

## Junior Countryside Ranger Project

### A Day in the Life of a Countryside Ranger

Due to the under-representation of ethnic communities in employment in the natural environment sector in Scotland, *Black Environment Network (BEN)* worked with *Fife Council Community Services - Countryside Rangers* and the *Black Community Development Project Edinburgh (BCDP)* to set up the pilot Junior Countryside Ranger Project. The Junior Countryside Ranger Programme was inspired by the Junior Ranger Programme established by Europarc in association with the International Ranger Federation in 2002.

### Making it happen

BCDP identified potential participants for a countryside trip: five girls and five boys aged between 12 and 15 years from diverse ethnic backgrounds, namely Chinese, Bangladeshi and Scottish white were selected. This project worked with the ethos of an integrated group. In the summer of 2004, 4 of the young people spent a day with professional countryside rangers in at Lochore Meadows Country Park, Lochgelly, Fife.

### Role models for potential recruits

The project aimed to gauge the level of interest for a full Junior Countryside Ranger Programme and build aspiration in young people towards working in the environmental sector. It was a credit to the Rangers that although there was a low turn out on the day due to extremely bad weather, it was a success nonetheless. The outcome of the project was to raise awareness among ethnic communities of employment opportunities in Scotland's environmental sector. This project gave the Countryside Rangers a first opportunity to develop their skills to work effectively with young people from ethnic communities, thereby laying down a basis for other new initiatives.

### Hands on experience

The young people participated in a range of environmental activities, and in so doing, learned about the value of country parks for nature, culture and society. They enjoyed guided walks, exploring a range of natural habitats and recreational facilities, looking at heritage features





including local relics of the mining industry. They gained a great sense of achievement from doing practical conservation and regeneration tasks such as felling trees using a variety of tools. Although only 4 young people took part, due to the bad weather, the highly positive experience of discovering what it is like to be a Countryside Ranger is being shared with family and friends, and peers within the ethnic communities. This is a breakthrough.

## The Future

BEN has recommended that further projects be undertaken with other under-represented community groups and that a fuller Junior Countryside Ranger Programme be developed and extended to other regions in the future. *Fife Council Community Services* have expressed an interest in working in partnership to develop such a programme.



## FACTFILE

- **Funders:**

ESF EQUAL Theme B, Lloyds TSB Foundation Scotland, Communities Scotland

- **Partners:**

Fife Council Community Services - Countryside Rangers, Black Community Development Project Edinburgh

- **Target group:** Young people from Scotland's ethnic communities

- **Numbers:** 4 young people

- **Resources:**

Evaluation report available from [www.ben-network.org.uk](http://www.ben-network.org.uk)

- **Key points:**

- Enabling young people to experience aspects of different environmental careers is vital if we want them to broaden their horizons re employment
- Careful targeting is essential to ensure ethnic community participation.
- It's important to have a contingency plan for bad weather (even in August in Scotland)!
- Setting the first experience of any kind of environmental activity within ethnic communities is a breakthrough



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