

Education and Employment Opportunities in the Outdoors

Outdoor activities for pleasure, education and as a potential career

Ethnic communities in Scotland have relatively low levels of exploration in terms of engagement with the built and natural environment. They are often unaware of what environmental organisations have to offer. Various staff in the environment sector have a lack of knowledge and experience of working with ethnic community groups. The Education and Employment Opportunities in the Outdoors Project aimed to promote awareness of employment opportunities, such as becoming outdoor activity instructors and educators. The project also aimed to increase the social inclusion and participation of ethnic communities and groups within the natural environment.

Making it happen

Black Environment Network (BEN) worked with the *Multicultural Family Base* in Edinburgh to create opportunities for young people from ethnic communities to experience challenging outdoor sports and activities. Eight Sikh, Muslim and Scottish white boys between 10-15 years of age spent a day with professional outdoor activity instructors and educators at *East Neuk Outdoors Centre* near Anstruther, Fife.

Making connections with people and nature

The project provided a platform for staff to engage with the young people, giving them practical experience of the environment and a chance to connect socially and culturally with the landscape, greenbelt areas and nature in rural Scotland.

The boys were not used to long journeys and felt a little travel sick on the way to Anstruther, but the weather was good and they all said they benefited greatly from their trip. The strenuous unaccustomed exercise left the group tired, but they gained new environmental awareness, outdoor skills and confidence in team work, risk assessment, safety and first aid.

They also learnt about the role of a canoeing and kayaking instructor.

The Future

All the participants said they would like to join similar activities in the future. In addition, they would recommend these outdoor





activities to their friends and families. The project stimulated their interest in skills development and employment opportunities. Other community groups in Scotland have also expressed interest in being part of a similar project in the future. In particular, *Multicultural Family Base* have said they would like to work with BEN again to set up a similar project for a group of girls.



FACTFILE

- **Funders:**

ESF Equal Theme B, Lloyds TSB Foundation Scotland, Communities Scotland

- **Partners:**

Black Environment Network, Multicultural Family Base, East Neuk Outdoors Centre.

- **Target group:**

Young men from ethnic communities.

- **Numbers:** 8 boys

- **Resources:**

Project evaluation report 'Education and Employment Opportunities in the Outdoors' is available on the BEN website www.ben-network.org.uk

- **Key points:**

- The environmental and outdoor activity sectors offer many opportunities for enjoyment, education, volunteering and employment which ethnic community groups should be encouraged to access.
- Even with limited resources, useful work in this area of ethnic participation can be developed, delivered and achieved. Connection between environmental organisations and ethnic groups can be established.
- Such projects promote a positive image of goodwill from environmental organisations towards ethnic communities.



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