and management to ensure that opportunities for environmental education, access and participation are available to everyone, regardless of disability, age or background. The Trust advises on issues, influences policy, assists professional practice, showcases good practice, organises user-testing by disabled people, provides training/ education and develops design and management projects.

#### Den Phillips – Rethink

Rethink is the largest severe mental illness charity in the UK. As of 2nd July 2002 'Rethink' is the new operating name for 'The National Schizophrenia Fellowship'. It is dedicated to improving the lives of everyone affected by severe mental illness, whether they have a condition themselves, care for others who do, or are professionals or volunteers working in the mental health field.

#### Toby James & Glenn Baverstock – Green Gym volunteer leaders, BTCV Cymru

### **Faith & the Environment Workshop Speakers**

#### Dave Bookless – A Rocha UK

A ROCHA UK - part of A ROCHA International - is about caring for creation and transforming communities through practical, local conservation projects. The main project focus is A Rocha Living Waterways, creating a "greener, cleaner Southall and Hayes" in multi-racial West London. It is Christian based, working with individuals and organisations with many beliefs and backgrounds.



## **Marginalised Communities Workshop Speakers**

### Alun Burge – Communities Directorate, Welsh Assembly

Alun Burge works in the Community Directorate of the Welsh Assembly government where he is responsible for the Communities First Programme and other anti-poverty initiatives. He has previously worked in the voluntary sector, including 15 years in international NGOs, mainly in Latin America.

### Sue Anderson – Community Liaison Officer, National Forest

The National Forest is a forest in the making: a place of 200 square miles spanning three counties in the English Midlands. The public can witness and enjoy its physical creation and be involved in its development as part of the nation's future heritage.

### Dolores Ferran – NI Housing Executive

As Northern Ireland's comprehensive regional housing authority, NI Housing Executive, provides housing and energy advice.

### Richard Payne – Youth Co-ordinator, Scottish Refugee Council

The Scottish Refugee Council was founded in 1985 to provide advice and assistance to individuals who are forced to leave their own country and seek protection in Scotland. It is the only independent professional agency in Scotland dedicated to refugee and asylum issues. It is based in Glasgow and Edinburgh and has a Scottish-wide remit. It closely works with other refugee organisations and non-governmental bodies across Britain.

### Stephanie Wong & Florence Dioka, Development Officers, Meridian

Meridian is a resource centre for black and minority ethnic women in the heart of Glasgow. The centre provides advice, information and counselling to help women gain greater quality of life. It offers a wide variety of projects to identify and meet the women's needs from computing to leisure classes. Meridian has worked with BTCV on a number of projects promoting environmental awareness and inter-communal understanding.

## **Organisational Change Workshop Speakers**

### Dave Wilson – Manager of Employment Philosophy BT

From pioneering work in optical technologies, digital switching through to work in advanced software techniques and protocols, BT has long been recognised as an industry leader in technical innovation in the communication world. For BT, the willingness to embrace new relationships, both technical and commercial, is key to maintaining its influence on the development of the communication industry.

### Jott Juri-Ott Salm – Nature Tours, Estonian Fund for Nature

The Estonian Fund for Nature (ELF) is an environmental NGO founded in 1991 by concerned naturalists who recognised the potential threats to Estonia's nature during a transition period from centralised system to a market economy and democratic society. Its mission is to protect Estonia's rich biodiversity through the development,

funding and implementation of nature conservation projects, to offer expertise in the formation of public policy - encouraging the sustainable use of natural resources and to work towards increased public environmental awareness through education.



Valerie Earl – Regional Director, CEMVO West Midlands

Valerie has worked for many years in the voluntary sector, in roles which focused upon community and organisational development. Before moving to CEMVO, she spent fourteen years delivering management consultancy services to citizens advice bureaux across the West and East Midlands, as a Regional Development Officer employed by the national Citizens Advice organisation. As a Regional Director in CEMVO she is now involved in the provision of both general development support and capacity building services to the Black and Ethnic Minority voluntary sector in the West Midlands. Aside from initial studies at University - she gained a law degree (LLB, Hons) - she now holds a post-graduate Professional Certificate in Management from the Open University and is in the process of undertaking the full MBA course.

Naila Akram, Police Leadership & Powers Unit, Home Office

A former BTCV volunteer and Environments for All staff member, Naila can comment from the inside on what it feels like to be involved in an organisation that is striving for change, the challenges of avoiding tokenism and the importance of backing up good intentions with adequate resources.

## **Youth and the Environment Workshop Speakers**

Dr Maria Balshaw – Director Creative Partnerships Birmingham

Creative Partnerships Birmingham is a creative education programme funded through Arts Council England by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and Department of Education and Skills. Creative Partnerships works to give school children in areas throughout England the opportunity to develop their potential, their ambition and creativity through sustainable partnerships with creative and cultural organisations, businesses and individuals. Maria Balshaw worked previously at the University of Birmingham and has published widely on literature, urban culture and multimedia urban studies.

Shaun Newman – Connexions Devon & Cornwall

Connexions is the Government's new advice and guidance service for 13-19 year olds. It works to improve and enhance a range of services, including modernising the way that young people get careers advice. Young people will be able to get the help and support they need to reach their full potential and make an effective transition to work and adult life.

Grigore Opritoiu – Community Outreach & Eco tourism Officer, Retezat National Park Administration, Romania

The Retezat National Park covers about 38 thousand ha in the Southern range of the Carpathians. This mountain range has been declared one of the Global 200 Eco regions. As one of the first park management systems in Romania currently being developed, the main management objectives of the park are biodiversity conservation

and public awareness raising and education. RNP Administration was established in 1999 as a subunit of the National Forest Administration, which administrates national forests in Romania.



Neville Lilley, Youth Organic Environment Project

The Youth Organic Environment (YOE) project helps children by teaching them the benefits of a healthy diet and bio-diversity. This Saturday, 100 children will take part in the second year launch at Uplands Allotment in Handsworth. The focus of the children's garden there is on developing young children into future gardeners and, more importantly, future stewards of our natural resources and community.

Andrew Watson – Stonebridge Housing Action Trust

Stonebridge Housing Action Trust is a leading urban regeneration agency, based in north west London. Set up in 1994, their aim is to transform the 1,775 home Stonebridge Estate by providing innovative solutions to the problems of social and economic deprivation faced by residents.

# Organisational Change Workshop



## **Speakers:**

*Facilitated by Richard Williams, Funding and Development Director for BTCV and Ron Fern Director for England, BTCV*

*Dave Wilson  
Manager of Employment Philosophy BT*

*Jott Juri-Ott Salm  
Estonia Fund for Nature*

*Valerie Earl  
Council for Ethnic Minority Organisations*

*Naila Akram  
Police Leadership & Powers Unit, Home Office*

## **Main points from the Speakers:**

*Where the speaker made a formal presentation a copy has been obtained and is attached with this feedback on our website.*

### **Speaker 1 Dave Wilson**

Organisations approaching companies such as BT need to talk to them in their language i.e. when asking them for money or support, organisations need to begin talking to them in a language BT understands, for instance by explaining what publicity the company will gain from this partnership, how will it help them implement their CSR policy, or how will it effect their share price. Organisations should also talk about their beliefs, whether it is in regard to a business decision or the world we live in, and articulate this belief in a way that makes sense to BT. The main issue when working with not for profit organisations is to learn how to listen and how to understand each other.

Dave gave the example of *Age Concern* who they have supported recently through a programme working with young children – an area that Age Concern are not automatically associated with. Age Concern were successful because they were able to explain how much publicity BT would get from this sponsorship deal.

Dave gave an example of how BT has tailored itself to listening to people's needs and how as a company it believes in diversity. Texting on mobile phones has always excluded blind people, but BT have adapted a voice-activated text to allow blind people to text. This has come out of the equality and diversity agenda.

At the moment businesses and the voluntary sector are talking different languages and an important change for organisations is to start speaking the same language when doing business.



### Speaker 2 Valerie Earl

Over the last 10 years the voluntary sector has experienced three strands of change:

- 1) Progression of grants and contracts for services to the new language of social enterprise and economic activity rather than social activity. Voluntary organisations are travelling along a continuum that is now entering the realms of income generation.
- 2) Government policies are effecting the funding that is available and how it is to be used i.e.
  - A lot of funding is devolved to a regional level. The Government's Social Inclusion Policy has led to the creation of the Connecting Communities Grant, resulting in the delivery of work the Government wants to see charities doing from now on.
- 3) Greater use of performance management and quality assessment within the voluntary sector.

Organisations need to adapt to these external forces when changing, without leading to differences within the organisation. Crucially, support is now available for organisations wanting to undergo such changes. For those that are independent, the Council for Voluntary Services can support the process involved in organisational change. The support available is not necessarily advice about how to adapt to change but could be how to function as an organisation within the current climate and apply for funding. Although such support is available, the responsibility for managing change remains with the organisation itself.

A key part of the change process is the need to involve staff in the strategic changes so that they understand why the change is taking place. The key to a healthy organisation is to build on its current capacity – to keep what's good such as the staff or its values, but manage to develop without losing these key assets.

To be successful, the organisation's focus needs to shift towards changing the fundamental strategy of an organisation rather than just adapting individual projects to get money.

### Speaker 3 Jott Juri-Ott Salm

Jott works for ELF - an environmental charity that is working with a smaller community-based organisation to facilitate organisational change.

The Kola Sami are the native and indigenous people of the Scandinavian peninsula. A smaller community of the Kola Sami, with a population of 2000, are also based in the North of the former Soviet Union. Since the Soviet Union disbanded the Kola Sami have seen a considerable change in livelihood and ELF has been working with this community to help them adapt to change. Essentially ELF worked with community members, local people, relatives and other interested parties from the



Kola Sami to work out economic and social strategies to survive. Open Space technology was used to take this development work forward.

The key principles are:

- 1) Whoever comes it is the right people.
- 2) Whatever happens is the only thing that could have.
- 3) Whenever it starts is the right time.
- 4) When it is over it is over.

That main point is that people were free to walk away from this work if they were not interested and that everyone was aware that they had an important part to play in the development process.

Consultancy advice on Public Relations, Management, and Environmental issues related to the proposed development plans were provided. ELF's involvement, in particular, was to facilitate the consultation process and encourage the community to bring their own ideas to the table to give people real ownership of the change process. To this end a competition was arranged within the community where people were invited to present their ideas for change. By the end of the consultation stage, ELF was in a position to help the Kola Sami community apply for funding to make the proposed plan a realisation. Funding was provided from Estonia Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Funding.

The fundamental key to the change process was getting the community itself to take ownership for the process by making sure the way forward is representative of the community's vision.

#### **Speaker 4 Naila Akram**

Naila joined BTCV as a Project Officer at the beginning of 2003, but admits that she had concerns about applying for a job in an organisation that she felt did not represent her interests – for Naila was not at all interested in the environment. However she was particularly interested in helping people, an ethos passionately shared by BTCV, and so she applied to work in BTCV Scotland. Naila's post was recruited through the Environments for All Programme to help disadvantaged communities in the south of Glasgow. What made the job so appealing was that they really trusted their staff and they let the project develop where the communities wanted it to go. In fact this has been one of the main factors for the projects success in Scotland, because it allowed real scope for creativity. Naila's approach for connecting with these communities was to use multimedia as a way for people to explore where they live and express how they feel about their local environment.

From working on this project she realised that although BTCV was working well with different cultural groups individually, the organisation was struggling to integrate different communities to encourage multi-cultural projects. One of the things she found from working with different ethnic minority groups on environmental projects was that volunteers were always really keen to tell her about the food of their culture. Food was therefore used as the focal interest for a project that encouraged different communities to work together. Perhaps the biggest highlight for Naila was when she took some women deep into the Scottish countryside who had never really had the



chance to go there before – women from Nigeria, India, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Iraq and Iran as well as England and Scotland. The women were taken on an environmental walk around the Scottish countryside to show them the native foods of Scotland. Essentially the idea behind the walk was to encourage the women to look at the environment through different eyes and use their common interest in food as a catalyst of conversation. The volunteers used the opportunity to explore for edible leaves and berries and share a multicultural feast in the evening, following a “Ready Steady Cook Event” organised by a local chef. Despite the groups not knowing one another when they set out, by the end of the exercise they had bonded through their mutual interest in food.

Naila feels that BTCV has accomplished a significant change in Scotland and the other areas covered by the Environments for All programme. It has evolved from an organisation where it’s staff didn’t know what Halal meat was, to one that has the skills to take multicultural groups out on environmental projects.

## **Questions and Answer Session for Organisational Change Workshop**

Question 1. Directed to *Dave Wilson from BT*. You spoke about the need for giving honest motivations for approaching companies, but this never comes across when you read the funding criteria. There needs to be more honesty in company policies as well therefore.

Response

Dave explained that there was a problem in being absolutely upfront about their needs as it can put some people off, since BT would then no longer be speaking the charity’s language.

Voluntary organisations need to ensure that a better link exists in the future between their belief, vision and how everyone, the corporate included, will benefit. This fact is not expressed in the funding criteria as it is not a publicly accepted language at the moment.

Question 2. BT is a massive organisation with all the management challenges that come with this size. How does BT address diversity issues within the organisation?

Historically when BT was Post Office Telecommunications, 93% of BT’s employees were male and 98% were white, reflecting their customers at that time. The company’s profile has had to change to reflect the change in their customer profile. Today the company is 23% female, with representation all the way up to the top ranks. 9% of employees are people from ethnic minorities.

Today you are just as likely to be promoted in BT if you are a woman as a man. However there are still issues to address as no females are represented on the management board. The company has responded by investing in the future of all their staff by establishing a learning apprenticeship scheme to ensure everyone has the chance to reach this level.



BT are also currently trying to increase the number of applicants they receive from BME groups, essentially by ensuring they get their advertising right. A whole programme of Diversity Coaching has also been introduced which trains coaches, in the form of ordinary members of staff, to work within his or her team to coach them on diversity issues relevant to them and their particular working environment. This has the advantage that issues are brought up and explored that wouldn't normally get discussed in a generic "one-size fits all" diversity training course.

Question 3. *Tom Freeland, Partnership Development Manager, National Urban Forestry Unit.* Would value your thoughts on how we achieve greater integration in Environmental projects so that diversity becomes integrated into all our programmes – not treated as special projects.

Response:

*Ron Fern, Director of Operations for England, BTCV* explained that EfA has accomplished much for BTCV, with the basic philosophy of the programme extending far beyond just the eight projects supported by the Community Fund. It is starting to change irrevocably the way the organisation operates, who we partner with, and how we recruit and train our staff and volunteers. He referred to a survey recently commissioned within England to establish how much time staff spent working with the homeless, the unemployed etc. The results were very surprising and revealed that we are working in areas, and with communities, where we haven't been before - essentially because of the partners we are now working with. Key to this change for Ron, is the fact that we have put into place a programme of Cultural Diversity Training, for staff throughout the organisation.

*Kevin Poskhill* also from *BTCV* added that for him the key to successful diversity is to ensure staff have the capacity to engage with the communities, find out what they want, establish trust and deliver improvements that are grounded on the community's issues and visions. This is a model that has had proven success throughout the EfA programme and is a methodology that has been transferred to all our projects.

Real diversity has arisen from a fundamental process change in the way we work with communities and partners that transcends the different definitions of the people we are trying to work with.

*Roger de Freitas, Chair of BTCV* explained that the real driver for change within the organisation was a fundamental change in our approach to governance. From an unwieldy board of trustees, with no real understanding of diversity, a smaller informed board was created. The responsibility of the trustees is now to ensure the organisation delivers our charitable objectives by setting the ends – how these ends are delivered operationally is left to the chief executive and senior directors. In fact the change would have been a lot different if this basic change in governance hadn't taken place.

Furthermore the trustees have become the ambassadors of the organisation in order to celebrate the changes that have taken place.



The organisation is really planning for diversity and in the same way as Naila underwent a learning process with BTCV, so the trustee's themselves are going through a learning continuum as well. Our ultimate aim is that diversity will be represented at board level too.

### Other Issues

David Obasi: Lots of BME groups are volunteering but on an informal basis, which means it is not recognised. Such groups haven't got a lot of funding so there is little capacity for growth or organisational structure. David felt that organisations would therefore really benefit from networking at events like this conference so they can find out where to get support and funding to realise such growth. However the cost of the conference would be beyond the reach of many organisations and David asked whether BTCV could offer bursaries or introduce concessions for small organisations.

### Main Points raised in the Workshop

- Listen to and learn the language of the funder, make sure you are giving them something they need rather than just asking for cash and then walking away. Organisations need to identify and understand the language of the funders they are approaching
- Treat people with dignity, respect and listen.
- Recognise the reasons for change and the drivers behind them
- Allow the change process to be owned by the people needing to change
- Environments for All needs to become an ethos in all that we do; leadership, communication and consultation.

# Youth and the Environment Workshop



## ***Speakers:***

*Facilitated by Miles Sibley Development and Support Director BTCV*

*Dr Maria Balshaw – Director Creative Partnerships Birmingham*

*Shaun Newman – Connexions Devon & Cornwall*

*Grigore Opritoiu – Community Outreach & Eco tourism Officer, Retezat National Park Administration, Romania*

*Neville Lilley, Youth Organic Environment Project*

*Andrew Watson – Stonebridge Housing Action*

*Main points made by each of the speakers:*

*(Where the speaker made a formal presentation a copy has been obtained and included with this feedback.)*

## **Summary provided by Miles Sibley**

If you ask young people whether they are interested in volunteering or the environment, a lot of them will say “no”. The point is to start from what interests them. Almost certainly they will have opinions about the area where they live, and about their role and position in the communities in which they live. Those opinions are the starting point for active and positive engagement. It is no good telling young people that they should be socially or environmentally responsible citizens. What we should be doing is offering them the chance to take responsibility and offering them the chance to be taken seriously. In the vast majority of cases, if you offer them that chance, they are very keen to take it.

Young people are the future and lay the foundations for tomorrow. However, young people are also about today’s society.

## **Speaker 1 Dr Maria Balshaw**

The Department of Education and Culture has funded a 2 year pilot scheme at the George Dixon School in Birmingham. Birmingham is one of 16 areas across the country that has been awarded such funding to work in socially and economically challenged areas to encourage a sustainable relationship between Education and Creative Culture in its widest terms. Funding covers a wide range of creative activities which give schools the chance to develop their own creative activities, which are identified and meaningful, to them. Although based in schools the activity also has links with the communities they find themselves, in order to develop models

for creative citizenship driven by the young people. Vital to develop a creative partnership, where you view all the actors as co-learners.



The project in Birmingham is based in the George Dixon School - one of the most culturally diverse schools in the city with pupils speaking over 47 different languages. The school is extremely dynamic with a very mobile population that changes every year – taking the majority of asylum seekers in the city.

With funding from the Department of Education and Culture the school has been working with artists from the city-centre based Icon Gallery who are interested in doing work off site within the school grounds. The emphasis of the project is very much about what the pupils want and a vital element of this project is that they are the drivers of this creative activity rather than the artists. The first year of the project has therefore been spent talking to the children, parents, teachers and other members of the school's community to pull together people's ideas about what the school's environment should look like - making sure it reflects the school community in its widest sense.

Young people were offered multiple means to allow themselves to express their views rather than being told what should be included in the garden. One of the consultation methods used by the artists to get the pupils to think about what they wanted to see in the garden was to exploit the link between food and gardening. A short video was played by Dr Balshaw which showed the creative activities that the pupils have been undertaking to explore their environment - activities such as: cookery and food awareness classes; painting and drawing; and video recordings, which allow them to express themselves.

One of the main points from this presentation was that “Active Listening” is needed in Youth Work. Projects should find the right way to allow young people to tell you things as well as the right way to hear it.

### Speaker 2 Shaun Newman

A copy of the presentation has been provided by the speaker. The following represent the main points of the talk:

Connexions: Devon and Cornwall is 1 of 47 partnerships that exist across the country and from a geographic perspective one of the biggest. Now in its third term the emphasis of the Connexions programme has moved down the age range and the focus is very much on prevention rather than crisis management. Connexions works with young people “now” to create the best start in life. The programme advocates Active Listening and young people are essential to the design and delivery of the service.

Connexions is based on a strategy of 8 core principles, including:

- Aspirations
- Overcoming barriers
- Involving young people
- Partnership
- Community involvement

- Equal opportunities
- Evidence based practice.



In Devon and Cornwall the partnership has established a model of the Single Role Personal Advisor, having been told by young people that this is what they wanted from the advice service. The single role approach ensures that young people are assigned one advisor who they can get to know and trust, to help them get through this transitional stage of their development. This personal advisor works in other teams such as Young Offender's teams, Refugee Action, Drug Action Teams and Care Leaver Support, where they can be of most help to the young person.

A beneficiary fund has also been established for young people, again having listened to their needs. Historically young people used to frequently tell the Connexions team that they often need a quick injection of cash to cover rent, buy a new shirt for an interview, pay for music lessons etc. Supported by the European Fund and the Prince's Trust the beneficiary fund can really make a difference at pivotal points in young peoples lives for a minimum outlay.

Other current developments within the Connexions team for the South West have included:

- Developing data sharing protocols to make it easier to exchange information between agencies
- Multi-agency training forums which help build trust and positive working relationships between different agencies involved in development of young people as staff are trained together
- Free phone line for young people
- All email addresses are in the public domain so young people can contact key workers at any time
- Pre e2e training to prepare young people so that they can access the e2e programme. Young people told us the entry threshold was too high and needed more preparation to access the scheme.

The underlying ethos of Connexions is to involve young people, and as such the programme is always looking for new and productive ways with which to involve volunteers in its planning and delivery, including:

- Exposing young people to the board
- Running young people's panels
- Administration of a computerised questionnaire
- Office Design
- Training
- Millennium Volunteers with BTCV

In the future the Connexions Partnership will be heavily involved with the "Children's Trusts" plans to develop extended and full service schools. In particular Connexions staff will play a crucial part in supporting young people during the transitional period of developing these extended schools.



### Speaker 3 Prof Adrian Beluoca

As before a copy of the presentation has been provided by the speaker. The following notes represent the main points from this presentation:

Retezat National Park is based in a highly industrialised region of Romania which has been heavily hit by a recession that has resulted in a number of the area's industries closing down. The area is therefore suffering from a high rate of unemployment and faces an uncertain future in terms of the economy. Teaching staff from the Faculty of Economics have therefore taken advantage of other positive opportunities from the region, such as the spectacular mountain range in Retezat National Park, to create sustainable economic opportunities such as tourism.

Retezat is the oldest National Park in Romania which needs a lot of work to restore it to its former state. Rubbish is a particular problem within the area. Staff from the University contacted the National Park to develop the site and students have been working hard to restore the area including removing rubbish, creating tourist trails, and laying footpaths on the mountain.

However this development work has proved to be just the starting point for a much larger programme of environmental improvement work involving young people from the community. By giving them ownership of the work, teaching them tool skills and first aid, the students have changed their attitudes to the park, gained in self-confidence and have subsequently become active supporters of a revitalised tourist park – without being asked. Many of the young people have gone on to involve their peers and younger volunteers from the community to create a generation chain called "Forest School". Teachers from the University have taken a backseat to the project and it is the students that are really driving the work forward. The massif has essentially become a workshop for learning with different generations learning from one another, with a sustainable programme of development work organised by the school but driven by the young people.

Benefits for the region include: a cleaner region, more tourists, more jobs, active attitude towards the environment amongst the wider community, positive experiences and learning opportunities. Essentially this is an example of a project that links together the three key elements of sustainable development: Economics, Social and Environment.

### Speaker 4 Neville Lilley

This project was established to try and fill a perceived gap in young people's development – namely, understanding where food comes from.

The project organiser not only felt that young people from his local community did not understand the benefits of growing their own food, but that they also didn't appreciate the value of the community open space provided by allotments. In 2003 three overgrown allotments were therefore acquired from Birmingham city council with money from the Birmingham Children's Fund to establish a food-growing initiative for young people.



When the project started young people were taken out to the allotments every Saturday and Sunday morning. From a handful of young people the project grew as word spread amongst their peers, until by the end of October 2003 the project was engaging with over 950 young people from the city of Birmingham.

By giving young people the responsibility to grow their own food they are learning a much wider lesson - that they can do their bit to improve the environment even if it is in their own backyards.

**Speaker 5 Grigore Opritoiu**  
**Eco Tourism Officer Retezat National Park, Romania**

A group of professionals came together from the Faculty of Engineering to export the idea of the fabulous natural scenery.

The first National Park Reserve to be set up in Romania. Founded in 1935. Biosphere reserve of 44,000 hectares with unique national flora and fauna. The initial idea for getting involved came from the fact that there were only 7 members of staff Turned a workshop into acquiring new skills. 250 students took part in 16 work camps. The results of the programme were impressive.

Examples of skills the young people embarked on were – First Aid techniques, construction skills and tool handling. BTCV volunteers were also involved in this training process. The young people gained much from this including self-confidence. They also held a seminar to share the best practice and ideas learnt from the projects. Activities included chalk drawing and holding a fashion show with outfits made out of recyclable material.

Overall, the benefits included a cleaner region, more tourists and ore job opportunities. The project also led to involving more school children in educational activities.

**Speaker 6 Andrew Watson – Stonebridge Housing Action Trust**

Stonebridge Housing Action Trust is a leading urban regeneration agency, based in north west London. Set up in 1994, their aim is to transform the 1,775 home Stonebridge Estate by providing innovative solutions to the problems of social and economic deprivation faced by residents.

These solutions include:

- offering every household a new or refurbished home that meets their individual needs. So, elderly people no longer have to live on the top floors of tower blocks, and families are offered houses with safe gardens for their children
- building homes to the highest standards, using good, practical design and durable materials with a low environmental impact
- combining the physical regeneration of Stonebridge with initiatives to improve education, job prospects, and residents' quality of life
- developing partnerships with residents and other agencies to ensure the long term success of projects.

The organisation engages young people in a number of activities such as community mentoring, sports training. They also use Marshal Arts as a form of motivation for young people.



When dealing with young people it is vital to involve them in the decision making process. Stonebridge Housing Action aims to employ young people directly so they can make decisions.

- Employment, training and education are key.
- Young people can talk to other young people and break down barriers.
- Sports, exercise and football are great tools for engaging young people.
- “Talk is cheap, it is better to deliver.”

*A common theme to emerge from each of the speakers is that young people need to be involved in a way that is meaningful to them. The key is to offer imaginative ways of engaging with young people that bring out young people’s interests and enthusiasms. Asking them simply to volunteer does not work.*

## **Question and Answer Session for Youth and the Environment Workshop**

1 How do you keep young people engaged during the transitional stage from teenager to adulthood? Posed by Russell Hampton, BTCV Scotland

Answer

Offering the students incentives seemed to be the consensus of opinion from the panel. In the Retezat project young people are offered free holidays in the mountains, and economic students at the university can use the environmental work to count towards the obligatory practical field work as part of their course, rather than having to observe work on the factory floor.

Similarly in the Youth Organic Ventures project all the young people have the incentive that they can take away the crops that they grow.

Connexions use two hooks:

- 1) They treat what young people have to say seriously and act on suggestions. For example, when young people are involved in Office Designs they are allowed to take the project over completely. Their ideas are treated the same as any consultants would be and feasible ideas are acted upon
- 2) Young people are treated as adults and they are recompensed for their time. Adults would be paid for giving their time to redesign offices and so young people are treated no differently to reflect the value of their work.

Dr Balshaw agreed adding that the key to engaging with any age group is not to fake incentives. The work is most effective when it has a real world context and is taken seriously. Furthermore the young people should choose how they get involved, so



multiple opportunities that reflect young people's enthusiasms and interests should be offered.

Question 2 David Jamieson, Director BTCV Scotland

BTCV Scotland are looking at the Americorp Volunteering Model which involves paying volunteers. The panel were asked for their views on this.

Answer

As mentioned previously Connexions pay their volunteers £25.00. The partnership has not experienced any problems from this reimbursement system. Shaun feels that the payment scheme works because it shows that Connexions are serious about their contribution – not faking it. Feedback shows young people are pleased with the fact they are paid and it shows they are taken seriously. After all an adult would be paid for providing a consultancy service, so it is only right that the young person's contribution is also rewarded.

Mahmood Mirza, Community Cohesion Officer (North Staffordshire Racial Equality Council) agreed that incentives are generally a good technique to adopt. He has been working with a group of young people engaged with criminal activities in the Staffordshire area. They initially approached him to tackle offensive graffiti in an area of a local park where they hung out. From the initial graffiti scrub, the young people have worked to redesign the play area and develop the ground for the wider community. The incentive here was improvement of an area that they used and empowerment to create the grounds the way they wanted.

Similar experiences were offered from the floor including Briony Serginson, Community Team Leader from Milton Keynes Parks Trusts Ltd. They initially made cash payments to volunteers but had to withdraw this because of tax problems. The incentive scheme had worked really well though so instead a point scheme was introduced which could be exchanged for outdoors equipment. A similar point scheme is used within the Millennium Volunteer Programme and young volunteers can use their points to buy bus passes, waterproof clothing etc as explained by Jack Atkinson, Project Co-ordinator for Millennium Volunteer Schemes in BTCV. Skills and training opportunities are also another very real incentive for young people identified by various participants from the workshop.

However Steve Webster (Policy Co-ordinator Youth and Community for Groundwork UK) raised the point that if volunteer time had a real cost instead of cost in kind, then this could potentially have a substantial impact on delivering work because of the extra funding needed to cover the increased cost.

Sue Nelson, Assistant Chief Executive from Encams, drew the workshop's attention to a piece of research their organisation had just completed which looked at motivational factors for young volunteers. It is widely acknowledged that children of primary school age and the 1<sup>st</sup> year of secondary are quite easy to involve in volunteering programmes, but older youths are more difficult to engage with. Encams are particularly interested in this age group, as this is when young people often start to experiment with graffiti and littering. Interestingly the research found that among 13 - 14 year olds peer pressure played an important driver. Moreover, if project workers

want to engage with young people they need to link with what's at the forefront of their mind at that age – having sex. Projects need to offer a way that will enhance their credibility with the opposite sex – to make them more attractive.



Copies of the Research “Young People and the Environment” can be found at [ww.encams.org.uk](http://ww.encams.org.uk) or by contacting Encam's Wigan office.

### Other Issues

Rufia Ashraf, Women's Support Worker for Northampton Bangladeshi Association, works with women that have been the victims of domestic violence and encourages them to leave their homes to work on allotments with their children. Rufia explained that she had little problem engaging with the women and children - her biggest barrier to keeping them involved was a more practical issue of transport. In her experience funders will back the project delivery but are less keen to provide infrastructure costs such as drivers to transport the women to and from the allotments.

Several suggestions for ways to address this problem were made from the floor:

Shaun Newman from Connexions suggested that the way forward maybe to try to tap into existing partnerships operating in the area. He explained how they discovered that a volunteer driver system is offered by the Probation service in the South West and they were able to make use of the driver to transport youngsters from the Connexions programme in between driving for Probation. Similarly it was suggested that the Northampton group could consider approaching existing networks such as the Community Transport Network run by their local authority, or the hospital driver scheme run by the Health service. Indeed, Barney Hill, Access Development Advisor from Lake District National Park Authority, explained how he faced similar transport issues when trying to run a twinning scheme between two schools in the Park. By working in partnership with local authorities and other agencies a solution was created with the county council.

A separate issue related to transport was then raised by Dr Balshaw. She explained how a parent group were keen to volunteer their services for the school but only if the work was to take place within the school grounds itself and the environment they were familiar with. The women from the group would not have been comfortable travelling further a field and would have withdrawn their support - however this was an issue that no-one had identified before the work began and further highlights the need to actively listen to the needs of every volunteer.



### **Main points of discussion**

The discussion highlighted it is important to engage with young people on issues that are important to them now. Youth work should not just be about grooming them for future potential and laying the foundations for responsible citizens of tomorrow.

In general young people do take issues relating to society and the environment seriously and accept responsibility. However they can only take responsibility if it is offered to them in an appropriate way

### **Main points raised:**

- Make it Real, give them responsibility, take it seriously
- Provide Incentives
- Actively Listen
- Offer multiple access options that reflect young people's interests



# Marginalised Communities Workshop

## **Speakers:**

*Facilitated by Ian Humphries, Operations Manager, Northern Ireland CVNI and Romena Huq, Environments for All Project Manager BTCV Scotland*

*Alun Burge – Communities Directorate, Welsh Assembly*

*Sue Anderson – Community Liaison Officer, National Forest*

*Dolores Ferran – NI Housing Executive*

*Richard Payne – Youth Co-ordinator, Scottish Refugee Council*

*Stephanie Wong & Florence Dioka, Development Officers, Meridian*

## **Summary of Speech by Alan Burge, Head of Communities First, Welsh Assembly**

### **Aims of ‘Community First’ Programme :-**

- To improve the living conditions in communities
- To eradicate poverty
- Aimed at the 100 most deprived wards in Wales

### **Key issues:**

- Look for long term funding (10-20 years)
- Programme was set up on the best international evidence of what works better
- First government in Western Europe to engage in a bottom up, risk taking programme
- The programme does not compare to anything in England and Scotland
- The type of work carried out involves various areas such as jobs and business, education and training, environment etc.

### **Challenges:**

- Being flexible according to local circumstances, but this can be a logistical nightmare
- Challenge to traditional ways especially for civil servants and local authorities as communities are involved directly, some government officials are uncomfortable with this direct involvement by the communities.
- Joining up all different services to work with communities



- Achieving softer outcomes such as change in attitude and better cohesion in the communities.
- Managing expectations and timescales, not too much too quickly.

***Summary of Speech by Prof. James Kearney, Centre for Voluntary Action Studies, University of Ulster***

James explained that as a disabled person himself, he is keen for everyone to become involved in volunteering.

Key issues emerging from the research done on barriers to volunteering:

- Communities are not only geographical, but they also vary according to quality (race, sexual orientation etc.)
- Volunteering has been found to create a sense of community amongst individuals
- But some groups are underrepresented and it is difficult to engage them.
- Volunteering is not yet inclusive

Barriers to Volunteering:

- Psychological, for example the misconception that BME communities have to be always on the receiving end of volunteering, but should not really take part in volunteering itself
- Volunteering still seen by many communities and individuals as a philanthropic activity
- Fear of over commitment, lack of confidence, lack of knowing what of volunteering is about
- Difficulty of finding volunteers, problems with inaccessibility for some volunteers, difficult registration procedures that put them off
- Attitudes of other people, inappropriate volunteering roles being given to certain volunteers, such as menial tasks.
- Financial issues, people prefer to work for money

3 key issues emerging from research:

- Look at supply of volunteers again and try to involve marginalised communities
- Forms of financial incentives to attract young volunteers or the less well off.
- Balance between formal volunteering and deprived communities, too much bias on formal volunteering. Not considering the needs of communities.

***Summary of Speech by Florence Dioka, Development Officer, Meridian, Scotland***

Meridian is a charity that provides information for women to become empowered offering language support, housing advice, training needs in order to compete for work as well as counselling and leisure activities etc.



Meridian works in partnership with BTCV by helping to organise visits to botanical gardens and the countryside. Many women from BME communities have had the chance this way to meet other women from different communities and to share knowledge of plants and find similarities between the colonial past of their countries and that of Scotland.

## **Question and Answer Session for Marginalised Communities Workshop**

### **General comment made by David Obazi National Coalition for Black Volunteers:**

Volunteer work is not recognised by BME communities, for example his children do not anything about the countryside. There is still a necessity to go and get BME communities, not wait for them to come to us. Some BME communities want to get involved, but are not sure how to get started.

### **Q. Fiona Lovely from Belfast Traveller Support Group**

Many benefits can be seen in the Chinese Travelling community following volunteering in Northern Ireland. Does BTCV do any work with the travelling communities in other parts of Great Britain?

### **A. Sheena Gladding – VO for Brent BTCV**

Yes BTCV works with traveller groups in Wembley

### **Q. Anthony McQuillan, BTCV Northern Ireland (CVNI) Director**

He would like to see the same programme in Northern Ireland, what took the Welsh Government to agree?

### **A. Alan Burge, Head of Communities First, Welsh Assembly**

- A radical administration committed to volunteering and communities to empower regions.
- Collecting international evidence
- An extensive consultation process that took place twice

The result was the installation of partnerships with the communities and some police districts have found an amazing difference with this approach, but you still have problems and although it is gaining momentum, the programme is by no means uniform and even across Wales.

### **Q. Anthony McQuillan, BTCV Northern Ireland (CVNI) Director**

A programme of this nature requires mature political thinking, was this case for the whole Welsh Assembly or was it just a few champions?

### **A. Alan Burge, Head of Communities First, Welsh Assembly**

The assembly having seen the results did not really need convincing of the effectiveness of the programme. It was a brave decision and 2 individuals were appointed to devise the model.



Also answered by Anthony Brittle (Communities First Programme): ‘one of the problems with the programme is the level of commitment from local authorities. Some are coming around to the idea that they can really empower communities.

If Northern Ireland could get a similar programme many good things could happen, although there are lessons to learn.’

Contribution by Professor James Kearney: ‘In Northern Ireland the problem is that senior civil servants do not know much about the communities and they need to be informed. The contribution by volunteering is also still not recognised.

We need dedicated MPs and officials at Senior level, but it’s hard to sell it to them as communities are not seen as an important issue. There should be more secondment for officials to work with communities.

This lack of investment in communities by government bodies was also confirmed by Florence Dioka, Development Officer, Meridian, Scotland, saying that it is difficult to get long term funding.

**Comment by Eileen Sabur, Act of Citizenship, Brent and MV officer**

‘Imagine the day when young people in schools can have a conference? It is difficult for young people to engage in volunteering and the work activities are often not available to them. I brought volunteers with me to help at the conference, but there are not enough opportunities like this for them.’

**Reply by James Kearney:** ‘from 2005 Gordon Brown will offer a gap year for students to volunteer, hopefully this will give more opportunities.’

**3 key points raised by Dennis Yates, East Sussex Disability Association:**

- We start a programme, it goes well, but then funding stops and is not sustainable.
- The Government wants to use the voluntary sector to do its work, but if this happens will the sector become as bureaucratic and unresponsive?
- People still do not understand the barriers to volunteering, there is need for specific training and resources, for example providing special resources for disabled volunteers to get to volunteering site

**Reply by Alan Burge, Head of Communities First, Welsh Assembly**

In Wales there is special funding to cover extra costs required to engage properly with blind/deaf and even BME groups.

**Comment by Eulene Roach, The Afro-Caribbean Project**

‘Congratulations on the work done BTCV! You brought people together, and our groups learnt to identify plants and bringing us closer together.’

**Comment by Anthony McQuillan, BTCV Northern Ireland (CVNI) Director**

CVNI has done a lot of good work with communities, but recently there has been problem with vandalism and sometimes these problems do not come from members of the community, but from outside. How do you prevent this from happening?



**Reply by Carrie Poskitt, Community Project Manager, BTCV**

By taking people to lovely places in the countryside, not just BME groups, but other people as well, and this helps them to share an experience and get a sense of unity in the community, using the environment as a tool to bring them together.

**Comment by Ola Lawal, Chairperson, Afri-Caribbean People's Places Organisation**

'Thanks BTCV, because they made things simple for us and guided us all through the stages until we finally managed to build the centre. Now we have all the certificates. People need to give communities a chance, so that they can also become interested and discover how things work, like how a coconut grow and they need support to do this.

I feel welcome and moved and was even helped with my wheelchair to get here, I hope we can go forward.'



# Health and the Environment Workshop

## **Speakers:**

*Facilitated by Mick Deness, Regional Director for the South-East, BTCV*

*Dr. William Bird – Green Gym pioneer*

*Sally Huband – Chief Officer, Age Concern, Dudley*

*Jane Stoneham – Director of the Sensory Trust*

*Den Phillips – Rethink*

*Toby James & Glenn Baverstock – Green Gym volunteer leaders, BTCV Cymru*

## **Summary of speech by Sally Huband, Chief Officer, Age Concern, Dudley**

Sally described the work of Age Concern. People tend to think that we work with 50+ only, but in gardening projects we work with older individuals. For example an old couple having been in their house for along time. The husband used to look after the garden, but then he passed away. The wife cannot look after it and feels depressed at seeing the garden deteriorate. Her family may not be able to help for the various reasons.

Age Concern has a subsidised gardening scheme, which is often overlooked. They have been looking for funding and partnerships, then in 1999 after consulting with the clients they met BTCV. The partnership started and 3 beneficiaries were identified :-

1. The elderly, getting help to maintain garden, meeting new people, and renewing their interest in life
2. Our organisation, learning to work in partnership and about fundraising
3. The volunteers, learning new skill, getting to know elderly people.

The wildlife gardening project is benefiting 9 gardens currently. One even participated in the wildlife surveys on television.

## **Speech made by Sally Huband, Chief Officer, Age Concern, Dudley**

“I want to get you thinking about the current generation of old people...much older people, in their 80s and 90s who might be frail. They may well have been living in



their homes for some years. It could be a three-bed 'semi' with quite a big garden; the husband looked after the garden, the wife did the cooking and shopping. Statistics prove the husband may pass away before her. Certain things can have a major effect on her. The first thing is the garden starts to look neglected; the trees are getting higher; the borders are overgrowing and the lawn will need cutting.

“It is absolute living proof that she has lost her partner and cannot manage part of her life. I am sure you would think the family could support her – but they might be living far away. They will have their own kids to care for and elderly people do not want to ask for help. The garden is one of the key issues which has an effect on elderly people; it is one of the first things that is mentioned when it comes to talking about moving into sheltered accommodation. That can be a traumatic experience for a person that has lived in their home for much of their lives. Age Concern’s gardening scheme in Dudley was heavily over-subscribed. It is a very expensive scheme to run. We are always on the lookout for people to refer our clients to. In 1999, we began to look for more people to support us. At that time, we shared an office with BTCV and we got chatting one day about working together, but it took some time to get a partnership developed. It seemed an unlikely alliance. As it developed we found there were some common goals. We now run a wildlife garden facility for old people. The service is to help them stay at home longer and take away the worry of the garden. It helps them mix with people from other communities, other ages – people they would not normally meet.

“It has helped improve their environment and renew their interest in their garden. “Age Concern and BTCV have benefited and learnt a lot. We have learned it is not all about money; putting together a Community Fund bid, sharing experiences, etc., There were lots of things we could bring and share. The environmental issues are coming through now. Currently, there are nine gardens being worked on, with ponds, bog gardens, herb gardens, raised gardens, bird feeders...One lady took part in the RSPB Garden Bird Watch scheme this year. We are really moving on, having recruited 10 volunteers onto the scheme. It is a Community Fund scheme funded over three years and we are in the second year of that programme.”

### *Summary of speech by Simon Ovenden – The Sensory Trust*

Disability cannot be boxed up, in some cases obesity, having to use push chairs or BME individuals can also be considered disabled.

In a project working in a mental hospital, the Sensory Trust decided to ask first what the patients, the nurses and the community wanted from the project.

Other projects involved converting a spoil tip and they consulted with overlooking villages and houses to ask what they wanted from the project.

Core areas of the Sensory Trust:

- Disability Awareness – This can be done through training, choice of venues, mobility, lighting and acoustics and seating. “When you talk about access people tend to focus on mobility issues.”



- Information – Information comes in different formats, languages for instance. Text for people with learning difficulties may not be appropriate, but pictorial information might
- Roles – It is important to look at people who are not physically active and what they can do.

Key issues in engaging people:

- Disability: awareness, communication between people
- Are the venues accessible, transport, language barriers
- Timing: people that have to work, taking them into consideration
- Roles: some people cannot do certain tasks.

The Sensory Trust they try to look at projects inclusively and get people to work together.

“The Sensory Trust is a national organisation that forms partnerships with local stakeholders and managers of green spaces. Our role is to get people to interact with the outdoor environment. Our main remit is working with disabled people. We have to look at disability in its broadest sense, In many cases, we are dealing with elderly people. Disability also spans people of different age groups. Language can also be a barrier. There are occasions when children are used by people as translators.”

Mr Ogden went on to talk about the trust’s work at a mental hospital involving the refurbishment of the grounds following a Planning For Real exercise. “We looked at who would be effected by the green spaces and making them aware of the project. At the start, they had an input and they are now getting involved in the physical improvement work.

“In Cornwall, we have been involved in the sowing of derelict brown field site to turn it into heath land. Many people see this site from their windows and we contacted the people and went door to door. Those who gave their time helped to sow the landscape planting up the site with trees.

“At North Derbyshire, there was a project with a group of people who wanted to set up a circular walk round the village. We promoted setting up the project with the group and all the planting process, so they did not have to start from a low platform.”

### *Summary of speech by Den Philips – Rethink*

The project was formed to kick-start the mental health system. Mental health patients are often discriminated in many different ways (learning difficulty, etc.). Before it was all about community containment, now it’s about community integration, for example working with conservationists. But it’s very risk orientated; we take people on referral, we have a contract, and we try to engage the volunteers at all levels, rather than just dumping them at volunteering site and picking them up a few hours later.

Good health is not just physical, it involves employment, quality of life etc. Conservation has allowed people to feel engaged and social engagement causes huge improvements in mental health patients.



### *Speech made by Den Phillips – Rethink*

Mr Phillips has spent 30 years as a social worker working with the elderly, probation cases, mental health etc.

In the early 80s he was working on psychiatric wards with people being put back into the community. The area he was working in had a horticultural project and the image that struck him as a young social worker was of a long, dark greenhouse, with a chap dosed up to the eyeballs doing geranium cuttings, working slowly, and by his side was a psychiatric nurse and an occupational therapist on the other side. He thought 'is this mental health care?'

Years later, Mr Phillips said he visited a community horticulture project and it seemed like the same system in a different place with all the same trappings. "Nothing had changed and I was not impressed."

Later on, an opportunity arose to set up a Green Health Partnership in Derbyshire and Mr Phillips was concerned about employing community support workers with shovels. "I thought we ought to employ conservationists and I thought this was an opportunity to work with BTCV. But mental health services want to do things their own way and there was me trying to get these patients some freedoms without molly coddling them, while BTCV had its risk assessments to consider – it was murder! The partnership thing is hard work. When you get down to it, it is about policy and procedures. Eventually, we managed to negotiate and adapt. We decided to involve and include people positively and hear their voices coming through. We advocate people to change policies and procedures.

"People can use the environment as a means for change by engaging in an activity and by externalising, looking outward, and it is a positive psychological environment to be in. We are proactive in moving people on to vocational education and other services. We want to provide the best holistic service we can."

### *Summary of Speech by Doctor William Bird*

Dr Bird has worked with BTCV since 1977. It was the only clinic where the conservation officer was there with the nurses.

Main points of presentation: -

- 37% of heart disease is caused by physical inactivity; inactivity can cause heart attacks, stroke, diabetes, fractured femurs etc.
- The cost for the NHS is huge.
- Inactivity also causes depression.
- A little bit of activity is enough.
- People want to be in the countryside as well as wanting to become fit.
- The connection with nature is important to people, it motivates them.
- Green Gym uses the countryside as a health resource.



Dr Bird presented a detailed overview of health statistics regarding obesity, coronary disease and other health issues in a power-point presentation. Here are some of his comments related to the presentation.

He began working with BTCV in 1997 and helped set up the first Green Gym next door to his GP practice.

“My main focus is on community support in the environment. We need to bring about more sustainable management of the whole environment.”

Dr Bird said he was pleased, after 10-15 years of lobbying the Government, that physical activity is now coming to the top of the political agenda. “That is brilliant,” he said.

“We have big problems about seeing who is physically active and who is not. You do not have to get fit to enjoy the benefits of physical activity. Just moving about and walking is beneficial.”

Dr Bird went on to talk about a study into why people became involved in Green Gyms and how their reasons might differ after some months of taking part.

“There is no point in people going to the gym and killing themselves and saying ‘I hate doing that!’

“The Green Gym is a means of motivation, being part of a group of people.

“We know that a more bio-diverse environment encourages more people to go out and enjoy the environment. It perpetuates things – it has a double whammy.”

Pontypool Green Gym volunteer officer Glenn Baverstock was introduced and said:

“All the work we have done is instantly beneficial and you can go back and see it again.

“It can change your whole week. I cannot stress enough how good it is. We have done work in the countryside and parks and we have worked with a nursery group and we work alongside elderly people on the Green Gym, some of whom have a disability. It is wonderful really.

“Throughout the time I have been involved, I have enjoyed it and I have wanted to go out every week.”

Dr Bird returned to talk about the Green Gym vs Step Aerobics, pointing out that GGs have a more sustained impact on heart rates activity. “The Green Gym benefits continue and by having people with you doing an activity, it increases maintaining that activity.

“People come in often without a conservation interest and they reap the benefits of taking part.”

Dr Bird went on to talk about the potential life-saving benefits of Green Gyms.



“Out of 60 males taking part in Green Gyms each year, statistically you can save one life. It just goes to show that from a small range of activities, it can make a big difference.”

He added that members’ reasons for being with GGs changes. “Being out in the countryside becomes increasingly important and the need to become fit becomes less important.”

Dr Bird concluded: “We have an environment which is safe and accessible and the Green Gym helps with conservation work.”

Dr Bird invited Toby, a young Green Gym volunteer from Wales, to stand up and tell his experience; he had depression and health problems following bereavement and was referred to the Green Gym and really helped him a lot. They did many different things in schools, churches, and on housing estates and he thinks is very good for physical and mental health.

Dr Bird, Green Gym externalises benefits.

- From a cardiovascular point of view, the Green Gym is more continuous and stable.
- Active groups suffer less deaths.
- Inactivity is not at the top of the agenda.
- Access to quality Green Space is a right.

## **Question and Answer Session for Health and the Environment Workshop**

### **Comment by Sraddha Karamsadkar, student studying Gardening:**

Sraddha is enjoying the course very much and that she also does her mum’s gardening and has a lot of appreciation for the work done by Age Concern.

### **Comment by Eulene Roach, the Afro-Caribbean Project**

Eulene and her group find the countryside very relaxing and enjoyable and they do a lot of walking.

### **Comment by Eleni Gazi, Conservation Volunteers Greece**

Eleni was fascinated by what has been said and very much interested to get the information and how to set up Green Gyms in Greece.

### **Q. Dennis Yates, East Sussex Disability Association**

1. Do you take into account wheel chair access when organising Green Gyms?
2. Is there any finding available?

### **A. Sara Bird**

1. We are working towards this, but the system is not yet perfect.
2. Yes, there are many ways of getting designs, these require disability access.



**Q. Joan Hunter, Northern Ireland**

How do you maintain enthusiasm when the weather is bad?

**A. Den Phillips, Rethink**

There are other activities that you can do, you also need to ask the volunteers what they want to do in these instances.

Dr Bird commented that people tends to use the weather as an excuse, and instead it needs to be confronted, and if you have your waterproofs then you come back smiling anyway!

Eulene Roach pointed out that in winter they do indoor workshops, such as DIY and other activities.

**Comment by Mark Graham, Eco Active**

They do work with refugees, but also drug offenders and often it lifts them out of their problems. For example, the lads like sawing down trees releasing energy and tension and feeling better after woods

*Savinder from the Black Environment Network* said he had studied the health effects of British weather on ethnic groups and said there was a clear physiological link. He remembered a flu study by Dr Bird and commended it.

*Steve Bedser, chief executive of Groundwork Trust in the Black Country.*

“What I have discovered working with GT is the links to BTCV. To promote community change, we have to promote links with health directors.”

*John Robins, Defra:* “While we gather evidence of health benefits, what we are not perhaps good at gathering is economic analysis to press the buttons of people in non-environmental areas we need to engage with. We need to build that into budgets. That is what it comes down to at the end of the day. Talking to government officials, you have to make the economic case of health benefits. You have to make the case for preventative medicine rather than treating people. It is something we have not been good at.”



# Faith and Communities Workshop

## *Speakers*

Facilitated by Parminder Garcha

*Dave Bookless from A Rocha UK*

*Deepak Naik MBE, Secretary General of Minorities in Europe.*

The workshop was begun with three quotations from faith scriptures:

*“Every animal  
(That lives) on the earth,  
And every being that flies  
On Wings...  
Shall be gathered to their Lord  
In the end.”*

*(Holy Qu’ran, Sura An’am, verse 38)*

*“Everything in the universe belongs to the Lord. You should only take what is really necessary for yourself, which is set aside for you. You should not take anything else, because you know not to whom it belongs.”  
(Isa Upanishad)*

*“Just as one thread holds hundreds and thousands of beads,  
The Lord is woven into creation.”  
(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p.484)*

## **Facilitator’s introduction speech by Parminder Garcha :-**

Before I introduce the speakers I would like to set the scene for you by asking a question which all faiths strive to address – ‘Why am I here?’

Why we are taking specifically about Faith – which in secular space is often seen as something personal, sometimes suspicious, cuddly – like a cup of Horlicks (warm, sweet and frothy - almost sedative!) but not relevant to environmental activism, awareness or local regeneration.

But those who practice a faith – In Birmingham we recognise 11 major faiths (Baha’I, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Islam, Jain, Judaism, Hinduism, Rastafarianism, Sikhism & Zoroastrianism). We feel it is timely, the increasing official interest in the potential of faith communities to contribute to urban regeneration. To date, there have been three landmark developments:



1. The establishment of the Inner Cities Religious Council (an advisory forum chaired by one of the ministers and including representatives from the major faiths to look at policy and in particular neighbourhood renewal)
  2. The inclusion of the faith dimension in government regeneration and guidelines for community cohesion
  3. Development of a much fuller rationale and guidance, particularly for statutory agencies in working with faith communities.
- (LGA (2002) – *Faith & Community: A good practice guide for local authorities*)

We now also have Faith Communities units within the Home Office and the ODPM and an officer at local GOWM. Recent consultation around infrastructure and capacity building in the sector actively involved faith organisations.

So the context is the growing recognition of the potential, resources and social-capital within faith communities. Indeed, this workshop is about faith – but also about the opportunities and potential of working in a faith dynamic for both funders and major players like BTCV. Hence, the aim of the workshop is threefold:

Firstly, to highlight good practice of organisations such as BTCV, A Rocha (and others) in engaging with faith groups in environmental regeneration activities

Secondly, to identify challenges, issues and concerns which practitioners have experienced.

Finally, to make recommendations, how organisations such as BTCV and also funders could better support, nurture, develop and help address the concerns identified in the second aim. Essentially – how can we better inspire, engage and empower faith communities in environmental regeneration.

I hope the discussion will be open, frank and informed – the feedback from the workshop will be reported in a conference report. We hope this will inform future policy and projects for both BTCV, our funders and partners.

### **Challenges & Issues:**

- “Environmental crisis is a spiritual crisis” – it’s about changing people and attitudes.
- Not all faiths are comfortable working in an ‘inter-faith’ group – they are happy to have their own group and work in partnership with other groups.
- Formal Inter-faith Gatherings – tend to attract faith leaders and other people interested in inter-faith dialogue but not the actual grass-roots community members.
- Funding is a major hurdle for faith groups – often viewed with suspicion (use funding for proselytizing not community service). However, the reality is that this is not the case in the majority of projects.
- Management Committees of Places of Worship tend to be run by the elder men (who were young when the place of worship was established!) This can be a hurdle as they have a particular mind-set around running the community provision. It will take time for this ‘mind-set’ to be changed.



- Officers need to be aware of that there is not a level playing-field for minority faith communities (Sikh, Muslim, Hindu, Jain, Buddhists etc) they face multiple deprivation and disadvantage, particularly prejudice and discrimination. For example, when they wanted to open places of worship, they were denied licences and planning permission. This still happens today. This is why buildings are very important to them – it provides a sense of place, space and security.
- Don't assume all BME communities are adherents of the minority faith communities. In London, most Church goers are BME groups.
- Environmentalists have traditionally not recognised faith as being important.
- If BTCV is focussing on 'people in places' not just places for the sake of places – then they need to respect and work in a faith context. In order to change people's mind sets and behaviour – faith is a powerful and effective motivator and inspirer.
- Apart from the Muslim Council, minority faith groups do not have any power or representation nationally (unlike the Christian and Jewish faiths) so approaches need to be local.
- Planning policies and regulations can be invasive to environmental projects and faith communities have a lack of 'space'
- HR Issues – new legislation outlawing discrimination on grounds of faith and sexual orientation. Advice sought on experiences around gay and lesbian people being discriminated by faith groups? Advice – we have to respect the fact that some faith traditions have specific beliefs and teachings against homosexuality, but that is not a reason to discriminate. Faith groups have to be open to discussion and exchange and working with different groups they disagree with – that will take time.
- In the Sikh, Muslim and Hindu faiths, because the communities face discrimination and disadvantage, since the 1950s the priority has been economic – to get established. The Gurdwaras and places of worship have been concerned with transferring the basic skills such as learning the mother-tongue language, learning music and reading scripture. The dissemination of the the love, joy, appreciation, care and spiritual inspiration of the divine creation which the Sikh Gurus had has not been disseminated. We (Sehej Anand Sabha) are working on this at the moment to develop resources to reinvigorate the community around ecology.

### **Potential:**

- Caring for creation is an intrinsic part of ALL faith traditions.
- Faith communities ARE involved in the environment but they don't use the same language to describe their work as regeneration practitioners / environmentalists
- Volunteering is important element to faith traditions
- Faith communities (in particular Minority Faith groups) have been extremely active in facilitating the process of regeneration in inner-city areas and the rejuvenation of the local environment in areas vacated by the white communities with grand places of worship (eg Soho Road, Southall Broadway and Belgrave Rd Leicester)



- Faith communities have set-up businesses and have the potential to do so much more (eg MSS Timber Merchant on Soho Rd) in terms of training and job creation.
- Growing things in allotments projects, gardens and grounds of places of worship is a good example of successful projects.
- Faith is a great tool for teaching about the environment and spiritual inspiration is powerful
- At schools, in GCSE R.E., they teach about faith and the environment / creation
- In A Rocha's experience, there are many advantages to faith-based environmental projects:
  1. Faith groups are a part of local communities.
  2. Faith groups have cross-cultural and international coverage.
  3. Faith groups are physically there for the long-term
  4. Volunteer recruitment through the congregation can be targeted
  5. Engaging with people is rewarding

### **Good Practice & recommendations for BTCV, partners & funders:**

- Need to work alongside faith groups in the spirit of partnership
- Organisations need to change their own practices and systems not expect Faith communities to compromise theirs
- Faith festivals (eg Eid, Vaisakhi & Diwali) are a good way of outreaching and getting the organisation known in the communities
- Young people and children are a good way in to faith communities (especially the minority faiths) through schools and youth groups. Most places of worship have youth activities.
- Targeting one person on the Management Committee (or young people in the congregation) to champion projects is a good way in to develop trust/
- It takes time to develop trust – sometimes up to 2 years! Funders and Officers need to be aware of this.
- The Journey is more important than the destination! For many faith groups the process is the learning and staff needs to bear this in mind.
- Don't go into Faith communities with pre-set agendas or expectations. As Judy Ling-Wong said – 'Be on Tap – Not on Top'!
- BTCV needs to be prepared to work in new and different ways – to listen and not go in with an agenda
- BTCV needs to encourage greater awareness of faith traditions on a local level with staff and volunteers
- Encourage BTCV to build relations with local Management Committees of places of worship – even if no 'physical' environmental project takes place. Faith communities are at different stages of their 'journey' – when they are ready they will come back, once the seed has been sown.
- The Tree Council wish to encourage different faith groups to get involved in National Tree Week – advised to initially work individually with each group. Every group has a spiritual connection with trees
- Regeneration is NOT just physical – need to do more enlightening or spiritual regeneration to change people's mind-sets.



- A Rocha have organised an 'Eco Pledge' by all the faith leaders on Southall & Hayes – that they will all research and teach their communities about their faith and the environment.
- BTCV have been successful in getting faith groups to apply for People's Places awards. Locally, the Springfield Church in Sparkhill and the Pleck Gurdwara in Walsall are developing gardens. We also have faith buildings looking at integrating sustainability measures such as water-saving, energy efficiency and alternative technology.
- Jobcentre Plus in London have produced a 'Faith Communities Tool Kit' for their staff to encourage greater awareness around faith issues. This is available on Faith In London's website. Connecting Faith Communities in Birmingham have regionalised it for the West Midlands and will be launching it shortly. It is available for general good practice usage.
- Examples of faith communities expressing their faith through the environment / creation: During Vaisakhi 1999 (the Tercentenary of the Khalsa order of the Sikhs) 300 saplings were planted by the Sikh community in Birmingham. In Nottingham the Khalsa Woods were established, working with Groundwork, National Parks and BTCV. The aim of these projects is to reinvigorate on a spiritual level – people's identity and heritage – the environment is the vehicle – the connection. To begin with, a means not an end for these groups. Over time, as they rediscover the environment from their own identity, they will be able to relate to nature conservation and environmental protection.

### **Speaker 1 Deepak Naik- Secretary General of Minorities Europe**

#### I

#### **Intro to Minorities Europe by Deepak Naik**

**Deepak works with minorities and smaller faith communities including; Hindu, Islam, Sikh and Buddhists. He's been working with these groups over the last 15-20 years on both a local and global scale. He believes we must all respect and understand each other and the environment.**

All the faiths Deepak works with are completely at one with the environment and play an important part in the regeneration of communities and physical areas. Gaining a licence for a place of worship is notoriously difficult and this is overcome by buying up disused churches and synagogues and reviving them as mosques, gurdwaras, wats and temples which in turn rejuvenates the surrounding areas.

There is a lot of respect for the environment running through these faiths and many of the places of worship are run on a day-to-day basis by volunteers, so in theory they have a lot in common with BTCV and the key elements for partnership are already present. The main problem is the completely different languages the two sides speak with regard to these elements. Management committees within the temples, gurdwaras, wats and mosques are mostly made up of elderly men that are very passionate and proficient at maintaining enthusiasm for the religion but unable to open their minds to other ways of celebrating their faith. A committee in Coventry decided to improve their temple grounds but were left with a feeling of disappointment because the whole process (including the consultation and grant



application process) was so time-consuming and the outcome so unimpressive. The outputs were tiny compared to the time expended.

The best way of making contact with faith groups is to find someone within the community, preferably on the committee, and build a relationship with them before launching into your long-term ideas for the partnership. If you can convince that person to work with you on a small-scale project, they can then work on the rest of the committee or community. People are always more open to ideas that come from someone they know and trust.

### **Speaker 2 Dave Bookless at A Rocha UK**

A Rocha believes that caring for creation and transforming communities go hand-in-hand. The environmental crisis facing the planet is a spiritual issue.

The recent summit in Johannesburg recognised the massive potential in religion to achieve environmental improvement and the various faiths were actually called upon to help in the fight to contain and mitigate the global environmental issues we are facing today. In retrospect, there has been no improvement in the crisis since Rio 10 years ago despite all the countries signing up to the agreement. In fact, it has got worse.

A Rocha run projects in 15 countries on 5 continents. They've transformed a 90 acre brownfield site in Southall into a country park with an environmental education centre. Dave chose Southall to do the project mainly because he's lived there all his life (inc 10 years as a vicar before he got involved with A Rocha) and there was a great need for some kind of environmental resource in the area.

The project has involved councils, residents, faith leaders, the large hindu, sikh and muslim communities as well as christians and people from the local BME populations. In London, over 50% of church congregations are from BME groups. All the faith leaders in Southall have signed an eco-pledge and are committed to searching their various scriptures to identify environmental threads they can use to enthuse their respective communities.

A Rocha in Southall also does lots of work with schools inc eco-clubs, outings to places of natural beauty and interest and practical conservation.

The reason the project has been such a success Dave puts down to the fact he's lived and worked in the borough all his life, and all the staff have moved into the area to be nearby. Faith-based organisations are the largest NGOs working with deprived communities in the UK and always have long-term plans and objectives. A majority of volunteers at A Rocha are asylum seekers and refugees. They are invariably well-educated and/or skilled in their field and through volunteering get glowing references for future employees.

## Question and Answer Session from Faith and Communities Workshop



Q from Community group member

How can we as a community group change to get closer to other faith community groups?

A from Deepak and A. Rocha

D - Remember truth, honesty and openness is welcomed in any faith. It is important to remain open minded when approaching faith communities.

A Rocha - Try not to approach with a formulated agenda i.e. We have money to make a community garden in your grounds, where shall we put it? Remember to consult initially as with any other group but take it a step further back, what improvements do they need help with. These groups have environmental concerns but maybe not what 'fluffy' conservation offers. Maybe it's more about dumped cars and graffiti

Q – Are there any projects that involve growing schemes in church grounds?

A- from A. Rocha – Look at the 'Living Churchyard Scheme' by doing a websearch or check out DEFRA's scheme for 'Eco Congregations' they may be able to provide an audit of grounds. There is also the Church Urban Fund. No details to hand but websearch should provide some information.

Q – What weight do you put on people understanding other people's faiths? How do you overcome prejudices?

A- A. Rocha said that it is important to expose people of one faith to another's faith especially if they live and work side by side. He organises regular visits to Mosques and Temples for the Christians involved with projects which really helps. Although conservation can be removed from religious teachings it is important to be sensitive to conflicting religions. A. Rocha organises different workdays for different religions as their focus is on the environment.

Deepak said that it is important for very established religions in the UK to understand that minority religions do not have as strong support systems in place and so struggle for funding to keep their religious premises 'alive' let alone developing the outside spaces with small grants. Therefore there is level playing ground to compare eachothers faith and its place in UK society.

Q The Tree Council

The tree council wish to launch a multi- faith tree celebration day where one day of the year is dedicated to Faith and Trees. Would this be difficult to coordinate?

Rocha responded that in his experience he would engage the groups separately but to keep this approach discreet. It may be an idea to produce different materials for different faith groups nationally. Approach Heads of Faith Nationally and link them in with the scheme.

Q – It was said that Management Committees in faith communities / buildings tend to be older gentlemen. How would say, BTCV, get involved with youths from faith groups?

A – Deepak – It is a difficult journey but approach community heads on a local level, one to one for advice and again build up a relationship of trust. Sometimes they have very little link with their own youth.



Rocha – There are some really dynamic youth faith groups too, try to find out where these are, perhaps by linking in with schools. Remember that R.E. GCSE is an ‘easy’ qualification to achieve! It has a module dedicated to Religion and the Environment –could tie in with the National Curriculum with local Secondary Schools.

Parminda – gave an example of a PP award that improved church grounds by working in consultation with the locally faith linked school.

Q – from A. Bedford at Islington Council

As Ecology manager for Islington, we’re finding it difficult to involve young refugees locally. We have approached the local Mosque and haven’t had any joy. What should we do?

A-Deepak suggested that he would contact the Muslim Council of Britain for advice and help and keep trying to contact the local Mosque by getting a Muslim school headteacher involved.

Q from Sue Holder on BTCV board of trustees

What is a good way to approach the elderly male committee members?

A from Deepak

Find a common language, compliment them on the work they have undertaken so far and build trust. This is a process in itself and can’t be rushed- some take 2-3 yrs to build.

Q from Sue Holder

Can you give us a real example please?

A from Deepak

There are too many examples to give one. There are 175 Hindu temples and 265 Gurdwaras in the UK! Talk about refurbishment- find out what they want to do with their space and find some common ground. Think of projects that fit in with their way of thinking.

Statement from Lea - BTCV Cymru (was a speaker in the morning session)

Succeeded in Wales through building a relationship with a local contact, finding out their priorities and creating a small project around that. Now they’re planning a much larger project. It all takes time!

### **Questions for A Rocha**

Nuradin Dirie- Camden Council

Q The eco-pledge idea is fabulous but have you been monitoring its effectiveness?

A. The Southall Sustainability Forum is the official title of the group that have signed up to the Eco-pledge. They have committed to regular meetings which local stakeholders also attend (police, council etc). The groups prime concern are pests and general envirocrime which is typical for residents of urban areas. As a group they do have greater voice for affecting change and have successfully lobbied the council to resolve some of the issues that have been highlighted at meetings.



Q Clare Taylor, ETN trainer

This project sounds very exciting but how sustainable is it? Where does your funding come from and is it guaranteed long-term?

A. A Rocha get money from 3 main sources:

1. the supermarket through section 106
2. SRB funding
3. Soil and rubble from excavations for the new Wembley stadium were used to landscape the site so they earned quite a bit of money from this
4. They also lease part of the site to 5-a-side football teams

Q Sue Holder, BTCV

Is the project bringing in non-faith residents or just christians, hindus, muslims and sikhs?

A. Yes- they get a lot of other volunteers through the council volunteer bureau too

Q Sue Holder

Is faith the main draw- is that the primary way you advertise your project and recruit volunteers?

A. Not really but faith is a massive attraction for a lot of people. Part of the days experience at the park is the sharing of a midday meal with all the staff as well. People that originally volunteered in the admin side of the running of the park have returned just to cook- this sharing of food is a very important part of the day.

Q Sue Holder

Does faith sometimes act as a barrier to people getting involved?

A sometimes- there is a lot of blame on Christians as causing the environmental problems we have today but remember Noah? He saved the animal population! It's a difficult thing to judge as they aren't there to ask.

Q Clare Taylor

Is there any monitoring of the faith of your volunteers?

A Yes, have started recording this info. But, it's not mandatory to provide that info. It does come down to availability- lots of the asylum seekers and refugees are islamic as it's that part of the world that's having most problems at the moment.

Q Jack Atkinson, BTCV Millenium Volunteers

What percentage of your volunteers are 16-24 years?

A Surprisingly low- can't really understand why either. The very young volunteers are particularly enthusiastic, the next age group is 30 and upwards so there's a big gap. Saying that, secondary school pupils do do work experience at the park.

Q Jack Atkinson

I think peer pressure is one of the main reasons

A Bradford is a good example- they have problems maintaining an input from the youth. Social clubs and sports-based projects get lots of volunteers from the youth bracket

Q Richard Usted

Do the teachings of all faiths have an environmental undercurrent?

A Parminder Garcha



Yes, respect for the environment is a thread running through all faiths. All the various religious writings and scriptures have a lot of love and appreciation for nature and conservation. In the Sikh faith dissemination of information is the problem. In minority faiths education is important and engagement is 30-40 years behind. Planting trees just wasn't a priority in the 50's – 70s, it was economics that was important.

The discrimination and racism prevalent in societies around the world today prevents a feeling of place which restricts progress.

Parminder drew attention to the WWF Ecology and...faith series.

Drawing examples of conservation and protection of the environment from scriptures and disseminating this info. to the communities is key.

Clare Taylor

The WWF Ecology and...series is out of print.

Dave Bookless

Francis of Assisi! WWF held a faith conference in the 80s- further information may be available on the website. Another book to be recommended;

The Bishop of Liverpool- Jesus and the Earth. It looks into sustainability.

Q Nuradin

Are there any examples of faith communities embarking on environmental projects without prompting from orgs?

A Dave Bookless

It's part of the faith. Even atheists experience spirituality in nature. It's just a matter of taking that step from appreciating nature to actually doing something to protect it. We need to push a lifestyle change.

Parminder

It's a matter of inspiration- we need to use faith as an inspiration and the environment as an expression faith.

In 1999 in Birmingham the Sikh population held a Tricentenary celebration to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> and final guru who empowered the followers. To mark the occasion they planted 300 trees.

In Nottingham, the Colsa Wood project- a partnership between the local Sikh population, Groundwork, BTCV and the Parks service. It was originally about heritage and identity for a Sikh youth group. The youth used the process of creating the woods to reinvigorate their heritage and helped them find a sense of space and place and celebrate their new life away from the Punjab.

Are there any specific barriers people have experienced?

Q Jack Atkinson

Sustainability- its not always addressed. The excitement of finally getting a project off the ground can make you forget about the long term and once initial funding has run out, projects (and the groups) often collapse.

A Parminder



The process and journey is the most important bit, not the end result- funders need to realise this. Its not about ticking boxes.

Lea, BTCV Cymru

Has been working with Welsh speakers, BME groups etc and it's a slow and gradual process, a really special journey. Although we can't escape funding outputs we must stay focussed on the people we are working with- as Judy Ling Wong (BEN) said in her speech we should be on tap not on top. Investing time in projects will lead to sustainability.

Sister Ola Lawal, Afri-Caribbean People's Organisation and People's Places award winner

Black people remember singing songs of faith while in the fields cultivating, it's the basis of everything. She has a meditation tape where the woman urges us to think of the sea, the mountains, the clean air, essentially the things that God created to calm ourselves. Life is in everything. Her mother always told her to treat the ground with dignity as we all return there sooner or later. We have to think of our great great great grandchildren and make sure we leave something positive for them. BTCV and nature binds us together and helps us work in peace and harmony. BTCV have been supporting the ACPO for nearly 2 years now and without the help of Sheena and Claire the garden project would never have happened.

Q The planning system needs to address the issue of lack of open spaces.

Phil Jones, HR Manager BTCV

Q Lesbians in one of the BTCV projects have been getting a lot of abuse from the group she was volunteering with. Through equal opportunities legislation we are bound to promote inclusivity but some faiths don't tolerate homosexuality etc. Whats the best way to cope with this?

A Dave

I'm glad somebody brought this up- your right faiths aren't always tolerant and secular morality does cause exclusion, the recent issue of head scarves in France is a great example. It's the same with sexuality- there are very clear teachings in the scriptures about this kind of thing and the only way forward is to agree to disagree. Some of my closest friends are muslim yet christians and muslims have very different views on who Jesus is. You just have to respect each others faiths- easier said than done.

Lea, BTCV Cymru

I agree, its all about respect, we're all very different people living on this planet. It's a 2-way process. Have to agree to disagree and put your differences aside and work together anyway.

### **Closing by Parminder Garcha**

Recommended literature;

Faith in London published by Jobcentre Plus- has sections on all the different faiths. Must remember that everyone is unique though and some are more devout than others so best to ask first before making assumptions.

Regional version of the above that Parminder was involved in with added sections





# Summary of Key Action Points from Workshop Sessions

## *Summary from Organisational Change Workshop*

- *Listen to and learn the language of the funder, make sure you are giving them something they need rather than just asking for cash and then walking away. Organisations need to identify and understand the language of the funders they are approaching.*
- *Treat people with dignity, respect their needs and listen.*
- *Recognise the reasons for change and the drivers behind them.*
- *Allow the change process to be owned by the people needing to change.*
- *Environments for All needs to become an ethos in all that we do; in leadership, communication and consultation.*

## *Summary from Youth and the Environment Workshop*

- *If you ask young people whether they are interested in volunteering or the environment, a lot of them will say “no”. The point is to start from what interests them. Almost certainly they will have opinions about the areas where they live, and about their role and position in the communities in which they live. Those opinions are the starting point for active and positive engagement.*
- *It is no good telling young people that they should be socially or environmentally responsible citizens/ What we should be doing is offering them the chance to take responsibility, and offering them the chance to be taken seriously. In the vast majority of cases, if you offer them that chance, they are very keen to take it.*

## *Summary from Marginalised Communities Workshop*

- *Problem with funding not being long-term enough/continuous. You start to develop a good programme and then it just stops.*
- *The government wants to use to use the voluntary sector for part of its work but there is concern that the voluntary sector will become as bureaucratic and unresponsive as parts of government.*



- *Much of the voluntary sector, and people in general don't understand the barriers to volunteering eg paying for people with disabilities to get to site. You need to cater for people with disabilities better.*
- *Lots of people are very thankful for the significant role BTCV plays in the lives of their communities.*
- *Thanks to (and often despite the lack of) funding, there is a lot of excellent, innovative and life-changing work taking place through environmental volunteering.*
- *In describing 'marginalised communities', a key point is that BTCV has addressed the issues that marginalise people. This is a major factor in BTCV's success.*
- *Disseminating awareness of the small things that inhibit participation would greatly help the ability of partner organisations to link projects.*

### *Summary from Faith in the Community Workshop*

- *Faith is a motivator, catalyst and source of inspiration to engage communities – not a barrier.*
- *Faith is part and parcel of the environment. BTCV and other organisations need to work with faith communities and need to work in 'God's Time'!*
- *BTCV and other organisations should not have assumptions or expectations about faith groups and go in with pre-set agendas and timescales.*
- *Minority faith communities do not have a level-playing field and 'starting – point' from where to engage with BTCV. Need to be aware and respect this.*



## *Round Up of Key Ideas of the Day*

- Give people a chance and they will respond.
- People have skills whoever they are.
- Volunteering is a way to contribute and celebrate what we do.
- “A neglected environment tells people they are worthless”
- Urge all the funders to resource BTCV to turn the grey areas into golden ones.

## *Quotes of the Day*

*“Asylum Seekers ate my donkey!”* (Maeve Sherlock)

*“Diversity is easy to say, hard to do.”*

## *Things to Learn*

- Value people’s own expertise and experience. *“On tap, not on top professionals!”*
- Imagination and fun.
- Thinking of what the environment can do for regeneration.
- Sustainable communities are the root of sustainable development.
- Methodology of working with all communities – *“Not only do it with them but being part of the community.”*
- *“People as a workforce for nature and nature helping to change people’s lives”*  
(Judy Ling-Wong)



# Environments for All Conference

## Delegate List

<b>Title</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Mr	Dave	Aberdeen	Regional Human Resources Manager	Environment Agency Wales
	Jim	Aberdein	Learning Development Manager	BTCV
Mrs	Cope	Adayem		Afri-Caribbean People's Organisation
	Michael	Adeyeye		Brent African Association
	Tim	Adkin	Area Manager	BTCV
	Naila	Akram		Home Office
Mrs	Huda	Alarashi	Volunteer Officer EfA	BTCV Scotland
Mr	Tony	Ambrose	Manager - Volunteers Rangers	SUSTRANS
	Moira	Anderson	Biodiversity Policy Unit	DEFRA
Mr	Orlando	Arnold	Senior Corporate Fundraiser	BTCV
Mrs	Rufia	Ashraf	Womens Support Worker	Northampton Bangladeshi Association
	Jack	Atkinson	Millennium Volunteer Project Co-ordinator	BTCV
	Tracey	Barrington	Project Officer Environment	Castle Vale Housing Action Trust – ECD Dept.
	Graham	Barrow	Chairman	Kerridge Ridge & Ingersley Vale Countryside & Heritage Project
Miss	Liz	Barton	Community Project Officer	Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland
Mr	Glen	Baverstock	VO (Green Gym)	BTCV Cymru
Mr	Andrew	Bedford	Ecology Manager	LB Islington
Mr	Steve	Bedser	Executive Director	Groundwork Black Country
	Runa	Begum		Mewn Cymru
Ms	Rehena	Begum	Volunteer Officer	BTCV Cymru
Mr	Stephen	Berry	People & Wildlife Officer	English Nature
Mr	David	Beuzeval	National External Funding Manager	Environment Agency
Ms	Jenny	Biggart	Community Diversity Officer	BTCV
	Olguta	Bleoca		
Profe ssor	Adrian	Bleoca		University Timisora/Ecosilva
Mrs	Barbara	Boardman	Deputy Director	Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland
Ms	Alison	Boden	Snr Manager Coast and Countryside	Wyre Borough Council
Mr	David	Bowtell	Franchise Manager	Merton College
Mr	Ian	Broomfield	Community Programmes Manager	Great North Forest
Dr	Andy	Brown	Chief Executive	English Nature
	Sarah	Burden	Marketing Officer	Green Flag
	Liz	Burgess	Legal & Support Services Director	BTCV
Mr	Eric	Cahoon	Community Development Worker	Community Empowerment Larne



Dr	Richard	Campen	Principal, Losehill Hall	Peak District National Park Authority
	Neil	Canham	Regional Director	BTCV
Ms	Chaela	Carrell	CPO	BTCV Cymru
Mrs	Stella	Carter	Volunteer	The Afro-Caribbean Project
	Jack	Chestnutt	Coleraine Field Officer	Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland
Mr	Anil	Chundoo	Community Development Officer	BTCV Scotland
Mr	Aitken	Clarke	Vice President	BTCV
Mrs	Elizabeth	Clarke	People Planting Leader	Green Light Trust
	Caty	Collier	Volunteer Development Manager	The Wildlife Trusts
	Alasdhair	Collins	People's Places Award Scheme Manager	BTCV
Ms	Nicole	Collomb	Enabling & Delivery Advisor	CABE Space
Mr	Peter	Crossan	Secretary	Seacourt Community Council
	Cath	Crowley	EfA Community Project Officer	BTCV
Mr	Geoffrey	Dart	Chairman	BTCV Enterprises
	Helen	Davies	Human Resources Advisor	Environment Agency Wales
	Lucy	Davies	Project Manager	Thrive
	Clifford	Davy	London Regional Director	BTCV
	Roger	De Freitas	BTCV Trustee	BTCV
	Lorraine	De Souza	Partnerships Officer	Environment Agency Wales
Mrs	Merle	Dekanski	Volunteers Officer	The Woodland Trust
	Mick	Denness	South East Director	BTCV
Mr	Niranjan	Dhillon	Principal	Friends of Phoenix Park
Mrs	Florence	Dioka	Counselling & Development Officer	Meridian
Mr	Nuradin	Dirie	Planning Project Officer	London Borough of Camden
Mr	Steve	Dixon	CPO	BTCV Cymru
Ms	Leslie	Dobson	South Wales Community Manager	BTCV Cymru
	Satpal	Dogra		Sikh Womens Forum
Mrs	Rebecca	Drozd	Community Volunteer Co-ordinator	YHA England & Wales Ltd
Mr	Tim	Duckmanton	Volunteer Officer	The Wildlife Trusts
	Jessica	Duffy	Penine Project Officer	BTCV
Mrs	Angela	Dyer	Head of Regeneration	Optima Community Association
	Pat	Ellingham	Head of Resources	Avon Wildlife Trust
Dr	Scott	Ferguson	Advisory Officer - Settlements	Scottish Natural Heritage
	Ron	Fern	England Director	BTCV
	Ines	Ferreira	Peoples Places Award Winner	Centre 404
Mr	Tom	Flood	Chief Executive	BTCV
	Paul	Forrest-Jameson	Inner London Area Manager	BTCV
Ms	Tracey	Forshaw	Gardening Programme Administrator	Help the Aged
	Steve	Fowkes	Birmingham Project Officer	BTCV
	Caroline	Frances-King	BTCV Trustee	BTCV
Ms	Annabel	Franklin	Community Project Officer	BTCV Scotland
Mr	Tom	Freeland	Partnership Development Manager	National Urban Forestry Unit
	Andy	Galligan	Green Training Officer	BTCV



Mr	Parminder	Garcha		Lynton Regeneration
Mrs	Eleni	Gazi	President	Conservation Volunteers Greece (C.V.G)
	Mark	Gibson	Regional Director for Yorkshire	BTCV
Miss	Jess	Gildener	Arts & Sustainability Officer	North Dorset District Council
	Julie	Gilson	Grants Manager	Camelot Foundation
	Sheena	Gladding	BME Outreach Officer	BTCV
	Chas	Goemans		Icelandic Environment Agency/BTCV Iceland
	Mark	Graham	Senior Conservation Officer	Environ Trust
	Lea	Halborg	Volunteer	BTCV Cymru
Mr	Russell	Hampton	Deputy Director	BTCV Scotland
	Kevin	Hand	Director of Campaigns	Tree Council
Mr	Mark	Harman	Group Treasurer	Articlave Community Association
	Andrew	Harradine	Former NE Wales Community Project Officer	BTCV
	Mary	Hastie	Manager	Sikh Sanjog
Ms	Sue	Hilder	BTCV Trustee	BTCV
	Barney	Hill	Access Development Advisor	Lake District National Park Authority
	Christopher	Hine	Wildlife Liaison Officer	Humberside Police
Mr	Mark	Horton	Community and Education Conservation Officer	Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland
	Catrin	Hughes	Volunteering Programmes Manager	National Trust
Dr	Ian	Humphreys	Operations Manager	Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland
Ms	Joan	Hunter	Environmental Project Worker	Kilcranny House
Ms	Romena	Huq	Project Manager (EfA)	BTCV Scotland
Mrs	Leena	Huq	Volunteer Officer EfA	BTCV Scotland
	Tof	Islam	Birmingham Development Worker	Black Environment Network
	Dave	Jackson	Birmingham, BC & W Manager	BTCV
Mr	David	Jamieson	Director	BTCV Scotland
	Andy	Jefferies	International Development Officer	BTCV
	Kevin	Jones	Regional Director	BTCV
	Philip	Jones	HR Manager	BTCV
Miss	Tanika	Kelay	Research Fellow	University of Surrey
Mr	Crispin	Kirkpatrick	Local Nature Reserve Officer	Brighton & Hove City Council
	Ola	Lawal	Peoples Places Award Winner	Afri-Caribbean People's Organisation
	Andy	Lees	Conservation Manager	Environ Trust
	John	Lewis	West Midlands Regional Director	BTCV
	Jowanna	Lewis	Organic Food for All Co-ordinator	HDRA
Mr	Neville	Lilly	Director	New Environmental Ventures Ltd.
	Fiona	Lovely	Senior Playworker	Belfast Traveller Support Group
	Linda	Macdonald	Resource Manager	Hidden Gardens - NVA Organisation
Mr	Callum	MacIntosh	GG Development Manager	BTCV Cymru
	Joy	MacKenzie	EfA Steering Committee Member	BTCV
	Paolo	Maddoni		Legambiente Italy
	Gill	Manning		West Penine Housing Association
Ms	Barbra	Mazur	Grants Manager	Esmee Fairbairn Foundation
	Clare	McClafferty	EfA Co-ordinator for England	BTCV



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	Kate	McKenzie	Eastern Regional Director	BTCV
Mr	Clarence	McKenzie		EfA Steering Group
Mrs	Hilary	McNeill	Campaign Manager	Technology Transfer and Innovation Ltd
	Anthony	McQuillan	Director	Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland
Mrs	Anne	Meikle	Director	BTCV Cymru
	Catherine	Miller	London Regional Worker	Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens
Mrs	R	Mills	Countryside and Access Officer	Devon County Council
	Mahmood	Mirza	Community Cohesion Officer	North Staffordshire Racial Equality Council
Mrs	Michelle	Morgan	Community Groups Administrator	BTCV
	Sue	Morrison	Cleansing & Grounds Maintenance Manager	Coventry City Council
	Moses	Moses	Representative	New Testament Community Project & Elders Voice
Mrs	Farida	Mukaddam	Community Development PO	BTCV EfA Leicester
Ms	Mary	Nairn	Volunteer Officer EfA	BTCV Scotland
	Nyla	Naseer	Head of Social Inclusion & Diversity	English Heritage
	Sue	Nelson	Assistant Chief Executive	Encams
Ms	Tanja	Neumayer	CPO	BTCV Cymru
	Tony	Newby	Volunteer Support Manager	BTCV
Dr	Ian	Newman	Chief Executive	Fieldfare Trust
	Sasha	Newman	South West Regional Director	BTCV
	Richard	Newstead	Project Officer	Kerridge Ridge & Ingersley Vale Countryside & Heritage Project
	David	Obaze	CANCELLED	National Coalition for Black Volunteering
Mr	Nick	Ockenden	Project Officer	GreenSpace
	William	Okorley	Tenants Leader	Stonebridge Housing Action Trust
Ms	Marina	Pacheco	Outer London Area Manager	BTCV
	Paul	Padfield	Project Manager	BTCV
Mrs	Elaine	Padmore	Volunteer	The Afro-Caribbean Project
Mr	Bharat	Pandya	Chair	Bhrama Samaj
Ms	Fiona	Parkin	Trust Fundraiser	BTCV
Mrs	Clare	Parsons	Community Development Officer	Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
Mr	David	Payne	South Wales Manager	BTCV Cymru
	Sarah	Pemberton	Capacity Building Team	Friends of the Earth
Mr	Toby	Pike	Volunteer	BTCV Cymru
	Carrie	Poskitt	Community Project Manager	BTCV
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Mr	John	Price	Public Affairs Manager	UKAEA
Mr	Duncan	Priddle	Acting Senior Countryside Manager	City of Edinburgh Council
	Anita	Prosser	Head of International	BTCV
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Ms	Susan	Reece	Training Co-ordinator	BTCV



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Mrs	Louise	Richardson	Head of Policy Unit	Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
	Fran	Richardson	Conservation Project Manager	BTCV
Mrs	Jean	Rider	Administrator	Local Heritage Initiative
Mrs	Eulene	Roach	The Afro-Caribbean Project	Women's Development Project
	John	Robbins	Team Member, Bio-Diversity Policy Unit	DEFRA
	Sanje	Robeli	Volunteer	Scottish Refugee Council Drama Group
	Liz	Roblin	Area Customer Sales Manager	Environment Agency Wales
Mr	David	Roney	Chair	New Deal for Communities - Oldham
Mrs	Kay	Roney	Public Health Officer	Hathershaw Residential Association
Miss	Kate	Ross	Reserves Officer	Derbyshire Wildlife Trust
	Bokthiar	Rouf	Project Officer	Castle Vale
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Mr	John	Saddiqi		Glodwick & Clarksfield Inter-Community Forum
Mr	Jott	Salm	Nature Tours	Estonian Fund for Nature
Ms	Liz	Sanderson	Volunteer EfA	BTCV Scotland
Ms	Alice	Schmidt	Student Researcher	Wyre Borough Council
Ms	Lesley	Scott	Case Manager	New Opportunities Fund
	Natasha	Scott-Matthews	Communications Co-ordinator	Barnardos Better Play
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Mr	Robert	Shaw	Chairman	Seacourt Community Council
Mr	Robert	Shearman	Senior Development Manager	Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland
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	Dawn	Shelford	Local Heritage Initiative Adviser	The Countryside Agency
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Mr	Yhayha	Thada	Black Voluntary Development Officer	VAL
	Iwan	Thomas	Team Leader Environment Management	Environment Agency Wales
	Paul	Todd	Deputy Manager	Green Flag
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Mrs	Helen	Townsend	Recreation, Access & Tourism Advisor	Forestry Commission England
Mrs	Jean	Trainor	Owner	Healthlinks
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Ms	Janette	Ward	Regional Director, South West	English Nature
Miss	Joanne	Ward	Residential Support Worker	The Simon Community
Ms	Eve	Warren	Community Outreach Officer	Derwent Community Team
Mr	Jalal	Wassu	Volunteer Officer EfA	BTCV Scotland



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Mrs	Barbara	Watson	Training & Grant Co-ordinator	Trafford Hall (NTRC)
	Andrew	Watson	Acting Chair	Stonebridge Estate Tenants & Residents Association
Mr	Steve	Webster	Policy Co-ordinator-Youth & Community	Groundwork UK
	Marie	White	Team Co-ordinator	PCT - Harlesden
Mrs	Janine	Wigmore	SGA Development Officer	Groundwork UK
Ms	Vicky	Wilkinson	Regional Community and Volunteering Officer	The National Trust
Mr	Richard	Williams	Development Director	BTCV
	Sharon	Williams	Head of Environmental Engagement	Earthwatch
	Chris	Williams	Programme Development Co-ordinator	BTCV
	Sarah	Williams	Countryside Protection Campaigner	The Ramblers Association
	Hannah	Williams	Rochdale Community Project Officer	BTCV
Ms	Janet	Williams	Secretary	Wrexham Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales
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Mrs	Stephanie	Wong	Counselling & Development Officer	Meridian
Ms	Corinna	Woodall	Policy Advisor	Heritage Lottery Fund
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