



# Progress Through Partnerships Engaging BME Communities

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# Why Community Cohesion?



- Cattle report on 2001 riots : found lack of integration and exclusion from mainstream society
- Respect for and contact between different cultures
- Creating similar life opportunities for all
- Encouraging community participation
- Active citizenship through strong relationships between people from different backgrounds

# Why Progress through Partnerships?



- 70% of BME live in the 88 most deprived boroughs – lack of participation of BME communities in Regeneration issues
- Lack of Collaboration between white-led & BME sector
- Bridge the gap in the sector between white-led & BME led in VCS
- Strong diverse voice to influence policy – ‘making it real’ for diverse sector
- Finding common ground based on shared values



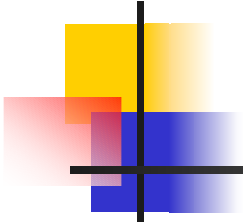
# Issues for BME organisations

## What PTP has found

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- Lack of trust
- Communication and Language Issues
- Lack of Influence at the decision making table
- Inequality of partnership
- Lack of Resources
- A need for Networking

# TESTING THE MIX



Research project carried out by the  
London Sustainable Development Unit

March 2001

Research was carried out in the areas of  
Southwark, Lambeth, Newham,  
Hammersmith & Fulham



# Testing The Mix

## Engaging BME Communities: Key Barriers

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- Poverty
- Funding
- Lack of Information
- Language
- Council Bureaucracy
- Confusing application forms and jargon

# Barriers to participation



- Too much confusion and jargon surround messages on R & E (Regeneration and Environment) issues.
- Critical to link environmental issues to health, social justice, human development as these are key concerns for BME (and also in the global context i.e. in the third world)
- Real life issues affecting BME communities – poor housing, lack of affordable childcare, education, joblessness – does not allow engagement on R & E and SD issues.
- The Environment job field – not representative of BME communities



# Access to information

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- Advice: Could be wrongly interpreted as 'telling us what to do'. Take time to listen
- Culturally relevant
- Should focus on independence, ownership and empowerment

# Removing barriers: Staff Training



- Staff need to empathise with issues of social and economic injustice and its link with environment.
- Need to 'mix' with minority communities in order to find out what these issues really mean to them; e.g. involvement in community events, faith related events, lifestyle events.
- Don't expect quick wins! Need for staff from white-led orgs to accept that it takes time to develop awareness of RE & SD issues affecting BME communities. This needs to be taken into consideration when devising workplans on engagement with BME communities

# Removing barriers: Identifying local 'champions'



- Go out and meet with influential groups within BME communities who are better able to link regen. and environment issues with BME 'lifestyle' priorities.
- Supporting 'champions' through capacity building (could be as simple as helping to arrange childcare so that they can be available to help sell your message, pay expenses). Making use of 'social capital'
- Rewarding champions who have made visible differences to their environment

# Removing barriers: Fun days



- Practical and fun ways of providing access to relevant information
- BME to have input
- Displays from Food Cooperatives, organisations that promote Fair-Trade goods, information on saving energy (reducing costs)
- Displays of BME community activities
- Provide Learning: link benefits to well-being