



**Black
& Green
Ambassadors**

Black & Green Ambassadors 2020 - 2023: Year One report

Our Vision: A world in which all people are equally leading, delivering and benefitting from environmentally and socially just communities.

Our Mission: To connect, empower and celebrate diverse leadership and community action on environmental issues in Bristol and beyond; challenging perceptions, creating new opportunities and working towards ensuring the environmental movement is inclusive and representative of all communities.



Sep 2020 – Oct 2021:

Delivering change in an unforgettable year

2020 saw the **re-launch of the Black & Green**

Ambassadors – a three-year programme set to scale up its efforts to empower new leaders to work with and between diverse communities, businesses, other organisations and individuals to explore, amplify and enable solutions leading to an environmentally and socially just future for all.

Building on the work of the pioneering pilot project, Asia Yousif, Olivia Sweeney and Roy Kareem joined the programme as the first annual cohort of Ambassadors.

Throughout 2020-2021, the Ambassadors undertook skills training and mentorship to support their leadership development, whilst participating in a wide range of local and national forums, events, campaigns and media opportunities. They developed a programme of radio shows, workshops and collaborations, and each undertook a community research project to frame questions and gather the evidence needed to advocate for change locally and further afield as well as identifying tangible solutions

Alongside a newly commissioned film and the October 2021 Black & Green Radio show, this report shares highlights from their journey and celebrates the voices of those who participated.



Watch the year one film:

www.blackandgreenambassadors.co.uk/resources



Listen to the Black & Green Radio shows:

www.blackandgreenambassadors.co.uk/radio-show

“

In addressing the issues of the extent to which the leadership of the organisation resembles its population, Bristol and its greater region is achieving more than many locations! With the momentum that we already have, we have a great opportunity to become world class exemplars in the wider environmental movement - a challenge we will relish.

Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant Mrs Peaches Golding OBE CStJ

“

The Black & Green Ambassadors programme has made me a more confident and vocal advocate for climate justice, and in many ways has made me comfortable identifying myself as an activist and a leader. I have learnt that I do have something valuable to say, and people are interested in hearing it, and even when they aren't it still should be said.

Olivia

Connecting, empowering and celebrating



600+ people through events, workshops and community research



60+ projects showcased through events and radio shows



12 radio shows featuring 20 guests and reaching 30.1K listeners



1.7K+ Twitter followers (+ 60% increase since Sep 2020)



399 Facebook followers (+70% increase since Sep 2020)



248 Instagram followers since set up in March 2021



1.5K website visitors since its launch in June 2021



Over 70% of people surveyed at events either felt more motivated to take action for social/environmental justice or had a better understanding of what actions they can take



Over 75% event attendees felt they had increased understanding of social and environmental equality and justice



Eastside Community Trust



Dave Tudgey, Bristol Energy Network



The Black & Green Radio Show

Broadcast on the last Thursday of every month, Ambassadors celebrated grass-roots projects, amplified opportunities and stimulated debate with diverse voices around issues of environmental sustainability, equity, diversity and inclusion.

Topics included food, urban environments, energy, local elections, water, clean air, nature, waste & resources and community, and showcased projects including 91 Ways, St Pauls Community Garden, Black Seeds Network and SONNET project.

Bristol Mayoral elections, April 2021

In the lead up to Bristol's local elections Ambassadors quizzed Mayoral candidates about their commitments to a greener and fairer city.

[Listen again here.](#)

Clean Air Day, June 2021

Looking back at how the air on earth has changed through time, what we can learn and what we must avoid – the show highlighted people's concerns and hopes and what actions we can take. [Listen again here.](#)



“

Being trained up and producing the monthly radio show has been a potent force in terms of my professional development – I'd always wanted to become more involved in some kind of media broadcasting, but hadn't had the confidence or opportunity to make this happen. As a result of being an Ambassador, Ujima have asked me to stay on as a presenter, while I'm also developing another podcast series for future release.

Roy



[Listen to all the radio shows here: www.blackandgreenambassadors.co.uk/radio-show/](http://www.blackandgreenambassadors.co.uk/radio-show/)

New opportunities

In June 2020 we hosted a workshop to make the Coordinator and Ambassador application process accessible and inclusive, providing an opportunity to learn more about the programme and creating a space to reflect on the priorities and interests of attendees.



We asked attendees....

Ambassadors will create new opportunities and spaces for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic voices to be included in and to lead conversations around achieving a green and fair city. What does this mean to you?

Environmentalism
is for everyone -
breaking stereotypes

A sector that
starts to listen and
change

Recognising that lots of
people are already showing
leadership, but they
might not call themselves
'environmentalists'

An end to
tokenism

Re-launching Black & Green

In November 2020, over 200 people joined [this global celebration](#) of diverse leadership on sustainability and climate justice featuring Ambassadors, guests, and keynote speaker Julian Agyeman (Professor of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning at Tufts University, Boston).

Video messages of support also came in from representatives from Ecuador, Nicaragua and Hannover, from reggae artist and activist Macka B, and from the Mayor of Nantes – in addition to Bristol West Labour MP Thangam Debbonaire, Brighton Pavilion Green MP Caroline Lucas, Judy Ling Wong CBE and Mya-Rose Craig aka BirdGirl. Local community-led, grass roots projects were showcased and a new poem 'A Place I Once Called Earth' by Philosophy of Mo closed the event.



“

A fantastic variety of voices sharing some truly inspirational stories of work being delivered across our communities.

James Sterling, Bristol City Council

“

Brilliantly produced - really engaging format - and excellent contributors. The best online event I've attended by far! Inspiring, joyful and full of hope.

Chloe Naldrett, Culture Declares, XR Bristol, Our Air Our City

“

I'm so proud to see all the Ambassadors past and present filling this event with even more realness and for highlighting that you have to start from where the people are and not from where we would like them to be.

Donald McTernan

The Black & Green Conversation: Next Generation

In collaboration with Creative Connex and Black Seeds Network in December 2020, the Black & Green Conversation brought together Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic environmentalists to review what had changed since the first Black and Green conversation in 2015. The workshop explored current challenges and provided further insight and evidence for the need to deliver projects that reflect and champion communities and environmentalists of colour.



Read the report from the workshop:

www.blackandgreenambassadors.co.uk/resources



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

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.

Bristol Voices Workshop

In June 2021, Ambassadors invited communities to join a discussion on clear air, green spaces and cultural heritage – helping people to connect, informing future research projects and raising the voices of the Black and Brown community in the conversation on how to protect both people and planet.



You are doing a lot right - have not been in a Zoom with so many diverse voices ever (involved in green agenda last two years)



80% of attendees felt more connected to other people, groups and organisations working to achieve social and environmental equality

Black & Green Community Celebration

To mark the end of their year-long term, Ambassadors hosted a special live event at Bristol's M Shed to celebrate the community voices, actions and contributions to their community research projects, as well as reflecting on their year and explore what lies ahead for them and the programme.





To Breathe – Olivia Sweeney



Learn more about Olivia's project at

www.blackandgreenambassadors.co.uk/projects/to-breathe

Communities of colour around the world are suffocating from a system that tries to take power and agency, not only this but we are breathing toxic air that can take our lives.

Clean Air is an issue of environmental justice, of racial justice and of social justice, and it is a fight for our lives. My project aimed to bridge that gap and help build community solutions for clean air through discussion & conversations. Activities included:

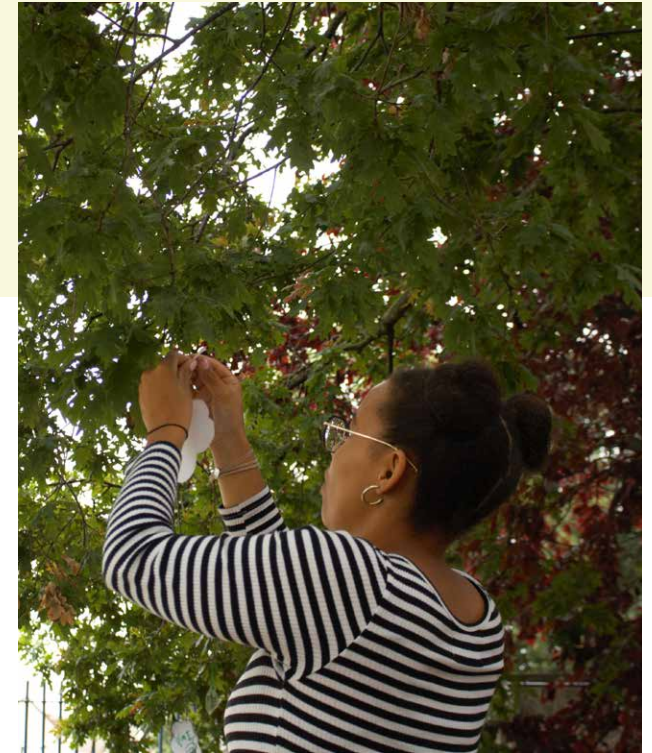
- An online survey focussing on the themes of Lived Experience, Perceptions, Power/Agency and solutions.
- Community conversations with existing groups exploring the causes and effects of dirty air as well as the solutions for clean air. With three groups:
 - Felix Road Girls – Girls age 8-14
 - Evergreens – a group of Caribbean elders
 - Cycling Sisters – a group for women of colour
- Building a picture of clean air – through a photo prize draw and one on one interviews. Asking where people go to breathe, how they feel when they are there, and what they need to breathe, along with taking a photo of them in that place. This will be shared in an interactive map that will allow people to experience these places, people and feelings, and continue to add their own.

People have experienced and can feel the differences in air across the city and in places they have lived throughout their lifetime. Some feel they can breathe clean air where they live now, some do not. In some instances Bristol has comparatively clean air, compared to growing up in Lagos or Lahore.

The priority was the need for space, people feel densely packed in and claustrophobic. Green spaces are an ideal, but space is necessary.

It is not all about transport- in academic or traditional air pollution spaces this dominates the discourse. Though this was spoken about, the conversations were so much richer, so much more than this.

There was a sense of limited or muted power. Individual action and behaviour was seen as important. People knew what actions could be taken, and felt they were able to put these into practice in a way that worked for their lives. But there was a need for a greater level of change, the need for the dial to shift from 'do no harm', to actively doing good for government, organisations and business.



We go to green open spaces, that are connected with people, nature and faith.

We feel alive, a sense of self, strong, connected with body, mind and history, protected and free.

To breathe we need to have safety, trust and knowledge. We need education, awareness, for individuals, organisations and government to act now not later. We need the dial to shift from do no harm, to doing good.

St Pauls Park



Stoke Park Estate



The Mound



Queens Square



“

Having the opportunity to reflect on the air quality in my neighbourhood and other parts of Bristol, made me realise how varied air quality is depending on which area of a city you're in, and how this seems to strongly correlate with social background and race. Since having this conversation, I have made more conscious effort to seek and spend more time in greener spaces with cleaner air around Bristol as part of my self-care. I feel inspired to research what is being done to improve air quality in Bristol and how I can support this movement as an individual community member. I am reassured this environmental and health issue is being challenged by many and believe that through collaborative effort we have a chance to make our air cleaner!

Rosina Al-Shaater, 'To Breathe' participant

Felix Road Adventure Playground





Parklives – Roy Kareem



Listen to Roy's podcasts at:

<https://www.blackandgreenambassadors.co.uk/projects/parklives/>

“

I wanted to bring different strands of thought, work, and practice into my life, to get the most out of my year and to get the most impact for the communities and other audiences we were engaging with: from the academic and theoretical understanding of how people interact with the outdoors, to the multiple stories of the day to day lived experience of racism and other forms of discrimination that are interwoven with the broader environmental movement.

Roy

I think parks and green spaces have been a historically understated focus in terms of a place of nature connection and the subsequent benefits to health and well-being that come with that relationship; and as urban communities are generally more highly diverse across all measures, be that ethnicity or other characteristics (which also correspond with often reportedly higher numbers of mental health issues), I was drawn to exploring them as a place of potentially transformational change.

My project was about telling the untold stories of Bristol's green spaces by looking into how members of Bristol ethnic communities use the cities green spaces, what being outside meant to them, now and in their pasts, and how the pandemic had potentially shifted or morphed these relationships. I wanted to provide a platform for people's stories to get out of their heads, into the wider world, and cause a ripple or two of positive change, beginning to complicate traditionally held narratives of what it means to be an 'outdoorsy person' in 21st century Britain.



I did this through:

- An online survey
- A series of one on one conversations with eight people across the city in different green spaces that were meaningful for them in some way; from the expanses of Eastville Park to the pocket of reclaimed community space named Dove Gardens in Kingsdown.
- Producing a podcast series to share these stories
- A collaboration with local poet, Kabbo Ferdinand, to creatively interpret these same interviews into written and spoken word pieces

What came up during these conversations? They were incredibly varied, but my personal reflections and responses noticed three pairings:

Community/solitude - people expressed how much it meant to be outdoors with others - especially during the pandemic when it was often the only place of interconnection. But it was also a precious place of solitude - of being away from the minds and inputs of others.

Discomfort/peace - that for many, being outdoors could still feel uncomfortable, physically, psychologically, and in other ways, but in that same space was a sense of peace that was often only available in the outdoors.



Risk/groundedness - for many, whether because of skin colour or gender, the outdoors could be a place of increased risk, and yet when this was accepted or overcome, there was a deep sense of being connected to something larger than oneself.

My hope for this project's impact is to broaden the conception of what it means to be outdoors and 'nature-connected' in the UK, teasing apart familiar archetypes of rambling and camping to something broader and more inclusive: the local/global urban dwellers who create meaningful connections to their local green spaces.

Stepping Sisters



Excerpt from Stepping Sisters, written by //Kabbo Hue Qua

Visit the website to read the poem in full: www.blackandgreenambassadors.co.uk/projects/parklives

Stepping Sisters
this is my life
natures our carer
stirring up happiness inside
walking cause it matters
walking in these green spaces
for it's my right
walking past all these strangers
strangely, never seen a face
hued like mine
like nature belonged to
the rich and white farmers, only
never a hue like mine
a change was needed so I
invited my Nubian Queens out
now we face down the stares
from the classes to right, middle
and left, together
in nature
we calm, strong and proud

I've been a walker
since a child, taught me
just a little courage has us
walking past our fears
of belonging even
when the chips are down
we've been walking
and walking and walking
walking before there were cars
walking for our freedom
walking for our lives
walking for equality
walking for justice,
walking for our liberty
walking through all of time
fighting the MAN, fighting the system

Step up Stepping Sister
Step Up! Knowing
I embraced myself
Had too, choice removed
some of the memories
of the past, haunting
as soon as Roots dropped
onto the black box
the name calling rung out
hurtfully, painful
furnacing spiteful rhetoric
Kissy, Chalkie, slave girl
dem' white boys screamed
chop off Kunta Kinte's feet
the slave master called
that will teach him
stop him from walking away
yet knowing without knowing
nature always soothed
the hue, the me
for my nature in nature
is my nature
and this is all I know



My kinfolk,
now and always been
the drivers of industry
driving, seemingly upwardly mobile
or so it seems
from picking cotton to
fake nails, high heels and
slick weaves
forgetfully, forgetting
our roots form crowns
disconnected and schooled
like low hanging fruit
not catching enough rays
lest we forget
so many drowned

Something's stirring
needed doing I felt
wrecked my brains on a
walkabout
an idea popped,
right
into my head,

left
my mind stirring,
up
why not start my own group?
and let the queens
decide for themselves,
down
with the rumours, whispering
and empty stares,
full up! full up!! full up!!!
we walking now!
ankles hurting and all





Asia Yousif - Cultural Heritage



Learn more about the project and see Asia in conversation at www.blackandgreenambassadors.co.uk/projects/how-does-cultural-heritage-affect-environmental-sustainability/

“It might be fun to do craft from materials like plastic but not good for the environment. What I like about this workshop is having fun and being kind to our planet

Leen Hussein, 9 years old

Diversity among Black and Brown communities in Bristol is huge and it is vital to celebrate the different cultures that we have in Bristol and use it as a tool for the positive change.

I believe that intersection between environment and culture is undeniable from agriculture to art to the industries and more. Environmental engagement shouldn't be separated from culture, as the way members of a society relate to the environment seems to be culturally patterned - which means that environmental engagement may differ from one culture to another.

My research project aimed to investigate the idea that some cultures already positively affect environmental sustainability through cultural behaviours and practices. I invited participants from Sudan, Pakistan, Somalia, India, Eritrea and Sri Lanka to share their heritage, knowledge and experience, and contribute to Bristol's environmental agenda.



Activities included:

- Two creative, interactive and inclusive workshops at Windmill Hill City farm to focus on food and cooking - we picked organic vegetables from the farm and cooked together while we were talking about sustainable practices from our different cultures.
- A family workshop involving crafting with natural materials - we collected sticks, stones and pinecones from streets and parks and some reusable materials.
- Interviews with workshop participants



My learnings are that:

- Many people from different cultures are already engaging in sustainable practices for a long time but without acknowledging the academic term “sustainability”.
- There is a lack of information about allotments among these communities - where they could grow their own organic vegetables as they used to do in their home country.
- People dream of cooking traditional food without importing ingredients.
- Communities are applying some sustainable practices in the UK.
- Culture can be used as a tool to engage these communities in environmental conversation, through something that relates to their cultures and means a lot to them, and makes it easy and accessible for them to be able contribute to the environmental movement in a way that suits them without using sophisticated language or environmental jargon.
- People tend to engage more in environmental conversation in a simple fun way.

There is a huge potential in the Black and Brown communities to become more active in the environmental sector if they get the opportunity. So, we have to create opportunities for this to happen, through environmental projects targeting these communities or through partnerships with other business or organisations.



“

Generating and challenging ideas and thinking positively - these are the main three parts of my project where the aim of this project is listen from other people and generate ideas from them and thinking in a positive way on how these practices can be applicable here and what we can learn from these practices.

After one of the food workshops some of the participants who lived locally near to farm but she hasn't been there before asked me how she can arrange a booking, as she wanted to invite the women from her area to spend time together in the farm. I felt very happy to empower individuals to make a change even in their close circle.

Asia



Working towards an inclusive and representative environmental movement



30+ speaking engagements & participation in local, national and international forums

Reached 3.6K+ people

Ambassadors speaking engagements included: London Climate Action Week, Bristol Citizen's Climate Assembly, Valleyfest 2021, Festival of the Ideas, St Pauls Carnival, Green New Deal UK, Sustainable Fashion Week, Global Action Plan event with the Environment Agency and Bristol Green Capital Partnership's event 'Cities vs the Climate & Nature Crisis'.

Audiences further afield were reached through press and media opportunities, with Olivia posing questions to West of England Mayoral candidates on BBC One West, and Ambassadors featured in The Guardian, Bristol 24/7, Bristol Cable Climate special and BBC Radio Bristol.

New collaborations were formed with campaigns such as 'Our Air, Our City' and grants panels for Wessex Water Foundation and Bristol & Bath Parks Foundation, and Ambassadors developed their experience as panellists and conference Chairs with the National Lottery Community Fund, Bristol Natural History Consortium and Ashden.

Ambassadors engaged with young people and education institutions, taking part in the Climate Change Education Research Network conference, a video for the UKSSN Climate INSET video, Avon Valley Environmental Network and hosting a one on one conversation with the Mayor of Bristol, Marvin Rees, on the opportunities for young people within STEM careers and sustainability.



“

I thought you spoke really well especially in response to some of the questions. You made me feel braver, stronger and more motivated than ever

Amrita Chandra, Environment Agency

“

Olivia was generous in sharing her knowledge and learnings and fed into our thinking as we developed our approach to communicating and implementing ideas around inclusion and diversity in community climate action. Olivia's approach was genuine, open, warm and respectful, and it was especially inspiring to see the way she connected with and acted as a role model for the girls and young women at Felix Road.

Emily Fifield, Eastside Community Trust



Photo by Mark Dolman

“

The outcome of our study on just transition in Bristol revealed that white men dominate climate change decision making, speaking 66% of the time. People of minority ethnic backgrounds only spoke 3% of the time, by comparison. Black and Green ambassadors are fundamental for changing these statistics and ensuring inclusion is on the agenda in Bristol.

Dr Alix Dietzel, University of Bristol

“

We have very much appreciated having Asia's local knowledge and expertise on our panels, sharing her experience of local groups and the work they do. Grassroots knowledge of services and activities already happening is essential when grant making.

Jennifer Staton, Wessex Water Foundation works in partnership with The Quartet Community Foundation

Empowering leadership



“ The Ambassador role helped me to explore opportunities that I never thought about it before and let me think about a shift in my career. Now I am exploring opportunities in food sustainability. It helped me a lot to enhance my knowledge and build my confidence. Nothing is impossible. If you work on yourself you can achieve what you want. I have been saying this programme pushed me out of my comfort zone to become a new version of myself.

Asia

“ I have been on the journey of realising the role communication plays in climate change, as an engineer this hasn't always been apparent, I now know this stronger than ever, and feel like I can be part of opening up this conversation to people who look like me. So many opportunities are now open to me, I no longer feel tied to a 'traditional job', knowing I can create something for myself and do this successfully and I am working in a space where there is an energy and need.

Olivia

“ Black and Green Ambassadors has given me the opportunity to speak with a much broader range of people than I might otherwise have done in my regular professional and personal life – that exposure has developed a deep sense of empathy and respect for other peoples' circumstances within me and is something I will always carry forward. It has greatly increased the potential for further specific work opportunities in the field of urban nature connection and related well-being outcomes, as well as more generally for broadcasting to become part of my professional life.

Roy

Mentorship

Mentorship supports Ambassadors to shape their goals, work through challenges and build on their leadership skills and confidence with the support, advice and opportunities provided by their mentor. [Register your interest in becoming a mentor here.](#)



“ The issues around sustainability are often discussed in complex jargon, detached them from real lives. And the sector is nowhere near as open and welcoming as it likes to think. As a mentor I try to share my understanding, connections and professional experience to help to demystify issues, validate insights and explore ways to create and make the most of opportunities. In return I get the challenge of a fresh perspective on issues I care about and the joy of seeing someone strengthen their sense of their own agency and think through how best to realise their huge potential for positive influence.

Simon Roberts, CEO Centre for Sustainable Energy

Looking ahead to Year Two

Roy and Olivia will be speaking at the UNFCCC COP26 Global Action Hub in November 2021 – providing a significant opportunity to take their work to an even wider audience of policy makers, environmental professionals, and activists. Follow us on social media for updates.

Meet the 2021-2022 Ambassadors!



(left to right) Ella-Marin Scotland-Waters, Ruth Nortey, Miss Divine and Rosina Al-Shaater- Black & Green Ambassadors Sep 2021 - 2022

Keep up to date with Year Two opportunities, events and news

- www.blackandgreenambassadors.co.uk
- [Sign up to the mailing list](#)
- [Get in touch via the website](#)



Support the programme

The Black and Green Ambassadors programme plays a pivotal and instrumental role in nurturing strong leaders from diverse communities across Bristol with the vision and drive to inspire and ignite action, to achieve an environmentally and socially just future for all. Your support will help to extend and enhance its impact.

If you would like to support the next year of the programme, donate or learn more about sponsor and partner opportunities, get in touch.

www.blackandgreenambassadors.co.uk/support-us/



A Place I Once Called Earth



A new poem commissioned for the re-launch of the three year Black & Green Ambassadors programme in November 2020
Philosophy Of Mo: @PhilosophyOfMo

Let me take you on a journey
So just sit back, relax, and try to visualise what you're hearing
In fact, let me sit up, back straight and project my voice clearly
I want you hear what I'm saying
And see what I'm painting

1 Million Bc, A world without Homo-sapiens

Step out the time machine
Can you see the ice age
Ice caps still engaged
Sea levels 125m below what it is today

Mid-ocean ridge
The longest mountain range
Step on the peak
& see what your eyes can gage
Things might not be the same
What you see might seem strange
UK sharing border with Europe?
Brexit wasn't an option back in those days

A time when mammoths roamed the earth
Saber teeth and Terror Birds
All once lived, In a place I called earth

Africa
A place I still call home
Listen to their myths, taboos, stories & proverbs
A place where nature is truly appreciated and understood
Take a look
At their indigenous communities

Tonga's from Zambia, have no need for 'environmental'

policies
sustainability, is part of their philosophy
Organic farming, crop rotation & selective harvesting
Renewable energy is what their harnessing
Scaredness of their water supply
Enforced and ensured by traditional authorities

Igbos of Nigeria
A distant cousin
Ecological ethics aligned with their moral and efforts
Humans, Animals and Earth
All simultaneously and spiritually connected

Question for the west it
Can you practice what you're preaching?

Harmonious coexistence, 2 words
That was once used to describe the amazon
Now plagued with deforestation & disaster
Millions of species are at risk of extinction

The Carib's tribe
Are no longer with us
Others, are only scattered remnants of what they once were
Global warming, 2 words
That now describe a place i call earth

So, what I'm I trying to say
What is the moral of this poem?
Well, let me give it to you straight
4.5 Billion years!
And only a few centuries to mess it all up

See, I believe we lost our way
Our ancestors may of not have ovens
But they knew how to use clay

They may of not had social media
But they knew how to communicate
They may of not had the latest technology
But they knew how to sustain

Now, I'm not suggesting that we go back to the stone age
But what I am saying is
That maybe, our history
Can remind us of what it means to be human again

And as we move towards a solution
We need to understand, that this is a global problem
Diversity and inclusion
Is necessary for the movement, towards a sustainable future

Protecting and renewing, our natural environments
The green planet and the blue one
Protecting and reviving, our built environments
The green spaces, food sources & housing standards
Preventing and reducing carbon emission
As we address and no longer procrastinate on air pollution

A world where ALL communities are EQUALLY recognised
In their efforts towards a sustainable future
As environmental justice and social reform
Are two side of the same equation

So, let's get up and lets get it
It's time for a rebirth
You only get one chance
In a place I call earth

Thank you

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With additional thanks:
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To our Year One sponsors:



To our Year One contributors:



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And all the many individuals and organisations who have offered their time, expertise and resources in the last year.