

## Raising awareness of conservation work and volunteering opportunities with teenagers

### Introducing a National Trust site and taster activities for Chinese youngsters and parents

Black Environment Network (BEN) was working in North Wales with National Trust (NT) staff to introduce local ethnic community young people to the farm on the Craflwyn Estate in Snowdonia. Here, they could enjoy outdoor activities and find out about conservation, organic farming and local sourcing of food. This was the first time the Estate had hosted a visit from local Chinese people.

### Making it happen

BEN has worked closely with the older members of the Chinese Community for several years. This NT project gave us the opportunity to specifically reach out to this younger age group.

The NT Youth Officer and BEN Development Worker spent some time establishing what activities were available and designing a day that would capture the interest of teenagers, and also their parents who were accompanying them and full of curiosity.

### Energy and enthusiasm for new experiences

Seven Chinese teenagers and ten parents from Gwynedd, Anglesey and Conwy arrived on the day. The morning was bright and sunny. A guided riverside walk at the site showed everyone the habitats it provided for wildlife and fish spawning. Then different NT staff outlined other site themes, jobs and responsibilities: the Farm Manager spoke about how the organic farm is run, the Warden about organising teams of volunteers and the Youth Officer explained the idea of food miles and organic produce.

The teenagers were willing to try some hard work, enthusiastically volunteering to learn how to clear thistles from the fields by hand. On an organic farm, weeds must be removed without weedkillers and a hand tool called a 'Lazy dog' was handed out to everyone for the job. With a little

instruction from the Youth Officer, the 'Lazy dog' was mastered and good progress made in the fields. It was a wonderful place for the young people to be out and active. The parents preferred to enjoy other aspects of the site, but were keen to understand what the youngsters were doing.



In spite of the torrential rain that descended in the afternoon, the youngsters were not disheartened; but eventually everyone took shelter in the barn to enjoy a picnic and a discussion ensued about locally sourced food and the organic meat produced at Hafod y Llan Farm. This was particularly interesting to many of the Chinese who are involved in catering.



This day enabled both parents and their teenagers to understand the volunteering and employment opportunities at this National Trust site. It is important that both generations experience this learning in order to support the ethnic young people to consider working in the environmental sector.

### The Future

This first visit provides a model for future groups. National Trust staff learned a lot from feedback and evaluation by the Chinese group and can develop their day programmes using this experience. This will be the beginning of a relationship between the NT, its staff and the Chinese Community in North Wales that will develop into the future.

#### FACTFILE

- **Funder:**  
National Trust  
CCW
- **Partners:**  
The Snowdonia Youth Initiative Project at Craflwyn  
Wai Kwun Chinese Women's Society  
Hafod y Llan Farm, Beddgelert
- **Target:**  
Ethnic youth from 11 - 18 years from Gwynedd and adjoining counties
- **Numbers:**  
20 members of Chinese community
- **Key Points:**
  - Combining strenuous, hands-on activity and raising awareness of environmental issues, can 'hook' teenagers, enabling them to have fun whilst learning
  - It is important for parents to understand and share experiences so that young people are supported to aspire to volunteering and employment opportunities



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