CREATING AWARENESS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A Partnership Project
by the Black Environment Network (Scotland)
and the One World Quilt 2000

February – September 2004

FINAL REPORT
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During spring 2004, the Black Environment Network (BEN) and One World Quilt 2000 worked together with three Black and ethnic minority community groups in Glasgow. Funding support for the project was received from: ESF Equal Theme B, Awards for All and Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland

Following discussions on sustainable development and interlinking issues that had importance to the community groups such as the motherhood, the environment, faith, pollution, their children’s future, ‘racism’, citizenship in Scotland and tolerance, each community group created their own unique and innovative quilt. The themes of the quilts were ‘A Beautiful World’, ‘A Peaceful World’ and ‘Peace Like Charity Begins at Home’.

The Key Outcomes of the Project were firstly, awareness raising of many issues, including: sustainable living and development;

- the value of traditional home-based skills and how they can be used in employment;
- and how a community group can run other projects themselves in their community and access sources of funding.

Secondly, the Project gave opportunities for self-expression, self- and community empowerment, for sharing opinions and views of the world and for socialising with others.

Thirdly, in workshops and alongside discussions, three unique community quilts were created and will be on display at The Tramway, part of the Hidden Garden, Glasgow.

The Key Recommendations for the future from the project are:

- Support communities to develop other community environmental art and sustainable development projects.
- Share the experiences of the project and stimulate interest among other community groups Scotland wide.

Further information on this or other projects is available from the BEN Glasgow office and visit www.ben-network.org.uk
2. PROJECT SUMMARY

2.1 Aims and Objectives of the Project

The aim of the project was to provide people from three Black and ethnic minority communities with an opportunity to participate in an environmental art project to create three unique community quilts. This Project would highlight issues of sustainable development and give the participants opportunities to discuss many interlinking issues that affected them such as the environment, pollution, faith, racism and tolerance. The project also aimed to raise awareness of the employment opportunities available within the heritage and environment sector.

The project objectives were to:

- Identify three community groups and participants Scotland-wide who would be interested in doing the project
- Train and advise groups on how to work with their wider communities on a quilt and how funding can be accessed.
- Foster an understanding among people of their responsibility to the environment and heritage and raise awareness on sustainable development and recycling issues.
- Facilitate the social inclusion and participation of Black and ethnic minority communities in environmental art and enjoyment.
- Promote the heritage and environment sector as an alternative area of employment to Black and ethnic minority communities.
- Develop the skills of participants to reach out and work with other community groups.

2.2 People Involved in the Project

There were 69 participants, mainly female in the age range 25-65 years old from diverse ethnic (Angolian, Bangladeshi, Indian and Chinese) and religious backgrounds (Catholic, Buddhist, Hindi and Muslim). There were also some younger family members. The majority of the participants came from Glasgow, but there were some from Cambuslang, Bearsden, Newton Mearns and East Kilbride.

From the community groups there were development workers, administrators, project leaders and volunteers who acted as interpreters/translator and sewing coaches/teachers.

From the project partners there was the BEN Equal Positive Action Worker and two One World Quilt 2000 project workers.
2.3 Partner Organisations

Black Environment Network (BEN)
BEN supports the full participation of ethnic minority communities in the natural and built environment. It develops and facilitates the delivery of innovative programmes of activities with Black and ethnic minority communities to support them to access resources and opportunities within the environmental sector to improve the quality of their life.

BEN also provides training, networking and policy support to organisations working within the build and natural environment to enable them to reach out and work with Black and ethnic minority communities. This helps to sustain the relations developed between communities and organisations to bring long-term physical and intellectual access to the benefits of the environment.

One World Quilt 2000
One World Quilt 2000 are a non-profit-making company in Milton Keynes, exploring ways to consider sustainable development, the Agenda 21 set by the United Nations for the 21st century.

Sustainable development and the theme of ‘one world’ embrace many interlinking issues, for example the environment, ecology, war, peace and community development. Many people have many ideas about creating a more just and peaceful world that values its natural resources. Guided by the principle Act locally, think globally, One World Quilt 2000 support community groups to explore what this principle means to them personally.

One World Quilt 2000 facilitates workshops which provide the opportunity to consider the environment, social development and global citizenship, as well as the designing and making of community quilts.

Partnership between BEN and One World Quilt 2000
BEN Scotland planned a series of sustainable development education and training workshops which had been requested by some local ethnic community groups in Edinburgh. The workshops would also promote benefits, resources and employment opportunities within the built and natural environment.

The Training Workshops were run by One World Quilt 2000, with the support of the BEN EQUAL Positive Action Worker, and the end result would be three innovative community quilts or wall hangings.

Partner Community Groups
Three Black and ethnic minority community organisations were involved in hosting and identifying the participants. The community groups have ownership of the quilts and can display and use them as they wish. BEN and One World Quilt 2000 may request to borrow them for appropriate exhibitions and events. The groups were:
**Glasgow Chinese Women’s Association** hosted by the Chinese Community Development Partnership (CCDP) and established in 1994, is based in Maryhill in the west end of Glasgow. It is the central point of contact and information between the Chinese community and the local authorities, public bodies and voluntary organisations.

**Connectivities** is a relatively new project of Taleem Trust in Govanhill on the south side of Glasgow. It is a culturally specific organisation working mainly with the Muslim community. The Trust offers training and development support to people from minority backgrounds including advocacy and resource acquisition.

**Meridian** is an information and resource centre near Glasgow city centre for Black and ethnic minority women. Meridian supports women to gain access to health, including mental health services, social welfare, voluntary sector services, education, training and employment services, counselling and legal advisory services.
2.4 **Key Outcomes**

- Three Black and ethnic minority community groups were identified from Glasgow, Scotland. 69 Black and ethnic minority participants were involved.

- Three unique community quilts were designed and created using a variety of hand and craft skills and materials.

- Education and discussions on sustainable development and recycling.

- The social inclusion and participation of Black and ethnic minority communities in environmental art and enjoyment.

- Skills development and training on how to work independently with the wider community on environmental art projects, and on fundraising, accessing funding support and organising projects and events.

- The heritage and environment sector was promoted as an alternative area of employment to Black and ethnic minority communities.

2.5 **Conclusions for Black and Ethnic Minority Communities**

There are a range of opportunities available to Black and ethnic minority communities within sustainable development for both enjoyment and education and training.

There are opportunities to progress, and Black and ethnic minority communities must begin to take the initiative through the support provided by organisations such as BEN to develop their own ideas and programmes of activities which addresses their social and cultural issues within the context of sustainable development.

Community projects and leaders have the responsibility of taking up these opportunities and resources for the benefit of their community members.
2.6 Conclusions for the Sustainable Development Sector

Organisations working in sustainable development must put ethnic participation on their agendas, particularly in areas of equality, education and audience development. This project demonstrates, that even with limited resources, useful work in the area of ethnic participation in sustainable development projects can be developed and delivered.

BEN’s role regarding ethnic participation is to act as a catalyst and facilitator. Organisations can initially use BEN to reach out more to Black and ethnic minority communities. The experience gained should be used to reach out further to more Black and ethnic minority communities.

Engaging with Black and ethnic minority communities needs to be pro-active, practical and continuous, therefore outreach work with those communities is essential.

With greater participation by Black and ethnic minority communities, they will become stimulated to contribute their own ideas and energies, thus contributing to sustainable living and debates on sustainability issues.
3. PROJECT BACKGROUND

3.1 Methodology

• Training Workshop: Presentation on sustainable development by the One World Quilt 2000 staff and BEN Worker. Awareness-raising and discussions on environmental art and fundraising.

• Training Workshop: Design of a quilt and practical crafts workshop.

• Practical Workshop: Creating and sewing the quilt.

3.2 Process of Delivery

• Outreach work by BEN worker to identify three Black and ethnic minority community groups through BEN network in Scotland to host One World Quilt Training Workshops. Preliminary meetings were held with community representatives to explain the aims and objectives of the project through a presentation and video. Recruitment of participants with support from community organisation representatives.

• Delivery of the three day Training Workshops with each group.

• Display of the completed quilts.
4. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

4.1 Delivery of the Project Activities to Each Community

Day 1: One World Quilt 2000 and BEN gave a presentation to each community group. Some of the participants were given a fact-file which contained information on sustainable development and how to organise an event of your own. The participants were shown photographs of other community quilts, and a video showing other community initiatives across the United Kingdom. This was followed by a brainstorming session, with discussions on choosing a quilt theme and planning a quilt design.

Day 2 and 3: A design session, where participants designed their panels, and chose from a variety of materials, including recycled materials and trimmings, to make up their pictures and patterns they have designed. Many participants brought in their own fabrics. The participants then made up their own panels. Community groups worked together, singly or in small groups.

The final stage was when the finished panels were put together by each community group, who chose a suitable background and put on the title and the logos of their group, BEN and One World Quilt 2000.

Participants did not need to have sewing or design experience as these skills were learnt during the project from either members of their own groups or from the two One World Quilt 2000 staff.

None of the quilts were completed within the three days when One World Quilt 2000 staff left Scotland and BEN continued to provide on-going support to the community groups.

4.2 The Experiences of the Community Groups

The Glasgow Chinese Women’s Association led their own discussions on the issues of sustainability and the environment, which are some of the underlying purposes of the project, and worked quickly on forming their favourite images of flowers, butterflies and children playing for their theme of ‘A Beautiful World’. The CCDP quilt was the largest and measured 8 foot by 8 foot.

The Connectivities Project worked in small groups and had a skilled seamstress who ran sewing classes. The theme of their quilt was ‘A Peaceful World’ and it shows images of religious buildings and environmental issues that are important to them. This quilt measures 4 foot by 8 foot.

Meridian had fewer participants initially, nevertheless, as other women in the building realised what was happening, they too joined in. This group of varied abilities continued to work together on their theme of ‘Peace like Charity Begins at Home’. The quilt measures 4 foot by 7 foot.

The groups discussed and explored a variety of sustainable development and socio-cultural issues. These were recorded on flipcharts (see photographs below) and were presented on the quilts.
4.3 Benefits for the Community Groups

The project supported community members to come together, where they are encouraged to express local problems and discuss solutions in a new way and in a familiar environment.

The project extended access and participation to a new area of opportunity for those most excluded in the wider society. It gave them a voice and encouraged them to take part in activities which would improve their own area and quality of life.

The project helped participants to increase personal skills, creativity and confidence. The process of designing and making panels for their own quilt, participants became more vocal about their own local problems.
The project gave opportunities for self-expression, self- and community empowerment, for sharing opinions and views of the world and for socialising with others.

The project raised awareness of the value of traditional home-based skills and how they could be used in employment.

The project raised awareness of how participants could develop, organise and run other projects themselves in their community, including accessing funding.

All of the community organisations said they greatly benefited socially and culturally, and enjoyed the process of the quilt-making. Equally important, the community groups which BEN supports tell others of the benefits of our work for their members. All participants said they would like to participate in similar activities in the future. Also, they would recommend the activities to their friends and families.

4.4 The Experiences of the Project Partners

The pre-planning of the timetable, materials and training packs went well, although towards the end on points of administration there was some minor misunderstandings. The OWQ process is at first unusual to the groups, but with the discussions on the principles of sustainable development and how everyone has something to contribute, and relating this to the women’s own lives and neighbourhood each person soon becomes enthusiastic. The quilts show the dedicated work undertaken. The organisers of the groups, together with BEN were invaluable they publicised the activities, enrolled the women, organised the venues, childcare and lunches. OWQ made friends and looks forward to visiting the groups again.
5. **CHALLENGES AND GENERAL OBSERVATIONS**

The challenges experienced during the project were:

**Timing of the project:** Originally the project was going to be delivered to community groups in both Edinburgh and Glasgow, however BEN community networks in Edinburgh already had events planned for the year, as had One World Quilt 2000; it was therefore necessary to quickly identify Black and ethnic minority community groups from one location, Glasgow. However, this project has the potential to stimulate other Black and ethnic minority community groups, such as those in Edinburgh who did not have the opportunity to participate this time to undertake similar community sustainable development projects.

**Level of support required:** In general, there was more support required than was originally envisaged. BEN continued to provide on-going support to the community groups after One World Quilt 2000 staff had completed the Training Workshops.

Participants from Meridian required on-going support to complete their quilt.

Connectivities project participants required an additional day to complete their quilt, requesting funding for extra childcare; BEN supported this additional day.

Participants from the Glasgow Chinese Women’s Association had existing skills both in sewing and in running group activities. It is hoped that they would use these skills in the future in other community environmental art and sustainable development projects.

**Sharing the success:** the BEN Worker researched possible prominent venues to display the three community quilts to stimulate other community projects. The Hidden Gardens in Glasgow will exhibit the quilts at the Tramway Theatre during autumn 2004.
6. WAYS FORWARD FOR THE FUTURE

- Develop other community environmental art and sustainable development projects

Groups involved in the project will be supported to raise funds to carry out further quilt-making projects. This will create awareness of the links between socio-cultural issues and the built and natural environment.

BEN are exploring new project initiatives that value home base skills such as sewing garments, knitting and creative art as many of the participants showed a keen interest in this area as a possible future career benefiting the built and natural environment.

Other community groups in Edinburgh and Aberdeen have expressed interest in being part of a similar project in the future.

- Share the experiences of the project and stimulate interest among other community groups Scotland wide.

BEN will publicise the exhibiting of the quilt event to organisations working with ethnic minority communities in Scotland. BEN will publicise the project on the BEN website.

During November and December 2004, the quilts will be exhibited as part of the Rabita Project ‘Dupattas and Scarves – the Stories They Tell’. The exhibition highlights aspects of the creative process in textile design and shows how objects of cultural and personal significance can take on different meanings in new environments without losing their original redolence.
APPENDIX I  LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

**Chinese Community Development Partnership**
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## APPENDIX II LIST OF PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

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APPENDIX III ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BEN and the One World Quilt 2000 gratefully acknowledge the contributions, both financial from ESF EQUAL Theme B Programme, Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland and Awards for All, and in-kind from all of the community organisations.

BEN and One World Quilt 2000 thank each and every participant for their contributions to the community quilts.