



## **Environmental Justice in London: A new approach to urban issues**

### **April 2006: A new work programme for London**

Over forty people attended the launch seminar for London 21's newest work programme – Environmental Justice in London. The seminar took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2006, at University College London. A mix of campaigners and academics showed what environmental justice and environmental inequalities mean and how these can be assessed and measured.

The first speaker of the afternoon was Chris Church, Chair of the Trustees of London 21. He provided an outline of the issues and London 21's role in addressing environmental justice through the instigation of the innovative Environmental Justice project. The project aims to work with local communities in London to access, utilise and map data on environmental quality, enabling people to assess their local environments and develop action plans to improve matters. This is the first city-level project in England, moving from research to action. The programme aims to work specifically in six neighbourhoods, finding out what environmental justice actually means to those who suffer the impacts.

We were pleased to be joined by Neil Whitney from the Sustainable Development Unit at DEFRA, who provided an overview of how the Government approaches the issues of environmental equity and justice, whilst illustrating how inequality fits into DEFRA's sustainable development priorities.

Both Dr Muki Haklay, University College London and Chris Grundy, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, provided fascinating presentations on the nature of environmental data, how it is represented and the role mapping tools such as Geographical Information Systems (GIS). Muki showed the wealth of data available - by taking one postcode he collected a range of environmental and social data sets from the web, over different spatial scales from the street level to the borough wide. The exercise highlighted the need to integrate existing data sets, but also questioned the accessibility and representation of this data. Chris Grundy engaged the audience on how we can use work with communities to

gather and analyse data. He also demonstrated how maps are successful communication tools.

Three break-out workshops took place during the afternoon. Seminar participants shared experiences of working with hard to reach groups around environmental and social issues; debated the role of mapping information - discussing what tools and techniques (from the technical to the simplistic) can be used, as well questioning how environmental justice fits into policy.

Two presentations concluded the seminar, but instigated a productive discussion. Maria Adebawale, the Director of Capacity Global, spoke of her experiences of building engagement on the issue of environmental justice. She demonstrated how the public and stakeholders can be effectively involved in projects and initiatives. Dr Carolyn Stephens of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine gave a thought-provoking presentation, highlighting that there is a need for a wide approach to issues of equity and injustice, thinking globally as well as at the local scale.

The event was not just a launch; it was also an opportunity to look hard how we can actually take forward work on Environmental justice at a local and London-wide level.

The next stage for the London 21 work is to identify the six neighbourhoods or communities in London where we can work with an existing group. We will also seek to work with the local councils responsible for those areas since it is highly likely that any plan to tackle poor quality and environmental inequalities will need action by the council as well as the community. Once those areas are identified we will hold a borough level meeting to discuss this new approach and then work with the selected community for several months to produce an action plan. We have the support and involvement from University College London and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine where we are working with people skilled in mapping and interpreting data, as demonstrated, much of which is already available.

We would be keen to hear from any community organisation or local council who would like to be engaged with this work

For more information please contact the London 21 development worker for this project, Miss Gemma Moore at: [gemma.moore@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:gemma.moore@ucl.ac.uk).

# **A Fairer, Greener London**

## **Project Outline**

The aim of this pilot programme is to empower London's communities and young people to monitor local sustainability, map environmental quality and inequalities and take action to improve their quality of life.

The programme will focus on London's areas of social deprivation in London and promote environmental justice by giving communities and young people in these areas effective tools to enhance the quality of their local environment.

The programme has three main objectives:

- To empower London's socially deprived communities to use data effectively to monitor local sustainability and, more specifically, environmental inequalities.
- To engage young Londoners with sustainability and environmental inequality issues through environmental mapping.
- To improve the accessibility of environmental information to Londoners.

### **The Outcomes and Outputs**

Objective 1: To empower London's communities to use environmental data effectively to monitor local sustainability and, more specifically, environmental inequalities.

Outcomes:

- London's socially deprived communities will have the most effective tools to make the case for environmental inequalities and take action to improve their local quality of life.
- Londoners will gain an increased understanding of environmental inequalities issues.

Outputs:

- Six events on environmental inequalities in areas of social deprivation in London.
- Six new pilot projects with community groups will build their capacity to use and link data, monitor local sustainability and tackle environmental inequalities.
- An Action Pack for community groups on accessing environmental data, monitoring local sustainability and environmental inequalities, and taking action.

Objective 2: To engage young Londoners with sustainability and environmental inequality issues through environmental mapping.

Outcomes:

- Young Londoners will gain understanding of the use of environmental and socio-economic data, local sustainability issues and environmental inequalities, and skills in mapping techniques (GIS and participatory).
- Young Londoners will gain the confidence to act and necessary skills to improve their local quality of life, including presentation, project development and campaigning skills.

Outputs:

- 120 students of two secondary schools from socially-deprived areas collect, handle, analyse and use environmental and socio-economic data related to their local area, and take local action in the form of a local campaign or practical project.
- Local and London-wide launches of the students findings and action.
- A Pack for KS3 and 4 with lesson plans for citizenship, .IT, geography and science on green mapping, monitoring local sustainability and environmental inequalities, and examples of related after-school activities.

Objective 3: To improve the accessibility of environmental information to Londoners.

Outcomes:

- Londoners have access to new effective tools to improve the quality of life of their communities.
- Londoners gain an understanding of the type of data that could be available to allow them to monitor local sustainability more effectively.
- The organisations involved in mapping sustainability information in Greater London, including local authorities, other statutory bodies and voluntary organisations working on environmental inequalities issues, will gain an improved understanding of environmental inequalities issues, the type of environmental data London's communities want access to, and the most appropriate format.

Outputs:

- A first stop, attractive, accessible website that directs them to sources of environmental data that are accessible and relevant to their needs, and includes examples of how to use this data.
- A research report on the information needed by communities to monitor local sustainability and environmental inequalities and the current availability of such information.
- A regular e-newsletter with updates, case-studies and resources sent to a database of socially focused and other community groups in London with an interest in environmental inequalities.
- Three seminars and an e-mail forum for organisations mapping sustainability in London to work together and reflect on how to make environmental data accessible for effective use by Londoners, and reach out to new users.

## **Programme Delivery**

The pilot programme will be delivered in four phases. These are as in the application but the timings have changed (see summary below).

### **Phase 1: Scoping and Identifying Pilots January 2006 – June 2006**

This will involve:

- Development of the steering group
- An initial seminar to launch the project
- Background research and development of a database of London groups with an interest in environmental inequalities.
- Selection of six boroughs in which to operate
- Six local (borough level) events on environmental inequalities and related issues
- A follow-up seminar to launch a report on community groups' concerns on environmental inequalities (arising from the first six events) and the gaps in environmental data.
- Selection of six pilot communities
- Selection of two pilot schools.

### **Phase 2: Data Collection and Local Action June 2006 - April 2007**

This will involve:

- Community pilots explore selected issues and collect information
- Pilots analyse and present the information, using GIS where appropriate, and develop an action plan
- Pilots take action on environmental inequalities
- Seminar for organisations mapping sustainability.
- Development of web pages with case-studies, updates and resources on mapping, environmental inequalities, and environmental data in Greater London.
- Youth pilots run with two KS3 classes (timings to be agreed)
- Youth pilots run with the same teacher but two different KS4 classes (timings to be agreed)

### **Phase 3 - Reviewing, Celebrating and Disseminating April - July 2007**

This will involve:

- Participatory evaluation of the pilot projects by the local community.
- Overall evaluation of the pilot programme, including focus group.
- Compilation of the community pack and the school pack.
- Launch of the packs and seminar on the project's findings and recommendations.