

## Ethnic Minority Youth Participation in the Built and Natural Environment

### Participation to raise awareness and build aspiration for employment

*Black Environment Network (BEN)* in partnership with the *Westerhailes Multicultural Welfare Project (WMWP)* decided to address the lack of ethnic community representation in the environment and heritage sectors by promoting opportunities for participation and employment.

This is the first project of its kind aimed at young people combining opportunities for them to enjoy the environment, and gain awareness of environmental responsibilities with an introduction to volunteering and employment opportunities.



### Two-way process of awareness raising

Between October 2003 and June 2004, five heritage and environmental organisations contributed staff time and resources to prepare the project. Then over a period of a fortnight, young people from Edinburgh's ethnic communities and the organisations' staff engaged with each other. This helped broaden everyone's experience. It gave the young people a chance to connect culturally and socially with Scottish greenbelt landscapes and museums and build a positive image of the sector. It also gave staff, such as countryside rangers, museum curators and even a boat captain, the opportunity to develop appropriate ways to enthuse them and talk about a range of careers.

### Making it happen

Workers took part in BEN's Diversity Training to assist them in gaining an understanding of ethnic environmental participation, enabling them to begin to address barriers, promote employment and open out their services to new audiences.

### "The best thing about the trip is making friends"

Over 60 young people from ethnic communities took part in five educational and interactive visits to heritage and built and natural environment sites. They participated in activities such as tree planting, visiting an exhibition and learned how to document their work through diaries and photographs. Organisational staff told stories about how they started in similar ways and developed their interest into their chosen career paths. An exhibition of the young people's photographic work was staged at Edinburgh City Art Gallery in May 2005.





## The Future

Partners are building on the success of this project. While nurturing and sustaining their work with these young people, they are also reaching out to other excluded groups. New potential participants are coming forward, stimulated by word of mouth contact between different ethnic communities.



## FACTFILE

### ● Funders:

The Edinburgh Youth Social Inclusion Programme (EYSIP), ESF EQUAL Theme B, Lloyds TSB Foundation Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, Communities Scotland.

### ● Partners:

- Edinburgh Green Belt Trust and Dalkeith Country Park
- Historic Scotland Education Ranger Service at Holyrood Park
- British Waterways Trust Scotland and the Falkirk Wheel
- The Green Team at Craigmillar Castle Park
- The National Galleries of Scotland at the Dean Gallery and the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

### ● Target group: Young people from ethnic communities in Edinburgh

### ● Numbers: 60+ young people

### ● Resources:

The young peoples' photographs and diaries were displayed at the Edinburgh City Art Gallery over two days in May 2005. A traveling exhibition of the project is available to communities and organisations working within the heritage and environment sectors to share the experience. The evaluation report 'Ethnic Minority Youth Participation in the Built and Natural Environment' is available on the BEN website [www.ben-network.org.uk](http://www.ben-network.org.uk)

### ● Key points for communities:

- Introduction to stimulating outdoor activities and access to green spaces can play a significant role in the health of young people and contribute to their quality of life and well being.
- Ethnic communities can take the initiative, with the support of BEN, to access opportunities, resources, information and the contacts that they need.
- Community projects and leaders have a responsibility to take up such opportunities and resources for the benefit of their community members.

### ● Key points for organisations:

- Environmental and heritage organisations must prioritise ethnic participation in order to comply with the Race Relations (Amendment 2000) Act. It must be embedded within the organisations' overall policy and strategy at all levels so that staff have the responsibility to take action. In particular, proactive outreach work and equal partnership is essential to ensure full engagement with ethnic communities.



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