



# ippr Green Jobs Summit

## Tuesday 22 June 2010

### Introduction

The aim of this event was to bring together grassroots activists from across the UK to explore the potential for building new coalitions to push for decent and green jobs in their areas.

Drawing on the experience of organisations like the Apollo Alliance and Centre on Wisconsin Strategy in the USA, as well as some innovative initiatives from the UK, the event examined whether a 'bottom-up' approach to developing new 'green-collar' jobs opportunities could be successful in the UK and what lessons can be learned from experiences overseas.

The event was attended by representatives from organisations with an interest in developing decent, low-carbon jobs, including: community-based organisations, social enterprises, local government, trade unions, charities and businesses from across the UK.

### Session 1: Learning from other countries

#### Speakers

- Barbara Byrd, Oregon Apollo Alliance
- Joel Rogers, Centre on Wisconsin Strategy

#### Chair

- Carey Oppenheim, ippr

In this session, our two speakers described some of the organisations and approaches that are working to create decent, green jobs in cities across the USA.

**Barbara Byrd** spoke about the Apollo Alliance – a coalition of environmental groups, labour unions, social justice organisations and businesses – that is now working in 17 states and cities across the US to deliver grassroots action to create decent green jobs (see [www.apolloalliance.org](http://www.apolloalliance.org) for more information.) She shared some tips on effective coalition working, based on the Apollo experience. These included:

- Ensure the right people are at the table from the start – including all four of the key constituents (environment, labour, business and social justice)

- Decision makers from these organisations must be there in order to make things happen
- Participation must be equal between all members
- Don't neglect the work of building relationships and trust between member organisations – this means taking the time to make sure people talk to each other and get to know each other properly.
- Set ground rules – especially where member organisations haven't worked together before
- Agree criteria for membership
- Agree on how to work together and how decision making will be structured
- Members should go their separate ways on specific issues where it is not possible to reach agreement, but this should be done *with respect*.
- It's important to have victories – make sure there are always some winnable projects going on, even if they are small
- Celebrate wins and take credit for victories – this is important for morale and can also help with political influence and funding.

**Joel Rogers** spoke about a number of initiatives, including the Wisconsin Energy Efficiency (WE2) (see [www.cows.org/collab\\_projects\\_detail.asp?id=54](http://www.cows.org/collab_projects_detail.asp?id=54)) and Emerald Cities ([www.emeraldcities.org](http://www.emeraldcities.org)). The WE2 initiative is an energy efficiency utility, which provides energy efficiency measures to homeowners and tenants that are then paid for through the savings on their energy bills. The programme brings together four key aspects:

- A strong proposition for homeowners and tenants
- Access to capital from central and local government funds
- Operations and service to deliver the energy efficiency measures
- Workforce and standards – requirements built into contracts ensure decent jobs and access to job opportunities for excluded communities.

Although the project has got off to a good start, Joel emphasised that there is still lots to be done and that it needs to be rapidly scaled up if it is to make a real impact.

## Session 2: Why are green jobs needed in the UK?

### Speakers:

- Louise Hutchins, Head of Energy Solutions, Greenpeace
- Matt Kepple, Youth Commission for Social Enterprise and Social Enterprise Ambassador
- David Still, Managing Director, Clipper Windpower Europe
- Sue Ferns, Head of Research, Prospect

### Chair:

- John Edmonds, Aldersgate Group

In this session, each of the speakers set out why green jobs were important for their particular sector. **Louise Hutchins** from Greenpeace described how green jobs would be necessary if the transition to a low carbon economy is to happen. She showed that there was the potential for the UK to benefit from lots of jobs in the growing low-carbon sector. Political leadership and support will be vital in securing the jobs. She added that the UK now needs a coalition of green, social justice and

housing movements; responsible media; trade unions; supply chain players; infrastructure players; finance; and local and national political figures to push for change from the grassroots.

**Matt Kepple** described the opportunities for social entrepreneurs in a green economy, setting out some exciting examples of individuals who were already taking advantage of new green business opportunities, and those who are also helping to bring social benefits, such as Greenworks, which employs ex-offenders who might otherwise struggle to find employment. He suggested that providing support for social entrepreneurs could help to tap into 'latent social ambition', particularly among young people, helping them to achieve their personal ambitions at the same time as making the world a better place.

**David Still** provided an inspiring vision of the future for the offshore wind industry in the UK, which he said had the potential to be bigger than the oil and gas industry is, including in manufacturing the turbines. However, he warned that the UK is competing with other countries to attract investment in this sector and that strong action and leadership would be necessary to ensure these benefits do not end up overseas. He also raised a concern about skills gaps in this sector and suggested that more long-term thinking was needed in terms of education and training.

Finally, **Sue Ferns** set out a trade union perspective on the green jobs agenda, highlighting the fact that 'green' sectors have good potential for future growth, provide an opportunity for the UK economy to move away from an over dependence on the financial sector and have scope for high quality employment – all of which are sorely needed in the current economic climate. She stressed that green skills were needed across the whole economy, not just in certain sectors and talked about the need for a Just Transition Strategy to ensure a fair outcome for carbon intensive industries, as well as emerging low-carbon industries.

### Session 3: What's already happening in the UK?

#### Speakers:

- Maria Adebawale, Capacity Global
- Jon Morris, Localise West Midlands
- Bill Rumble, Mark Group

#### Chair:

- Tess Gill, Sustainable Development Commission

In this session, we heard three examples of work that is already being done in the UK to create decent, green jobs. **Maria Adebawale** talked about Capacity Global's TEN project, which aims to increase the proportion of under represented groups – in particular ethnic minority and those with low skills – in the environmental sector. She challenged everyone to think about how their organisation could have a social impact as well as an environmental one.

**Jon Morris** described the Birmingham Green New Deal, an exciting project being run by Birmingham Council, which takes advantage of the recently introduced Feed-In Tariff to install micro renewables on properties in the city, providing new opportunities

for local firms at the same time. He also talked about the need to consider scale – local level input is important to get the detail right, but schemes need to operate at a sufficiently large scale to be an attractive investment proposition.

Finally **Bill Rumble** talked about the Mark Group's energy efficiency training academy in Leicester. He set out three ways to help stimulate green jobs:

- Focus on market creation (as opposed to job creation) – this requires a long-term policy framework and education.
- Give the industry an identity – so that children today will want to be 'green technicians' when they grow up.
- Be careful not to overburden new industry with poorly conceived regulations.

For more information about all of these initiatives, see ippr's scoping paper [Green and Decent Jobs: The case for local action](#).

## Session 4: Break-out groups – what is possible in the UK?

In this session, participants were divided into smaller discussion groups to talk about some of the issues arising from the previous three sessions.

### Group 1: Opportunities and threats for new green jobs in the UK

Contributors to this group discussed the drivers of green job growth in the UK. Debate centred on whether demand-side factors (such as policy, regulation and investment) have a greater role in stimulating green job creation than supply-side factors, such as the availability of skilled labour and investing in human capital. The group strongly felt that partnership and coalition building, in the vein of the Apollo Alliance model, could potentially be an important factor in mobilising green jobs in the UK from the bottom-up.

In addition to local-level policy initiatives and programmes (e.g. in energy efficiency), political leadership at the national and local level was also mentioned as one of the key levers to spurring green job creation, with the potential to unlock other policy drivers. The importance of political leadership was however questioned by others.

The role of business was also discussed and the group stressed that there were great opportunities for greening existing jobs as part of a wider drive to encourage businesses to clean-up their operations and decarbonise supply chains. It was also suggested that British firms would need to adapt to low-carbon norms to ensure competitiveness in a future global low-carbon economy.

In terms of threats, the group identified a number of issues including impending budget cuts, cutting back on green stimulus measures, uncertainties around public procurement and lack of drivers, including the absence of sufficient long-term signals for the private sector. In particular, the group suggested that the absence of a medium to long-term planning framework for the low-carbon agenda, including the absence of a price on carbon, could seriously stifle prospects for green sector expansion (and jobs within them). Establishing a UK low-carbon or 'sustainable' industrial strategy was recommended by one participant as a means by which to consolidate the green growth and jobs agenda.

Furthermore, the group felt that there remains a significant lack of opportunities for 'green' training and development, in secondary, higher and further education, and that this needed to be addressed to ensure that prospective green jobs in the UK can be filled.

Finally, the group warned that job creation and sustainable development objectives were not always compatible (i.e. climate policy is likely to lead to job losses in carbon-intensive industries) and suggested that greater exploration of how the two can be objectives can be reconciled was necessary.

### **Group 2: The potential for coalition working**

This group talked about the benefits of coalition working, some of the issues that can arise and the different ways that coalitions can work. The group agreed that there are potential benefits for different organisations working together on this agenda. The work involved can be so demanding and require so many different kinds of skills and experience that efforts to bring together organisations with different strengths can be vital. But participants also felt that in practice it can be difficult to achieve this and some people expressed frustration with previous attempts to work with other organisations.

Problems arise when aims are not clearly defined upfront and when organisations have very different capacities to get involved, different working practices and different agendas or priorities. Some participants suggested that informal networks are sometimes more appropriate because they can get round some of these problems – with networks, there is not necessarily an overall goal or a specific argument to be made that everyone has to sign up to, and less formal requirements for participation or funding.

However, others in the group felt they were 'networked out' – there are already lots of networks operating in this area, but a feeling that they are not achieving much, precisely because they are so loosely defined and participating organisations do not feel fully committed. Creating more formal coalitions forces organisations to set clear terms of reference, be clear upfront about their reasons for participating and what they want to get out of a coalition and how things will work in practice.

The group ended up identifying a spectrum of partnership working running from very loose networks through to formally constituted coalitions with a defined purpose and perhaps a time- or goal-limited lifespan. The key is for organisations who are thinking about working together to work out what they want to achieve first and this should help them decide what kind of structure their partnership working should take, and who else they need to involve.

Leading on from this, participants felt that organisations working together should be realistic and open about their agendas from the start – and accept that they may not be able to agree on everything. Coalitions that can be flexible, where people can disagree and pursue their different agendas without the coalition collapsing are necessary but can be difficult to achieve in practice.

Participants also raised issues about the different capacities of organisations to get involved and the risk that large organisations, that bring funding and influence, could dominate coalitions. How to make sure that smaller, niche organisations feel able to get involved was a key question. The group discussed whether it can make sense to form coalitions with a relatively small number of similar-sized organisations or within a defined geography – or whether this might limit a coalition’s scope and impact. Whether and how to involve businesses was also discussed, with some participants reporting that businesses often see coalitions and networks as ‘talking shops’ for the public and voluntary sectors.

The different roles of coalition partners was also a key issue – who will initiate, lead and manage a coalition? Without leadership, coalitions can drift and achieve little. Some people felt that local authorities could be best-placed to initiate and lead local coalitions. Participants were also keen to see coalitions do more than just write reports – they called for more practical examples of successful action and ideas for scaling up.

### **Group 3: Taking a local approach: benefits and challenges**

Participants in this group welcomed the idea of more local action on the green jobs agenda. Participants argued that this agenda is so big that it requires lots of different organisations in different parts of the country innovating in different areas so that we can see what works.

One of the central issues discussed by this group was the use of procurement by local agencies. Participants felt that procurement policies are often difficult for smaller organisations to cope with and local procurer can be too rigid in apply their policies. Requirements around turnover and track-record can be difficult for smaller and newer organisations to meet, making it difficult for local firms or social enterprises to compete for local contracts in the green services arena. Some participants reported that commissioners in their local area had developed processes to involve smaller, local organisations in procurement, for example, by provide extra support to local SMEs to help with bidding; and splitting up larger contracts into smaller parts so that they come in under the threshold for state aid under European law. Other participants argued for ‘smarter’ procurement, whereby small organisations are encouraged to join together to bid for large contracts; or local authorities join together to commission services. However, participants also noted that these approaches can create extra costs for local authorities so may be difficult to implement.

Participants made the point that local action should be about filling in the gaps around what central government is already providing, and making sure that local activities do not simply duplicate what is already happening. The prime example was around the provision of employment support for people who have out of work for a period of time – central government provides the basics, so local funding should be used to top-up provision which meets local needs; and provide the bridge between central government welfare provision and local jobs. There was a concern that we are yet to see many long-term unemployed people move into green jobs because no one is yet making the link between welfare to work programmes and local employment.

Community engagement was also discussed by the group, with some raising concerns about the way in which local volunteers can be co-opted by businesses delivering green programmes, to provide unpaid support to commercial operations. Participants felt that business model in the green sector need to more fully reflect the full costs rather than rely on volunteers. Participants also noted problems with engaging local people, who might lack knowledge or interest on green issues.

Finally, participants wanted to stress that there are already many organisations working on different aspects that feed into the green jobs agenda but they are often not explicitly joined up around the green jobs agenda. The role of further local action should be to promote those linkages and help coordinate activity, and guard against duplication. This suggests an important role for local authorities.

#### **Group 4: Ensuring green jobs are decent jobs**

Contributors to this group discussion wanted to highlight that green jobs are not inherently *good* and that real work needs to be done to ensure that fairness is more central within a low carbon economy. The group recognised that some 'green jobs' require fairly low skills and thus will not always be well-paid or have scope for progression. From a health and safety point of view some green jobs can be particularly dangerous jobs (for example, in waste and recycling). The group decided that union activities and health and safety regulation are important in the green jobs sector in order to ensure basic protection for workers.

In addition, to ensure minimum standards and pay for workers, and citing examples from the US, the group felt that 'community workforce agreements' with social clauses should be central to any public procurement strategies.

The issue of 'value' was also raised as the group asserted that it is necessary to better capture the value of the green economy, and thus green jobs, to ensure decent wages for the 'green workforce'. Initiatives such as the EU-ETS, that puts a price on carbon, were praised accordingly.

The public perception of 'valuable work' was also touched on as something that needs addressing in relation to green jobs being better valued.

On education and training and the green jobs agenda, the importance of long-term planning was underlined as necessary to decrease the time-lag which currently exists here. A 'chicken and egg' problem was also highlighted as stemming from a general lack of confidence in the green jobs market that is causing a barrier to such long term planning becoming a reality. For this reason the current employer led approach to skills and training was criticised.

### **Closing speech**

Founder of Solar Century and Green New Deal group member **Jeremy Leggett** closed the summit by outlining his vision for a new green economy. He talked about his own experiences of setting up a 'green' company – Solar Century – and warned that the looming threat of peak oil poses a grave threat to jobs in the oil industry. Although the potential for green jobs is great, they are not a given and strong leadership and political support will be necessary for them to become a reality.

## Conclusion

The conference provided an opportunity to discuss ways in which community-based organisations across the UK might work together in the future to help stimulate decent green jobs in their local areas.

While many speakers noted that 'green' jobs in the UK were not inevitable, there was still a sense of optimism that with committed leadership from central government and strong coalitions working at the grassroots level the UK could hope to see growing numbers of green job opportunities in the future.

It was also clearly acknowledged that 'green' jobs are not necessarily 'good' jobs and that government, businesses, unions and other third sector organisations will all have to play a role in making sure the new green economy is also a fair economy.

The conference provided an opportunity for people from a range of different sectors with a common interest in green jobs to meet and share ideas and experiences. We hope that some new relationships were forged and that attendees left with new ideas and a renewed passion to make decent green jobs a reality.

## About ippr's work on green and decent jobs

The ippr green jobs summit was the culmination of a scoping study into the opportunities for creating green and decent local jobs across the UK. As part of the project, we also produced a scoping paper setting out some of the projects underway in the US and what is already happening in the UK. The project was generously funded by the [Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation](#). More information about the project is available [here](#). Previous ippr publications on green jobs include [The Future's Green: Jobs and the UK low-carbon transition](#) and [Green Jobs: Prospects for creating jobs from offshore wind in the UK](#).

In the next phase of our work, we will assemble a group of organisations interested in taking this agenda forward and run a series of roundtables to examine in more detail the opportunities and challenges in creating local, green and decent jobs in the UK. We will also organise a learning exchange to the US to learn more about the many successful programmes operating over there. This stage of the project is also being funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. The final aim of our work on green and decent jobs is to work with other organisations to set up a demonstration project that creates green and decent jobs for local people.

If you would like to talk to someone about ippr's ongoing work on this agenda, please contact Reg Platt ([r.platt@ippr.org](mailto:r.platt@ippr.org) / 020 7470 6129) or Clare McNeil ([c.mcneil@ippr.org](mailto:c.mcneil@ippr.org) / 020 7470 6157).