



Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Communities and the Environment

This briefing has been produced following the Motivate London event on “BME communities and the environment – the partnership approach”, held in June 2005. It outlines a number of do’s and don’ts and top tips for engagement, and captures the key learning.

Channels for outreach: how and where to engage with BME communities

Leaflets and websites aren’t always the most effective ways to communicate. Establishing a consistent, physical presence in a community (rather than relying on mail or phone calls) builds trust and is often the best way to directly engage with community members. Ideas for interactive involvement include:

- Door-knocking campaigns
- Activities on borough high streets
- Projects in local housing estates
- Community festivals and events
- Ethnic arts and media venues
- Faith institutions
- Schools and community centres
- Local BME networks

Getting the message across: effective communication strategies

Once you’ve established contact, raise your profile and boost involvement by making your message accessible and relevant to your target audience:

Making it accessible

- Illustrate text with graphics
- Translate materials into other languages (where applicable)
- Use clear, plain language
- Use ethnic (not just mainstream) media
- Use existing BME channels and networks
- Ask community for their suggestions on relevant channels of communication

Making it meaningful

- Make environmental issues relevant to peoples’ everyday lives, connecting to social, economic and quality of life issues
- Focus on capacity building: develop social capital, civic responsibility, and long-term partnerships with and between BME groups
- Empower people to take responsibility in their own communities

Resources for further information

- 4 Easy Steps to Diverse Partnerships
 - Building Trust: The Voluntary Sector Perspective
 - Directory of London BME Infrastructure Organisations
 - Motivate London Web Resource: case studies and other ideas for motivating sustainable behaviour http://www.lsx.org.uk/programmes/motivating_page1214.aspx
- } Contact info@lsx.org.uk

Top Tips: Do’s and Don’ts for Practice

Don’t:

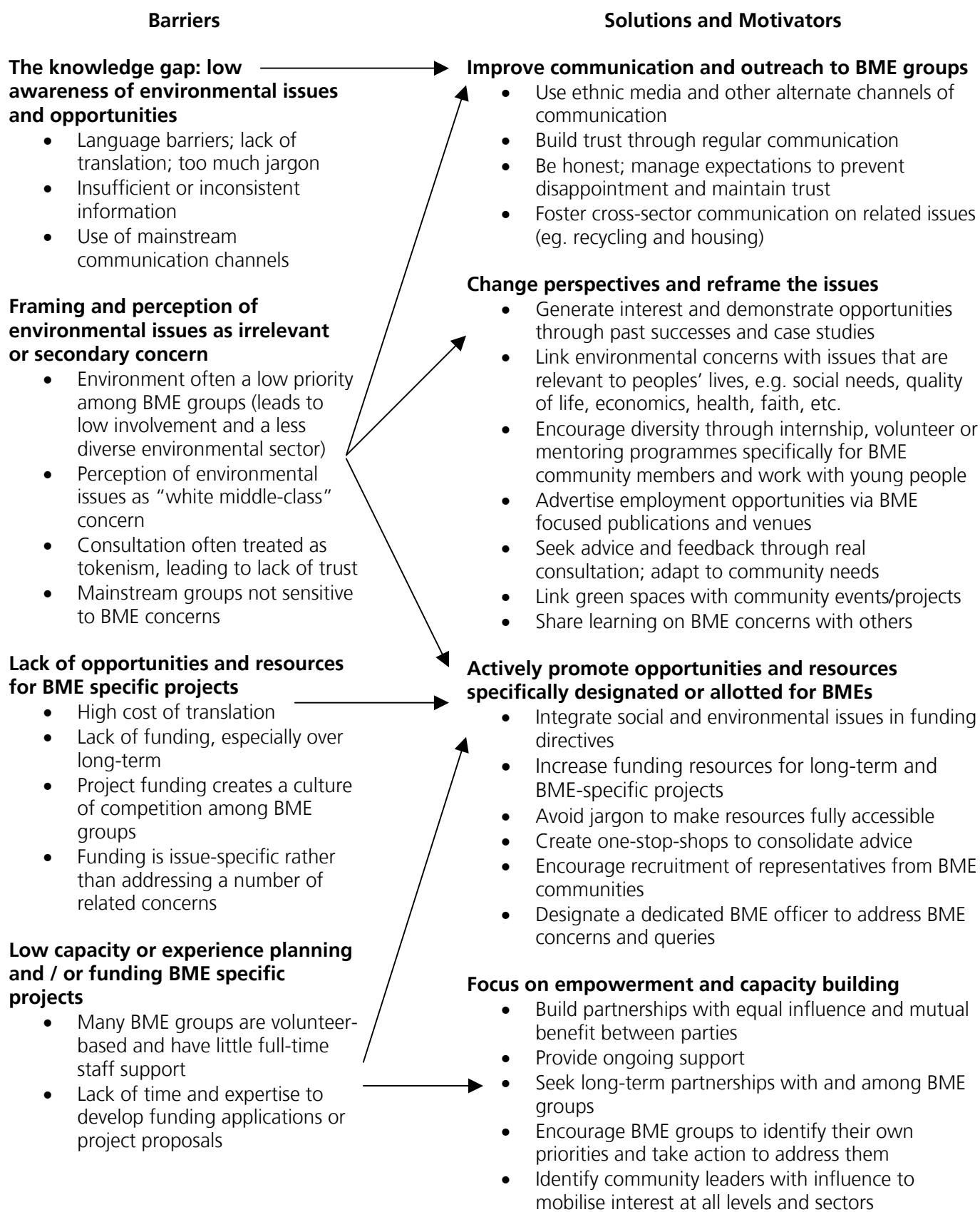
- Rely on translation or leaflets alone
- Use jargon
- Assume equal access to the internet
- Polarise BME issues from “white” or “mainstream” issues
- Only speak to “the usual suspects,” or to members from only one sector or part of a community

Do:

- Connect to peoples’ lives and communities using examples or case studies
- Be aware of cultural sensitivities, especially attitudes towards gender, age and dress
- Empower community leaders and key influencers
- Use festivals and community activities to engage with people on the ground
- Be patient when building partnerships and trust

Common barriers and how to overcome them

This lists common barriers to BME involvement and points to solutions that can be used to overcome them. These are just suggestions; many of the solutions can be creatively used to tackle a whole range of barriers.



This briefing has been produced by the Motivate London project run by London Sustainability Exchange. Motivate London is a project looking at how to motivate Londoners to take on board more sustainable lifestyles. Contact Project Officer Gayle Burgess at: g.burgess@lsx.org.uk for more information, or visit our website: www.lsx.org.uk