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living in a clean and healthy environment is everyone's right

Environmental Justice A Look at London

What is Environmental Justice?



- Poor local environmental quality
- Disproportionate exposure to risks
- Cumulative and multiple exposure over time
- Disproportionate vulnerability
- Differential access

Environmental Justice Key Points

- Concept originates from USA arising from citizen's rights campaigns (1960s onward);
- Relatively new area of research in the UK
- Early studies aimed to address general perception that poor people are not interested in environmental issues
- The human right to a dignified life
- Overall responsibility for everyone to protect the environment for future generations
- Access to information and to a fair legal system
- A voice for the poorest in the world who will suffer disproportionately from environmental damages

Some previous studies of local people's concerns

- Rainforests are a long way from here ... (Burningham and Thrush, 2001)
- Transport, the environment and social exclusion (Lucas, Grosvenor & Simpson, 2001)
- Prioritising local environmental concerns (Lucas, Fuller, Psaila & Thrush, 2004)
- Regeneration & EJ: Links and Lessons (Adebowale, 2003)
- SDRN synthesis review (Lucas, Walker, Eames, and Poustie, 2004)
- Many more (www.jrf.org.uk)

Local people's concerns (1)



- Tensions between providing jobs and a 'good' environment
- Fear of crime and personal safety both in and outside local area
- Poor housing (maintenance and repairs), stigma of neighbourhoods and no chance to move out
- Decline in shopping facilities, GP surgeries and other local amenities and no transport to go further a-field

Local people's concerns (2)



- Lack of activities for children and young people leads to antisocial behaviour – graffiti, vandalism, violence
- Inadequate environmental services - rubbish, litter and street cleaning leading to health concerns
- Environmental hazards and hazardous activities – traffic pollution, waste incineration, sewer processing, factory emissions
- Lack of information and opportunity to participate in local decision-making

Emerging issues

- Access to green space
- Flood risk
- Mobile phone masts
- Social sustainability concerns – health, crime, quality of life
- Climate change
- Global environmental issues

Some statistical evidence of inequalities

- 82% of large factories emitting carcinogenic chemicals located in the 20% most deprived local authority wards (FoE, 2001).
- Sites containing 'hazardous substance sites' are more likely to be located in wards with higher BME populations (Walker, Fairbank and Bickerstaff, 2000).
- Respiratory problems in London more concentrated in the poorest areas despite lower car ownership and use (Stephens et al, 1998).

More statistics

- Children from SC V are 5 times more likely to be knocked down by a car than children in SC I (Roberts and Power, 1996) and Asian children more likely than white children (DETR 2001).
- 38 per cent of social housing and 32 per cent of private sector housing stock were classified as 'non-decent in 2001 (ONS, 2004).
- At least 4.5 million households were living in fuel poverty in the UK in 2001 (DETR 2001b)

... & a few more numbers

- 20% of the population unable to afford healthy food (Stephens et al, 2001).
- Poorer households are more likely to be located in areas with fewer shops and amenities and inadequate transport links to shops selling affordable healthy food (SEU, 2002).
- Authorities with high levels of deprivation have poorer performance standards than average in relation to environmental issues such as refuse collection, public parks and street cleaning (Duffy, 2000).

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- SuScit Project
- Just Cities Project
- Every Action Counts-Diversity Project
- Refugee Environmental Action Network

Moving Forward



- Capacity building, community participation
- Joint work
- Further research
- Local agencies understanding and embracing EJ