

THE PRINCE'S CHARITIES' INITIATIVE IN BURNLEY



In 1985 The Prince of Wales developed a One Town partnership in Halifax, West Yorkshire when His Royal Highness brought together the local authority and businesses to establish a regeneration programme to increase employment opportunities and improve the built environment after a large carpet factory had closed.

What has been particularly interesting is the range of innovative work that has come from the charities working so closely together – and bringing distinctive expertise to the place.

Twenty years later, following a visit to Burnley in 2005 to see the work of two of his organizations, he felt that a similar initiative could again prove to be valuable, so he asked 10 of his charities – Business in the Community (BITC), The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment, The Prince's Trust, The Prince's Regeneration Trust, The Prince's School of Traditional Arts, The Foundation for Integrated Health, In Kind Direct, The Prince's Foundation for Children and the Arts, Arts and Business and The British Asian Trust – to work together with Burnley Council and other key partners to help provide greater opportunities for young people, support to the schools and community organizations, as well as expertise in revitalizing run-down parts of the town.

Following a major initiative supported by the North West Regional Development Agency, the partnership took a big step forward in 2008 when five members of staff from the charities moved into offices in the town to join the Multi Agency Problem Solving Team, the key group of local agencies working on a range of borough-wide projects aimed at tackling crime, anti-social behaviour and other community issues.

What has been particularly interesting is the range of innovative work that has come from the charities working so closely together – and bringing distinctive expertise to the place. BITC has brought business leaders on the Seeing is Believing programme, resulting in career development programmes in schools and master classes for local entrepreneurs. The Prince's Trust is running a series of Team Programmes to help young people get into work, training or education, while The Prince's School of Traditional Arts has been teaching primary and secondary schoolchildren from different cultural backgrounds how the patterns of Nature are reflected in traditional art and design, and in the process encouraging a greater understanding of their shared heritage.

Working with the town to withstand the recession, BITC has established a groundbreaking Burnley Banking Consortium, a group of high street bank executives, business leaders and the Leader of the Council working together to ensure local businesses have access to loans at competitive rates to keep them operating through difficult trading conditions.

The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment and The Prince's Regeneration Trust are working closely with Burnley Borough Council and Bryan Gray – the Chairman of the RDA – on the future of the Weaver's Triangle and the overall master plan for the town's regeneration.

LEFT

The Prince of Wales gives a speech after opening a Business in the Community workshop at Lancashire Digital Technology Centre, Burnley.

Picture supplied by The Burnley Express.

THE PRINCE'S RAINFORESTS PROJECT





The Prince of Wales, along with many environmental experts and scientists, believes that if the battle against climate change is to be won, slowing the rate of tropical deforestation is essential.

“Climate change is the greatest threat facing mankind. Every year destruction of the Earth’s rainforests releases more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than all the world’s cars, planes and ships put together. We must act now. Future generations are depending on us.”

The Prince of Wales speaking in the film to launch an online global public awareness campaign, May 2009.

ABOVE

The Prince of Wales hosts an historic meeting of world leaders to discuss how to address deforestation.

LEFT

The Prince of Wales and the PRP’s computer-generated frog raise awareness of the need for emergency action to save rainforests.

The Prince’s Rainforests Project (PRP) has been working for nearly two years to encourage consensus among governments, non-governmental organizations and private sector representatives as to how the rate of tropical deforestation can be slowed. Destruction of the world’s rainforests has a substantial impact on climate change – contributing more emissions than the entire global transport sector. The forests also sustain biodiversity, regulate and provide rainfall, provide other vital eco-system services, and sustain livelihoods for more than one billion of the world’s poorest people.

During the past year, the Project has been focused on understanding the economic reasons for deforestation to find an equitable way to encourage rainforest nations to protect, rather than destroy, their forests; to make the trees worth more alive than dead and to identify ways to fund this approach.

In March 2009, the PRP prepared a report on its findings and conclusions (available on the website www.rainforestSOS.org). The report identifies the need for an interim financing mechanism to support immediate action to curb deforestation – an “Emergency Package for Tropical Forests”. The aim is to generate substantial funding quickly through a public-private partnership in developed countries so that rainforest nations can embark on alternative low-carbon economic development paths.

On 1st April 2009, The Prince of Wales hosted an historic meeting of world leaders to discuss this issue. The participants agreed to form an International Working Group to study the proposal, along with others, before making recommendations for a co-ordinated, global plan of action ahead of the UNFCCC meeting in Copenhagen in December.

Throughout the remainder of 2009, the PRP will continue to work with governments and a wide range of businesses and other organizations, to refine these ideas and to support the activities of the Working Group.

To help foster a climate of public opinion in support of the emergency action required, on 5th May 2009 the PRP launched a global public awareness programme that aims to build an online community to create global determination for change on this vitally important issue. The focal point is a 90-second film about the need to end deforestation. The film features The Prince of Wales, Prince William and Prince Harry, and an array of well-known figures including Harrison Ford, the Dalai Lama and Daniel Craig. Each individual appears alongside a computer-generated frog which serves as a symbol of the rainforests.