



The Black & Green Conversation: Next Gen 2021

**Roger Griffith & Gnisha Bevan, Black Seeds Network
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1. Introduction

On 9th December 2020, Roger Griffith and Gnisha Bevan of Creative Connex consultancy held an online workshop on behalf of Bristol Green Capital and Ujima Radio for the National Lottery Black and Green Programme. The idea was to examine with a new set of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) environmentalists to review what had changed since the first Black and Green conversation in 2015. The 2015 workshop was attended by a number of community leaders, activists and artists and included Elected Mayor Marvin Rees. We sought an update on the current challenges and signposting solutions for the future. We hope this comprehensive report prepares the road ahead for future projects and activism.

We asked questions which were similar to the ones asked six years ago as a comparison study. Since then there has been a climate emergency declared and Covid-19 health concerns causing economic challenges. In addition the statue of slave trader Edward Colston has symbolically fallen here in Bristol as part of the Black Lives Matter protests and we acknowledge the world has very much changed. However the intersectionality of race and the environment is even more amplified.

- Question 1: What's Changed from Five Years Ago?
- Question 2: What are the Barriers to Participation?
- Question 3: Working in Partnership - What are the Benefits & Challenges?
- Question 4: What Solutions can we put forward?

We have also supplied a number of quotes from the workshop which make insightful reading.

1.1. Background and Context

2021 will see the tenth anniversary of the Black and Green programme of environmental social activism. In 2011 Ujima began engaging local people to become Green Citizen Journalists who documented high levels of air pollution from the M32, which divides Easton and St Pauls in Bristol. 2015 saw the coming together of Bristol Green Capital Partnership and Ujima Radio as they were engaged in Bristol's European Green Capital year. This was highlighted within the then Green and Black initiative and a year of successful projects. In 2017 in collaboration with Cabot Institute, University of Bristol there was the launch of pilot Green and Black Ambassadors. There has also been a Green and Black UWE Bristol internship and many associated projects and progress. All of this serves as an impressive track record of community activism, research, leadership and media projects. With a new name change The new 2020 Black and Green Ambassadors will continue to engage activists and challenge the myth that communities of colour are not interested in environmental issues.

1.2 Terminology

We understand the term Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) provokes debate and challenge and fully accept its limitations. We have interspersed it with current thinking and use environmental communities of colour.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



2.1 Then and Now Comparison Study Years On – What’s Changed?

- Participants reported a combination of physical and psychological barriers. Many of the barriers to partnership including transport, cost, living conditions, awareness, and exclusion are consistent with previous findings from 2015 Black and Green Conversations workshop and demonstrate the need for the programme is still there.
- Participants stated a passion for working with people who have been excluded from the environmental sector in Bristol.
- Participants felt that the profile of existing environmentalists of colour and their work has been raised.
- Positive representation of BAME environmentalists is slowly increasing.
- Understanding of intersectionality within environmental agendas has been raised, but this may not translate into knowledge about what to do within ‘mainstream’ environmental organisations.
- Improved Connections and Partnerships have happened as a result of the Black and Green programme.
- Media has an important role to play in awareness raising – community, local, national.
- Creating new narratives is necessary within the environmental sector.

2.2 Barriers to participation

- The perception that nature connection or ‘mainstream’ environmentalism is a ‘white, elite, middle-class thing’ still exists among participants. Conversely, our work and research also shows environmental communities of colour are still very much interested in nature and environmentalism.

2.3 Partnership Working – Benefits and Challenges

- Participants felt that working in partnership brings benefits that “almost always outweigh the negatives”:
- The concept of partnership working is positive, but the application was felt to be equally important. Partnership working needs to be designed into the process from the very beginning.
- Many participants mentioned a passion for working with people who have been excluded from the environmental sector. Issues such as raising the profile of existing environmentalists of colour and their work, positive representation, and consideration of intersectionality within environmental agendas were high priorities.
- New perspectives can be drawn from a diversity of viewpoints.
- Partnerships can open up new opportunities such as: reaching different audiences, different communities using different channels of communication. For example, partnerships involving Black and Green Ambassadors, individual projects e.g. Manu Maunganidze’s projects, Black Seeds Network or joining wider organisations such as Avon Wildlife Trust.

2.4 Toward Developing Solutions

- Many participants felt that the solutions are out there; it’s a matter of connecting the dots. Black and Green environmentalists in Bristol need to connect the right people, and to learn from what works to find ways to strengthen the environmental sector in Bristol.
- Existing activities can be applied in new ways.
- It’s not necessary to re-invent the wheel. By talking to people, , we find those who are already doing things and thinking in new ways. We just need to provide pathway and as many networks as possible into giving environmentalists of colour a voice.
- Bringing people together via nature doesn’t require extra work. BAME people have always had connection to nature. The important thing is to remember to connect to nature *and* heritage and to what ancestors have always done.

2.5 Key Observations

Whilst the nature of BAME communities continues to change over generations sadly the nature of racism does not. Our long-standing communities or new arrivals to the UK continue to reflect hidden stories that celebrate diversity and inclusion. With increasing evidence of global climate change and increased awareness around the way we live and co-exist following the pandemic have given fresh impetus and opportunities to raise the profile and voice of BAME environmentalists. The death of Ella Kissi-Debrah have brought focus into issues such as clean air in the media.

This comprehensive report provides valuable insight into the perception of BAME environmentalists on race, environmental racism and Black Lives Matter. It provides awareness on the barriers and challenges to partnership working with mainstream organisations that can provide solutions for future generations. It continues to provide further insight and evidence for the need of future Black and Green ambassadors is to continue to deliver projects that reflect and champion communities and environmentalists of colour.

3 THE WORKSHOP QUESTIONS



Question 1: How have things changed since the Black and Green Project began?

3.1 Recap of successes from the pilot Black and Green Project

The primary focus of the Black and Green project was to improve representation within BAME communities by highlighting stories, developing leadership and delivering community action research and projects. A number of successful projects occurred including a regular radio show, community action research, and interviewing major political leaders such as US Senator Bernie Sanders. Other projects which raised the awareness and profile of social and environmental justice issues included; the Eat Your Greens food recipe project, nature walks, partnerships, mentoring of senior environmental leaders, and talks at major events and. This was outlined and the workshop participants responded as follows:

- Lots of things have changed since 2015. Participants were hesitant to put a view on whether this is positive or negative as its “*always more complicated than that*”.

“In 2015 there were lots of stories and narratives around immigration because of upcoming Brexit vote. Who should or should not be in this country in the UK, hordes of migrants etc. On one side, a lot more awareness. But, though diversity is on the agenda for a lot of organisations, they have not caught up with the level of racism within their organisations.

It does feel like there’s a sense of urgency that wasn’t there in 2015 around the environmental movement. Now the pandemic is here, but maybe things like sustainability, environmentalism, intersectionality, are having their moment. There is fear that some of these issues could slip out of the spotlight unless we capitalise and regenerate using that energy, otherwise that wave will dissipate.”

3.2 Building Awareness

- Awareness has grown. Going back to 2015, no one in the ‘mainstream’ sector had even thought about BAME environmentalists E.g. Zakiya McKenzie, Jasmine Ketibuah-Foley and Mya Rose Craig doing talks together or individually. Today there are thousands of people listening online and at events.
- What has been achieved is good because awareness has been raised, but now it’s on to the next stages. As one participant put it,

“Puss is coming to the surface’ – racism occurs, which before was obvious to us and not the mainstream society. We’ve come a long way because that mentality is there, but it’s probably going to take another 5 years for more change. The foundations have been made now it’s time to move beyond words. On the positive side, it’s good that it’s being discussed. We feel we’re in a position where it’s good to challenge. To ask: Why do you want to get involved with different groups? What’s your goal? What is your agenda? What is your aim?”

3.3 Organisations are still catching up.

- Though diversity is on the agenda for organisations, they have not caught up with dealing with racism within their organisations. Hiring, stereotyping and microaggressions are just some examples. There are many organisations who, at the surface, think they want to change, but actually are not ready for that change. There are a few that are really starting to change, but there is a lot of tokenism.

3.4 The need to raise profile of environmental issues within BAME communities.

- Some community members will think *‘it’s not important, we’ve got other things to worry about. We need to raise profile of issues within our communities, as well as talking to the strategic leads and funders. We need a balance, and we need to raise the profile in both.*

3.5 Has Black Lives Matter (BLM) made a difference?

“Now that the main protests have died down, it’s almost like it’s been forgotten. The mentality is ‘We should be doing BLM stuff’, but they’re not doing anything really.”

4. Question 2: What are our Barriers to participation?

Fig 1 – Participant answers: What Are the Barriers to Participation?

Creative Connex
Black and Green consultation

What are our barriers to participation	Votes
Too many social issues to deal with in day-to-day life, e.g. housing, food, relationships	5
lack of role models that 'look like them'	4
lack of information	3
equipment and travel costs	2
Lack of early childhood experiences in the outdoors	2
A non-diverse set of commissioners and producers producing mainstream media content	2
Sustainability is seen as 'hippie' or 'uncool' - because of how it is usually presented on social media, i.e. white hippies + permaculture	2
Lack of sense of belonging, therefore not connected to nature in the UK (rather at home)	2
Questions like: "Given the urgency of environmental crisis - how can we include people when it takes time and resources?"	2
The narrative that 'diverse people aren't interested/engaged in nature' could possibly be damaging? Makes them feel 'other'	1
Not knowing how to make a difference/how to be sustainable in a way that fits their daily life	1
using sophisticated language / jargon	1
eco-anxiety and a feeling of helplessness	1
Stories of disengagement amongst BAME communities get internalised by those same communities and it becomes self-fulfilling.	1
Trauma	1
lack of reparation e.g. on privatisation of countryside by the elite when they gained significant wealth and land in the UK from slave trade	1
People of colour might be in the room, but not listened to	1
people think participation close to people from certain background	0
access to locations when events are centralized for instance	0
not enough groups to join where you can go walking in a group	0
Perception of risk and being made to feel uncomfortable in the outdoors	0

4.1 Physical barriers to getting into nature.

Participants listed a number of physical barriers preventing access to nature. Many were the same as those reported in 2015, and other additional barriers were listed as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

4.2.1 Transport:

- Lack of transport to 'anywhere sensible'
- Cost of transport. '£10 return on the bus to go to Chew Valley from Bristol. If you can get a bus to return.'
- In the city (St George) cars on roads were parked up. No space on pavements, people literally knock you over as walking past you when you go outside.

4.2.2 Living conditions:

- For example, living in a flat means it's not easy to get out into nature during pandemic.

4.3. Structural Barriers: Exclusion and wider societal structural inequality:

- **Information Deficit.** There is a lack of information on places and events. Many people are unaware national parks exist for example.
- **Language can be jargonistic:** Words like *conservation, rewilding, vegan, plant based, carbon emissions, footprint, organic, non-native*. Lots of technical words. People may have heard these words, but might not be clear on what they actually mean.
- **Microaggressions:** e.g. Looks that you get at the table ' *yeah, what do you know about this?*'
- Questions like: "Given the urgency of environmental crisis - how can we include people when it takes time and resources?" This can give the feeling that BAME communities POC are not really a fundamental part of environmental movements.
- **Lack of inspiring action from mainstream environmental leadership:** Decision makers were seen as very white and euro centric.
- **Tokenism:** In the words of one participant: "The more you tap in the buzz words, the less I believe you". It's the action that follows through that matters.
- **Successful projects can slide backwards if they are not maintained.**
- **A lack of recognition of our communities:** Historically where we've come from are often rural places. One participant noted that "First generation people are still 'obsessed' with growing everything themselves".
- One participant has lots of contacts abroad in the environmental sector, in the nature sector and there isn't the same disconnection as in the UK.



Question 2: Working in partnership- What are the Benefits and Challenges?



5.1 Benefits

Participants felt that working in partnership brings benefits that 'almost always outweigh the negatives'.

- New perspectives can be drawn from a diversity of viewpoints.
 - Partnerships can open up new opportunities such as:
 - Reaching different audiences, different communities, using different channels of communication.
 - Partners who have experience of working with groups that organisations want to work with can:
 - help reach people and meet people where they congregate . find stories, perspective and issues that wouldn't otherwise come across.
- bring light to issues that otherwise may not get the spotlight- especially if working with different groups and immersed in people's lifestyles and culture.

However, these benefits can only be realised when organisations are willing to put themselves into uncomfortable spaces and remove themselves from what they are used to, and willing to be humble and learn.

5.2 Challenges

- The concept of partnership working is positive, but the application is important. Partnership working needs to be designed into the process from the very beginning. Otherwise this can lead to several negative outcomes.
- Participants raised several key points to consider:
 - **Have the outcomes, or processes and mechanics been made clear from the start?** If not, this can lead to outcomes and impacts that were unexpected.
 - **Even the *choices* of partnerships can exclude diverse voices.** Who is going to be in the room? Which partners, and how have they been chosen?
 - **Partnerships should be developed collaboratively**, not as an afterthought once a project has been developed.
 - **What are the power dynamics involved in partnership set up?** Some organisations may have pre-conceived ideas of how to support communities, and approach community organisations to implement their ideas rather than going to communities and asking them ‘What are your needs?’ ‘How can we develop this together?’ and co-creating. Balance is key. Resist temptations to shoe-horn community organisations into existing projects.
- **Are community organisations being asked to give up power and agency?**
 - In all partnership working, it may be necessary to give up *some* power or dilute an aspect of your vision. An awareness of this helps with the realities and complexities.
 - Participants mentioned that people in BAME communities were wary of ‘Missionary groups/white saviours’ who want to work with people on the ground, but end up creating a very negative experience. Trauma and past experiences can make some communities really hesitant to give up any kind of agency and power to work in a partnership. Tact and sensitivity are required skills.
- **Are organisations which are interested in working with BAME communities willing to try new things?**
 - There can be a feeling of ‘This is the way we’ve always done it.’ In media- lots of people work to tried and tested content, and what they know works. A lot of power holders and decision makers embody the ‘pale, stale, male’ approach so it can be difficult to be innovative. This can be exhausting to constantly try and pitch new ideas and be rejected, just because someone doesn’t want to risk doing something new and different. A lot of people go on to make their own content and don’t work with public broadcasters because they know their work won’t get the credit it deserves.
- **Do all organisations who are forming a partnership have BAME leadership at strategic level?**
 - There are not enough Black leaders and BAME people rarely see anyone like them at the strategic table from the start. That’s a key area that needs to be changed. We need people around the table who can represent at that level- who can speak your language.
- **Who are the people who are allocating money to different organisations, and what is their background?**
 - When they make their decisions, they don’t include BAME communities.

- **Have all stakeholders' points of view and needs been considered? Or simply the most visible and powerful?**
 - Again using a media example, a lot of natural history programming is filmed in Safari/wildlife parks across the Global South. This can be problematic when issues such like game hunting and safari hunts are portrayed in a light of being positive for conservation. But issues around poaching or hunting for subsistence can be portrayed in a negative light. Especially when being done by communities of colour. Important conversations are now happening as people are becoming more aware of how they frame that topic. Those conversations weren't happening before because those organisations weren't considering how subsistence hunting is important and can also be sustainable. A beginning awareness that they don't necessarily have to blame indigenous cultures/ communities of colour for wildlife reduction etc.
- **Is culture being taken into account?**
 - In collectivist societies partnerships potentially come more naturally. But in an individualistic society, it's obviously very much about the individual and can feed the ego.
- **Is there a commitment to move away from tokenism towards real structural change?**
 - When some organisations say 'diversity', it can appear to be almost like a tick box exercise. Organisations may think they know about inclusion, but actually don't know about it, or are not really listening, so end up just paying lip service. Whilst it may seem that BAME people being in the room is enough, this alone does not lead to change. For the future, we need to make links at higher levels. But emphasis should be on organisations to make commitment and resources to make change, not on BAME communities.

Does the partnership include visible allyship- aligning with organisations who are trying to make positive change?

- **Are issues of equity truly understood?**
As one participant succinctly put it,

"Especially this year (2020) with Black Lives Matters, I've heard so many different people, on my travels saying 'Oh Black Lives Matters', and I'm looking at them, and I'm like, 'Do you really know what that means? Do you really understand what people have been through with this?'"

Fig 3. How can we work in partnership?

Conversation 2- How can we work in partnership?	Votes
Visible allyship	1
Trackable community engagement	1
Co-create aims, outcomes and processes from the start	1
Often a slower process, but potential to reach wider audience	1
Allows us to be intersectional and consider a variety of issues at stake	1
Negative: bureaucracy and barriers in making new content and being innovative	0
Positive: Better access to communities, funding, ideas etc.	0
By taking into account all stakeholders viewpoints	0
Depends on the approach, but even partnership could exclude diverse voices	0
Balanced working- in terms of power dynamics	0
Making sure environmentalists are remunerated for their work and time and not tokenised	0
Communicate regularly	0
Think the concept of partnership working is positive but isn't always the case in application as it depends on other factors	0
Large scale organisations hoarding power, funding etc.	0
Arrogance of organisations. Used to being the experts and not good at listening	0
Be inquisitive, learning and improve listening and how to give and take in feedback	0

5 Question 4: Toward Developing Early Solutions.

6.1 See the positives and opportunities.

- **As a positive, this current time (post BLM) is an opportunity, to have further debate and meetings with strategic leaders, it's a start.** There's enough of us around to challenge the people that make the decisions to turn it into something meaningful. Opportunity to approach people and ask them 'What are you doing about this?'
- **Framing things positively is important-** if too negative can put off future Ambassadors!

There is a sense of positive energy that we can grow from right now. Specifically because of the extraordinary events of 2020.

- Every generation can feel like 'something radical is happening right now in my life'. Maybe everyone feels like that all the time, but it does feel like 2020 is some sort of fork in the road and things can go different ways. It's an opportunity for us to influence that.
- **There's a golden opportunity in front of us, and we have to grab it with both hands and run with it.**



6.2 Tackle Unequal Structures

6.2.1 Engage people at the strategic level.

"We need to connect with people at the strategic level and open their eyes."

The importance of meeting people at strategic level was raised, as a long-term solution, which won't happen overnight, but where change can eventually be made. It is also important to meet people who make decisions about the funding.. There was a feeling that people making decisions may say the words 'partnership' but don't actually believe in it.

These quotes from participants illustrate the point:

“Few people from BAME backgrounds move up the career ladder. (We are) not seen as somebody that is valued and has some say. Usually pushed over into a corner in so many projects and organisations. It’s wearing. We need national level organisations e.g. National Union of Farmers, or ministers that deal with environment to make a link with an organisation like Black and Green.”

- *“I worked with a leading national media broadcaster on a major initiative to bring in BAME people for an inclusive music project. It was quite successful at the time. All these projects got more and more people.*
- *“I suppose it ticked their boxes, but it’s sad to say, to hear, ten years later, that nothing’s changed. It’s gone back. It seems to be that way. We start a project. We get a movement. We get people, and then it just dissipates. Few years later down the line, it goes back to how it was. And that’s my worry with a lot of projects, and a lot of programmes. You know, do we have this activism that suddenly, then, goes back to as it is. And that’s the only thing I wanted to feed into. Because we did this years ago, and it’s gone back again”.*

These statement supports the facilitators Gnisha Bevan and Roger’ Griffith’s academic work. They have co-written a [book chapter](#) together and Gnisha has undertaken master’s research in this area. It is the story and evidence of structural and institutional racism being repeated and displayed in the environmental sector.

6.2.2 Recruiting a more diverse workforce as part of solution.

This is a long-term solution. Strategic change needs to happen at strategic level. If top-down, people of colour need to be at the top too.

6.2.3 Work both at strategic level, and grass root level

There is a need to have people from BAME communities, knowing those communities’ needs, and how to approach the community. Need people to approach communities who speak same language, know their culture, and help them to get their voice heard. Working with grassroots level can make a huge difference.

6.2.4 Encouraging this continuous line of communication.

Being aware of communities that you are working with and having open lines of communication is key. Not just doing it as a tick box exercise. Instead of saying ‘we should do this...’ it is important to speak to people .

6.2.5 End Tokenism Today!

- **Avoid doing ‘a lot of talk, and not a lot of walk’.**
 - Companies and organisations have to be willing – can’t be lip service, they have to *believe* in removing inequality.
 - Participants reported organisations often saying, “we’re not diverse enough we need more talent”. But not actually practising this.

- Examples of how this plays out include: *“a talking shop, where you go to a meeting and you’re kind of there as a token. And nothing gets done.”*, or *“writing equality statements and people probably getting paid lots of money to write them, but they’re not living, breathing documents. Just empty.”*

“There’s a lot of organisations thinking ‘oh, yeah, yeah, we need... you know, can we just have some of your photos to put on our website?’ But not just that... State of Nature report last year, signed by 70 organisations, and half the young people were included in a tokenistic way. Organisations will say ‘we didn’t really look into it’. But had signed the report. Often they haven’t often gone out to the community to get the real source of the information”.

- We need to balance influencing others alongside doing our own thing.

6.3 Engaging people

- **Understand the difference between people who are interested in the environment already and would like to get a chance to participate and people who are not engaged.** There are a lot of people who don’t know what’s going on in Bristol regarding environmental or sustainability events.

There’s a ‘Feeling that going out into nature is a white, elite, middle class thing. It’s not something that we (BAME communities) do.’

- Lack of information on events: *“If you don’t know where to start because you don’t have the information, maybe you will never start.”*
- *“BAME communities can think that sustainability is not for them, because they are not represented. There is a lack of role models in this area.”*
- *“Constantly talking about brown people not being engaged, surely that’s more damaging, because it then becomes a trope, entrenched in environmental communication. We need to step away from that because it’s just not true.”*

- **Outreach can help; for example by holding events with members of community where they are.** Work in partnership with organisations to plan them and get a diverse range of people there.
- **There are people for whom English is a barrier** . So events need to be inclusive for everyone. Don’t need to have verbal communication- maybe some craft, or something that everyone can access. E.g. walking groups- people love it. Including people with disabilities, who can’t walk for a long time. Still something people love.

‘White-led organisations go out and try to engage people with what they are interested in, not making it relevant by making it about rural and cultural heritage. Instead they ask, ‘why aren’t you interested in this toad species that I want to raise money for!’

- **Be willing to learn, to find the right approach** – if there is an event regarding environment and sustainability and few people engage, this can be seen as not using the right approach. If sustainability is put as the title, some people won’t know what is meant by sustainability’. Maybe we can say ‘what are your practices in your home/host country?’ ‘How can we share that?’ ‘How can we share your heritage and we can share our experience?’

“Children going on Black2Nature camps don’t know what Scouts or Guides are. Black2Nature have 100% rate engaging children and teenagers with nature over an immersive weekend. They are used to hearing people say, ‘you can’t engage teenagers with nature.’, They make it relevant and then gain interest for any age.”

6.3.1 Supporting access to nature, and access to the countryside.

Participants had a passion for nature connections and benefits for mental health.

“Diverse people are already involved with nature, and the notion that they are disengaged simply isn’t true and needs to be challenged.”

- Nature and being outdoors can impact mental health and wellbeing E.g. Birds ‘can keep you sane’. Can help with sense of self.

“Our communities have over a number of years been so excluded from accessing nature, and feeling that it’s not anything they’re connected with in UK, that it’s come off the agenda. People don’t even realise that there’s a barrier. People have come to think that it’s their decision, when it’s not. It’s not a decision that people are making knowingly.”

- Wanting to get BAME communities in the west involved in nature.

“It’s not the lack of engagement that’s a problem – it’s all the barriers that we’re talking about today that stop people from getting engaged. But if we remove these barriers, then what’s to say that people won’t love nature and being outside? “

- To illustrate exclusion from conservation circles one participant recalled working as a nature film maker. A cameraman on location was surprised that a woman of colour was working there because he said, “I didn’t think brown people were interested in nature”. This Really stuck with her and logged in her brain because it was a stereotype the cameraman had in his mind. It made her really angry to make her feel that she didn’t belong there. She was already feeling that she did not belong there but this made it worse.

6.4 Improving Connections.

- **Provide pathways and as many networks as possible to giving environmentalists of colour a voice.**
 - What the work by Black and Green Ambassadors, Black2Nature and several local other projects has shown is a clear pathway to give BAME environmentalists a voice. The next phase can build on their work and involve new organisations such as Manu Maunganidze’s work and Black Seeds Network to mainstream environmental issues to Wildlife Trust, City Farms, Bristol Zoo and Wildplace. This network needs building to make an infrastructure of awareness.

- **We don't need to re-invent the wheel.**
 - Many felt that the solutions exist and it's a matter of making the connections. By connecting the right people to the right issues and we can learn from what works. We can find ways to work together to strengthen the environmental sector in Bristol and beyond.
- **We can apply existing activities in new ways.**
 - By holding conversations with communities and researching what people are already doing and embracing new ways of working.
- **Reconnecting to our heritage and what our communities have done for centuries.**
 - Extra things are not needed to bring people together with nature. It's always been there with the connections to BAME communities heritage to nature.

6.5. Representation and Recognition

Everyone has something to contribute. It is important to help lots of different people feel they can be empowered and get involved as well.

There was a need spoken of to raise awareness among BAME communities of their existing knowledge of environmental issues.

"My grandparents were sticklers for growing everything they could."

- BAME communities have long been growing things in the back garden- Organic food before that term became popular and expensive.

"Our ancestors were share-croppers 'hippies before hippies' were around. They were brought to the USA to grow food that they knew how to grow. Perplexing narrative that inner city black people are not connected to nature because it's always been with us." (Participant of African-American heritage)

"Gentrification – shifts with perceptions around gardens. In the past, people thought only poor people had gardens, and the visuals around that; poor, mostly people of colour, weren't highly cultured or educated, really negative stereotypes for a really long time. Now it's become gentrified and really chic/suave to have a garden. Oh look at my garden, I have all of these plants and stuff.' And at same time inner city people, mostly of colour and the perception is oh they don't have gardens. They don't know how to have gardens. It's like a cultural, historical gaslighting on a major scale, and it's disheartening."



- **Work with all kinds of people to restore heritage projects in connections to nature.**
- Have a good narrative to remind our communities of: “Who would be more in touch with the land, than the people who were forced to work the land for free?”
- Ensuring we engage with communities of colour via all ages and abilities and income groups to develop an environmental movement that is inclusive and representative. Otherwise it will be a very white community.
- .
- Helping people learn more about the environment. Engage people from communities who already work with refugees and asylum seekers and others. Helping people become more aware about what’s happening around them.

“During a science question time in parliament, questions were raised around diversity and inclusion for BAME and disabled communities. People were talking passionately about how diversity should be part of the bread and butter and part of everything. As commonplace as putting on seatbelt when going into a car. But when asked a question about inspiring scientists, they took that opportunity to highlight four white male scientists that everyone already knew, like Darwin”

6.7 Nexus between environmental and social justice.

“The Black and Green Project can and is changing the perception of the environmental movement.”

The environmental movement is perceived as white, middle class and well meaning. Many participants felt that it is not possible to separate environmental and societal issues:

- Everything touches on equality and representation.
- Bringing issues around intersectionality into mainstream knowledge is necessary.
- Environmentalism can be used as an issue for wider reconciliation for historical injustice.
- There is a value in influencing from both top and bottom simultaneously.
- Helping environmentalists of colour in their sustainability careers and awareness and promotion that these roles exist can aid employment.

6.8 Ten Key Solutions and Awareness Issues

- i. **Passions can be turned into platforms.**
- ii. **Use of education within projects, communities and organisations.**
- iii. **Deliver engagement solutions.**
- iv. **Make an impact from the top to the bottom in organisations.**
- v. **Better representation and campaigns**
- vi. **Awareness of Intersectionality**
- vii. **Provide better access to nature.**
- viii. **Employment and gain roles within the industry**
- ix. **Reconciliation: What are the Best ways forward.**
- x. **Use of a compelling narrative by sharing memories. This was raised several times-- the details were:**
 - **Provide opportunities for environmentalists of colour to be on our screens and in media with strong representation.**
 - **Show how BAME communities are already involved in sustainable behaviours.**
 - **Acknowledging that BAME communities are already part of a global environmental movement.**
 - **Challenging the perceptions of what it means to be an environmentalist.**
 - **Unearthing unheard stories and providing media coverage.**
 - **Tell the story of how BAME environmental projects play a key role in health and well-being.**
 - **Getting BAME community voices to talk about environmentalism as they perceive it.**

7. Participants/Acknowledgements

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Aisha Stewart

Asia Yousif

Carlton Romaine

Clara Fung

Dee Roder

Elijah Kellman

Helena Craig

Jacqueline Braithwaite

Lizzi Testani

Olivia Sweeney

Roy Kareem

Sandra Gordon

Sara Telahoun

Sue Bowers

Tay-Yibah Aziz

Thomas Sanchis

Report compiled by Roger Griffith and Gnisha Bevan co-founders of Black Seeds Network Creative Connex.

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