



WOMEN IN THE GREEN ECONOMY: *Voices* from Southeast Seattle

Putting the Voices and needs of low income women and women of color at the center of the new, green economy.



“We started the Women in the Green Economy Project last fall to create a place for women like me – low income women, women of color, and women from immigrant backgrounds to raise our voices, front and center, so that we could be a part of this green economy as the structure is getting built – on the front end. Because if we’re not on the front end of this new green movement, it will become just one more opportunity in society that leaves us behind.”

- Tammy Nguyen, New Holly resident and founder of the Women in the Green Economy Project



We've all heard that the new "Green Economy" promises jobs and products that will lift families out of poverty and improve their health, while at the same time reversing global warming. But are women - and specifically women of color and low income women - gaining equal access to all of the benefits that the green economy has to offer?

Women hold 90% of the full time jobs that earn less than \$15,000 per year;ⁱ how can we ensure that green jobs are good not just for the environment, but also for women’s pocketbooks? Nearly one in four Latino women and one in five African American women worry about having enough food to put on their tables; ⁱⁱhow can we debate the merits of a locally grown tomato without talking about who can afford to eat that tomato and who cannot?



We know that mold in a home or apartment can cause asthma in our children; how can we allow home weatherization programs to ignore or pass over the apartment buildings and families with the greatest home repair needs? Low income households are six to seven times more likely than other households to not own cars,ⁱⁱⁱ and women are the ones spending hours a day on the bus to and from daycare, school and work; how can we improve public transit to serve all communities, instead of focusing exclusively on getting people out of their cars?

Got Green created the Women in the Green Economy Project to get women of color and low income women in Southeast Seattle neighborhoods engaged on the front end of the green economy in our city, so that we could weigh in on these questions and more. This report is an attempt to amplify the voices of real women – women of color, immigrant women, single parents, low income women – from the most racially diverse and lowest income neighborhood in our city and to speak for ourselves.

HOW WE DEVELOPED THIS REPORT:

A community-based survey

On January 29, 2011, more than 40 women and men from Southeast Seattle neighborhoods met at the historic Lee House in the New Holly community to launch Got Green's Women in the Green Economy Project.

Lillie Brinker, an advocate for health and wellness in the African American community and beyond kicked off the event. "It's time for low income women and women of color to have their voices up front and center in the green movement," Lillie told the crowd, "We begin here."

Between January 29 and April 30, project organizer Tammy Nguyen and 35 volunteers (28 of whom are people of color living and/or working in the Southeast Seattle community) conducted face-to-face surveys with 212 women of color, low income women, and immigrant women outside of grocery stores, in the lobby of community health clinics, at a transitional housing site, and in kitchens, living rooms and cafés. 35% of surveys were conducted in a language other than English – including Somali, Spanish, Tigrinya and Vietnamese. Women who completed the survey were thanked with a \$5 coffee shop gift card.

The survey was designed to be easy for volunteers to administer, and a conversation starter that would allow the women surveyed to speak from their own experience. After determining that a woman lived in Southeast Seattle, she was handed a flier that defined four areas of the green economy in popular language: Green Jobs, Green Home, Public Transportation, and Access to Healthy Foods. Fliers were available in four languages. The woman was then asked to rank – or prioritize - the four areas from most important to her and her family, to least important.

Beginning with her top ranked issue area, and working down through her third or fourth, we then asked "Why is this issue important to you?" and "What is getting in the way or making it hard for you to... (get a green job, maintain a green and healthy home, use public transportation, or feed your family healthy food?)." Survey takers then listened closely to her answers, asked clarifying questions, and coded her responses on a multiple choice sheet.



Following the survey collection period, the [Women in the Green Economy Project](#) organized three Community Roundtables where project volunteers and Got Green organizers facilitated discussions on key issue areas. Twenty-one women – all either women of color or low income, or both – attended a community roundtable. The roundtables laid the groundwork for community organizing efforts on women's priorities in the green economy; out of the roundtables we recruited women to serve on a Food Access Organizing Committee, to volunteer for the project, and to participate in interviews for this report.



Southeast Seattle is our city's last battleground in the fight to preserve our historic working class communities of color against proponents of gentrification.



voices

THE WOMEN IN THE GREEN ECONOMY SURVEY: The participants

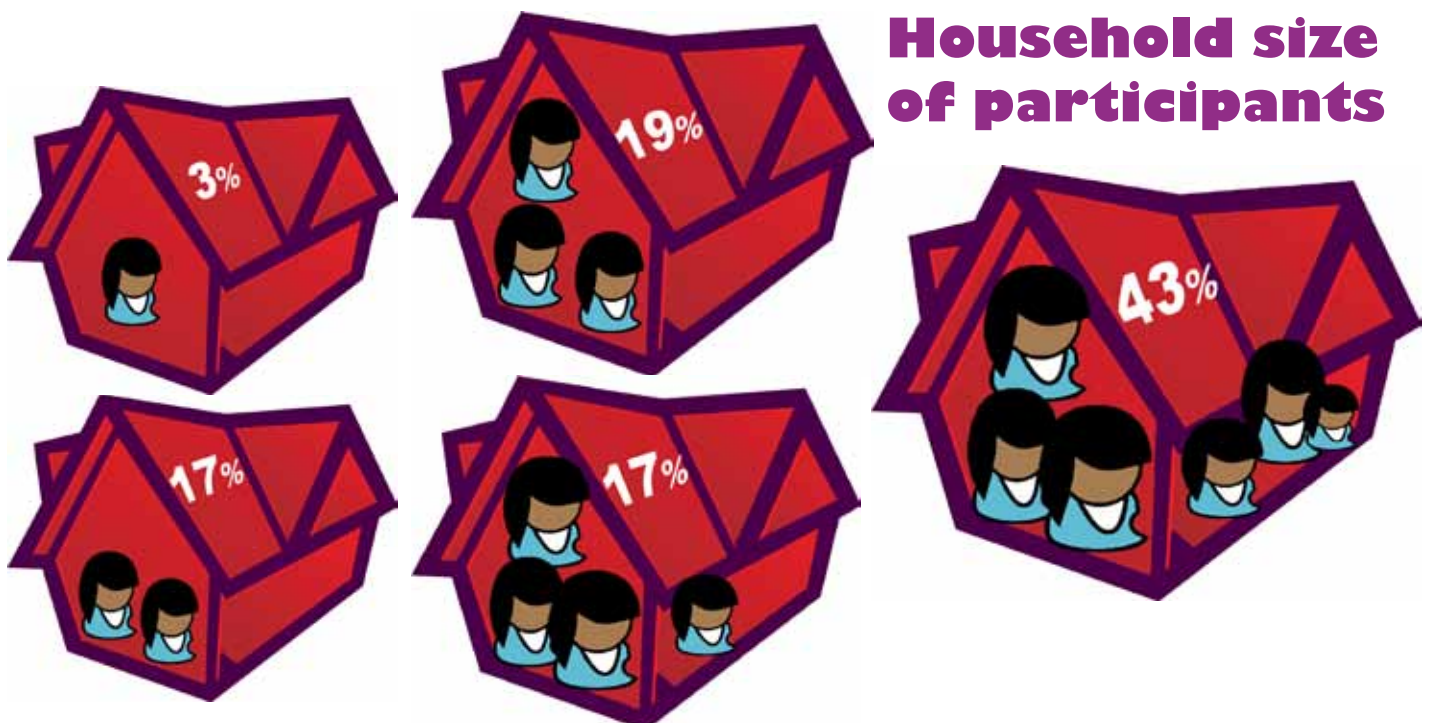
“This project represents a voice that doesn’t get lifted up; it represents a perspective that needs to get heard.”
– Theresa Fujiwara, Southeast Seattle resident and Got Green Board Member

While a controversy has emerged about calling 98118 “the most diverse zip code in the United States,” it goes without saying that Seattle’s Rainier Valley is home to more low income women and women of color than any other Seattle neighborhood. In the Valley, 50% more families live below the federal poverty line than in our city as a whole.^{iv} In Southeast Seattle, single parent families are 40% more prevalent than in the rest of the city,^v and those households are nearly three times more likely to have five or more people.^{vi}

For community members working for racial justice, Southeast Seattle is our city’s last battleground in the fight to preserve our historic working class communities of color against proponents of gentrification. It is one of the few areas left in the city where people of color still live and struggle to maintain a foothold. In the past 20 years thousands of our neighbors have been pushed out of the city, forced south to King County’s more affordable suburbs or even as far as Tacoma/Pierce County.^{vii} Got Green is organizing to ensure that the green movement and catch phrases such as “transit

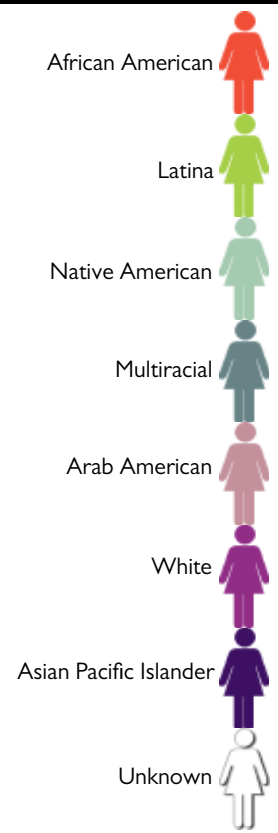
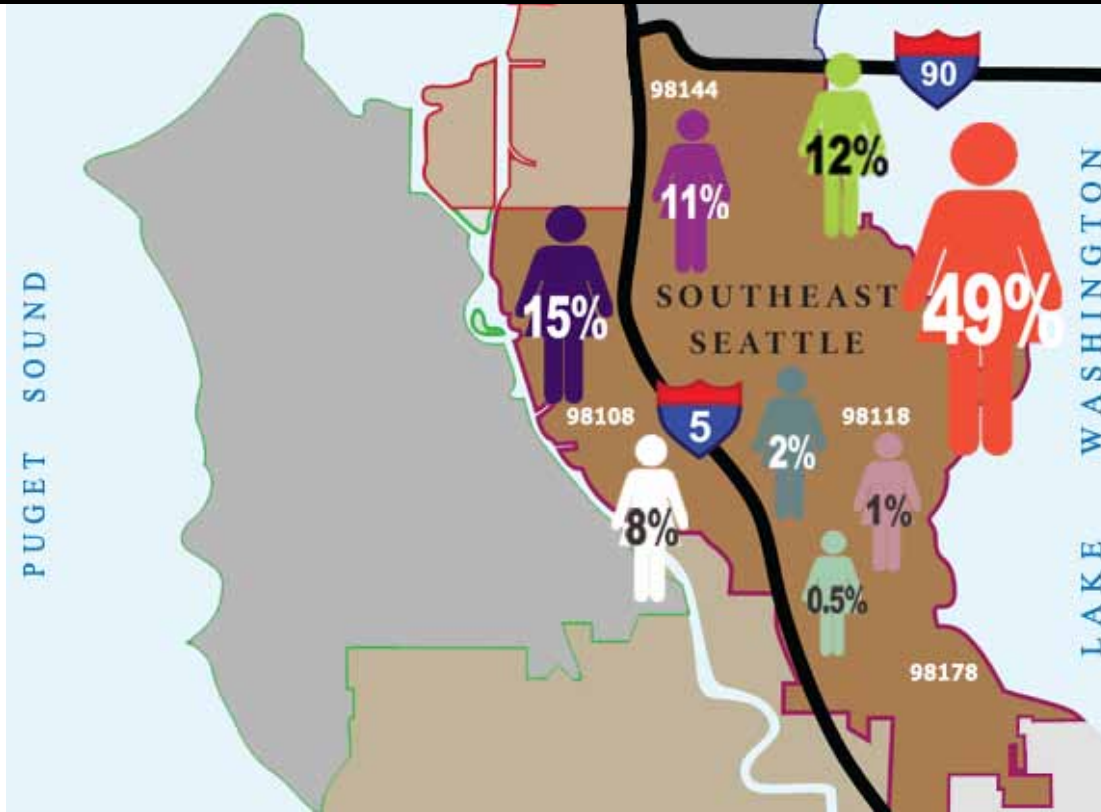
oriented development” are not used to further displace communities that have traditionally lived in the Rainier Valley. At the same time we’re working to uplift our community and ensure that sustainable jobs, healthcare and affordable housing are developed.

The women reached through the survey represent a cross section of working class and poor women in Southeast Seattle. 82% of the women surveyed are women of color, compared to 70% people of color in Southeast overall. Among all respondents, 49% are Black/African American (58% of those are East African women who are first or second generation immigrants, and 42% from the historic African American community); 15% are Asian Pacific American; 12% are Latina; 2% are multi-racial; 1% are Arab American; 1% are Native American; 11% are white; and 8% did not respond to the question. Immigrant women, from a variety of communities, were reached by the survey: more than 53% of the participants speak a language other than, or in addition to, English in their homes.

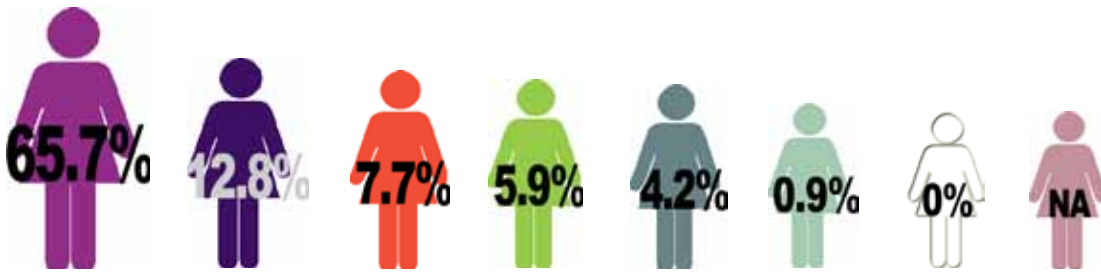


NOTE: The average Seattle household size is 2 people. Families of color are 3 to 4 times more likely than white families to live in households with many generations of extended family members. (from the 2007 to 2009 American Community Survey)
43% of our survey participants live in households of 5 or more people.

RACE/ETHNICITY OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS



Race/Ethnicity of Seattle overall



INCOME OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Percentage below the graphic represents income of Seattle overall.



For low income women and women of color, going green means improving family health

“It’s exciting to me that this survey brought a different perspective to what is meant by the ‘Green Movement;’ it moves us beyond solar panels.” – Michelle Esguerra, survey participant

In developing the framework for the survey, steering committee members for the Women in the Green Economy Project aimed to identify issues that we felt other women of color and low income women could relate to. Members knew that we had to move beyond green construction trade jobs and alternative energy sources in order to speak to other women in Southeast Seattle and make the environmental movement relevant to their lives.

By nearly a 2:1 margin (40%), women chose Access to Healthy Foods as their top priority for reaping the benefits of the green economy. Food was followed by Green Home (23%), a category which included cost savings from energy efficiency as well as indoor, environmental health. Green Jobs came in at 20%; and Public Transportation was prioritized by 17%. These priorities held true for women of color across race and ethnicity, with a few variations. Latinas prioritized Public Transportation (31%) ahead of both Green Home (19%) and Green Jobs (12%). And Asian Pacific Islander women prioritized Public Transportation (22%) ahead of Green Jobs (13%).

What appeared to be driving women in the survey to prioritize Access to Healthy Foods and Green Home was concern for their family’s health. Over two thirds (67%) of the women who prioritized food as either first or second and over half (53%) of women who prioritized green home as first or second said they made these choices because of their desire to improve their family’s health.

RECOMMENDATION: To reach low income women and women of color, the environmental movement needs to stop exclusively talking about the health of our planet, and instead start talking about – and promoting policies – that improve all families’ health.



THE TOP PRIORITIES:



1.
40% Access to healthy foods



2.
23% Green Homes



3.
20% Green Jobs



4.
17% Public transportation

ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD:

Put more healthy food dollars in low income women's pockets

We've all heard about the healthy food crisis in America. In many cases, media and others place the blame on low income mothers for childhood obesity. This disturbing trend has reached such extremes that a recent American Medical Association Journal article suggested that obese children be removed from their homes and placed in foster care.^{viii}

Yet our survey results show that low-income women of color regard good nutrition as a critical priority. In choosing Access to Healthy Foods by nearly a 2:1 margin the women surveyed expressed a deep concern for their own and their children's health. When asked "what is your main barrier to a healthy diet for you and your family?" 67% had a simple answer: cost.

A recent University of Washington study determined that to bring the average King County resident's level of potassium alone up to federal nutrition guidelines would cost that person \$380 per year in additional groceries.^{ix} **A family of four needs an additional \$1,300 per year (or \$100 a month) just to begin to make a dent in an unhealthy diet.** The study also showed that buying foods with more saturated fat and sugar costs less.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Support any policy shift – at local, state and national levels - that puts more dollars for purchasing healthy foods into the pockets of low income women. Specifically support financial incentive or "double bucks" programs that reward families on the Basic Food Program with extra dollars for making healthy food choices.^{xi}

Recover the EBT card fees charged to Washington State's Basic Food Program by megabank J.P. Morgan Chase, and use those dollars to expand the successful Farmers Market Nutrition Program. Specifically expand the FMNP to include families with children over age five who are currently not covered by the program.

Increase the opportunities for SE Seattle urban farmers – especially from low income and ethnically diverse communities –to sell their locally grown produce at affordable prices at neighborhood-based "mini-markets."^{xii} Additionally, promote economic development strategies to support the creation of a neighborhood-run produce stand or full service grocery store in Skyway.

Geographic inaccessibility of affordable, healthy foods was another barrier listed by women in the survey. 23% said that the location of grocery stores or produce stands is a barrier; and 18% said that organics and other healthier options aren't available where they live. While many pointed out that gentrification has increased the number of grocery stores in Southeast Seattle, some Rainier Valley neighborhoods and most of Skyway have been identified as "healthy food deserts" where residents have to travel more than 30 minutes on public transit to reach a major grocery store.^x

Several efforts to encourage urban gardening are afoot in Southeast Seattle, and while women active in the project support the concept, only 7% of women surveyed said their reason for prioritizing access to healthy foods was a desire to grow their own; and only 12% said a major barrier was no place to garden. In the food access community roundtable, many women brought up the time crunch of working and parenting – especially single parenting – and said lack of time is preventing them from starting their own gardens.



VIOLET LAVATAI and her son Russell live with her sister's family in Seattle's Skyway neighborhood. They had their own place until the recession hit and it cost Violet her job as a computer technician for a national gas station chain. Violet is passionate about increasing access to healthier foods for her family, her Samoan community, and her neighborhood. She calls Skyway "the neighborhood that Seattle forgot."



Up here in Skyway – if we need to go shopping, we have to go down the hill. Up here, you don't have access to anything; if you want to have access to fresh fruit and vegetables, you would literally have to grow your own.

But if you had asked me when I was working, 'Would you like to plant your own garden?' I would have said there was just no way I could do that. My day was filled up until seven or eight o'clock at night.

If I could, I would help people empower

themselves by helping the community get a grant to open a store, where everyone has access to healthy food that we can afford... If we had a store, or even a fruit stand, where we had access to fresh fruit, and other good foods, I know it would be profitable...

In the Samoan community, coming here to America intensified the health problems for the older generation; they were getting colon cancer, their diabetes was getting worse. When you come over here to America and you start eating all the processed foods it intensified those ailments. ...

... The bottom line is that people just can't afford good food. So we don't buy the good food, we buy the cheapest food we know – the bad food - because it's cheap and available. Like Top Ramen; we know it's bad for us, but we buy it anyway because we can afford it.

We know what we need to get rid of diabetes: less sugar, more fruit. This is crazy to me – because sugar is actually cheaper than fruit – per pound. You have access to a bag of sugar, but you can't afford that bag of grapes.

Can't we reverse this? Can't we reverse things so that the fresh fruit and vegetables become dirt cheap and we will instead say, 'Man I can't afford that package of Top Ramen; but this bag of apples only cost me a buck!' That's the world I want to see.

RAMATA DIEBATE

is a committed parent of two young children, Dominic and Ella. A 2007 graduate of the University of Washington, she volunteers at the Kent Family Court Parent-to-Parent Peer Advocates program. Since participating in an urban environmental education program in high school, she has worked to educate herself about our food system and its impact on family health and the environment.

At the time I took the survey, I was breastfeeding my daughter, and I was worried about having the proper nutrients; not having pesticides in my system and just generally having a healthy diet. I would say it's of top importance to me and my family – and to every family – that we get access to healthy food.

We want our children to be healthy, to grow the way they are supposed to; and they can't do that off of processed foods. I don't think any family prefers to eat processed foods; but at certain times of the month, it's what's consumed because there's not the funds to buy the fresh produce. At the end of the month – it's the hardest. At the end of the month you have to scrimp on fruits and vegetables and meat; and it shouldn't be that way. Healthy food should be affordable enough so that families can eat well all month; not just in the first two or three weeks.

I'm struggling economically, but I'm an educated woman. And yet I don't understand why it should be this way.

At the government level, farmers and producers of fruits and vegetables should be subsidized, and more should be grown; I read that if on one perfect day, everyone in the United States decided to follow the food and nutrition guidelines and eat at least five servings of fresh fruits and vegetables, there wouldn't be enough fresh produce in this country to go around. Which is a shame; they subsidize corn but not most fresh produce. Local farmers – organic farmers – we should get them involved.



Together we should be able to figure out how to make good food affordable.

GREEN HOMES: Save the planet, money and our children's health

“There should be a moral principle there that says, let's green the ghetto first. Let's go to those communities where they have the least ability to pay for that retrofit and make sure they get that help, make sure they get that support.”

– Van Jones

Women in the survey chose Green Homes as their second priority for the green economy (23%), second only to access to healthy food. Of the women who chose Green Home as their first or second priority, over half (53%) said it was to improve their family's health; More than two thirds (68%) live in households earning less than \$25,000 per year; and nearly half (48%) live in households with five or more people.

A national study titled “Greening America's Distressed Housing”^{xiii} reports that renters and people of color are more likely to live in older less energy efficient buildings. As a result of the condition of their housing, low income households are saddled with energy costs that are 28% higher per square foot than higher income households.^{xiv}



Women who participated in the Green Home Community Roundtable and in two dozen home visits conducted in Rainier Valley apartment buildings from May through July 2011 cited mold as a top concern. They believe mold growth is a result of a variety of home repair issues including older, single paned windows, lack of simple ventilation strategies like bathroom or range hood fans, and cold, poorly insulated walls.

When federal stimulus money started hitting cities around the United States for home weatherization programs that would be good for the planet, good for our pocketbooks, and good for our health, many hoped that the homes most in need would be the first to get weatherized.

In Seattle, the City's HomeWise low income weatherization program has existed for several years— but it only addresses a small portion of the need. Then in April 2011 the Community Power Works Program (CPW) was launched. Funded by a \$20 million Department of Energy stimulus grant, CPW aims to weatherize 2,000 single family homes by providing accessible loans and direct rebates to homeowners – regardless of income.

CPW's multi-family program to weatherize privately owned apartment buildings is still in development. The challenge for our community is to organize to ensure that low and moderate income families who are renters will receive the home repair and weatherization services they need.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Increase the percentage of funds through the City of Seattle's Community Power Works home weatherization program dedicated to private sector, multi-family apartment buildings in Southeast and Central Seattle.

Ensure that families renting apartments in buildings weatherized under the Community Power Works Program are protected against unfair rent hikes as a result of the government subsidized building upgrades.

Through federal grants or other sources, fund necessary “pre-weatherization” repairs to dilapidated apartment buildings that will allow more buildings to qualify for the Community Power Works Program and future weatherization dollars, while at the same time improving the living conditions and environmental health of the tenants.

❖ 79% of women who prioritized green home have children living with them (vs. 67% of all respondents; and less than 20% of all Seattle households).

❖ 68% of women who prioritized green home have household incomes of lower than \$25k/year (vs. 53% of all respondents; and 21% of all Seattle households).



Jacquel Redmond

and her son, Reakwan (7) are lifelong residents of Seattle's Rainier Beach neighborhood. Jacquel is actively involved in improving her community for all families through her leadership role in the Rainier Beach Empowerment Coalition. She is particularly interested in getting the word out about "green" in a way that cuts through the jargon so that other women can see how it is connected to them and their family's health.

I'm a single mom, I'm low income and the health of my child is always my main priority. At night when my child and I sleep – I want to trust that the air that we breathe is clean. Both my child and I have developed respiratory issues, due to the mold on the outside of our apartment building – on the outside of our windows. I have my windows open now, because it's summertime, but in the other three seasons I try to keep them closed due to the mold.

... I'm really into green cleaning products; because they're less toxic for my child. I have those new light bulbs in my place, and I haven't had to change one in four years. It has helped me save an enormous amount of money. I think that compact fluorescent light bulbs should be a requirement in rental apartments; they should be easier to access – cheaper or even free. Collectively this would cut costs as a whole – for families and for City Light.

I'm about raising awareness and explaining how "green" is really connected to our health. If landlords were more serious about becoming green and making apartments they owned green, we would have less issues with our health, less respiratory issues... Do I want to see a policy put in place for landlords? Yeah, sure. At the end of the day, that's their property, they own it. They should have an obligation to maintain their property in a healthy and efficient way.



GREEN JOBS: Make the Green movement work for women

“What we’re seeing now is the result of historic labor segmentation where women are underrepresented in fields considered green – bioengineering, construction, etc. – for a long time.”

- C. Nicole Mason, Executive Director of the Women of Color Policy Network^{xv}

The spark for the Women in the Green Economy Project came a year ago when Got Green staff recognized a problem: not one woman had enrolled in, let alone graduated from its federal stimulus funded weatherization installer job training program.

Unfortunately, Got Green’s job training program mirrored the inequities in the “new” green economy overall. In 2007, less than 4% of all workers employed in the green building sector were women; and less than 1% were women of color.^{xvi} These statistics are worse than in the construction industry where overall that same year women held 9.4% of jobs.^{xvii}

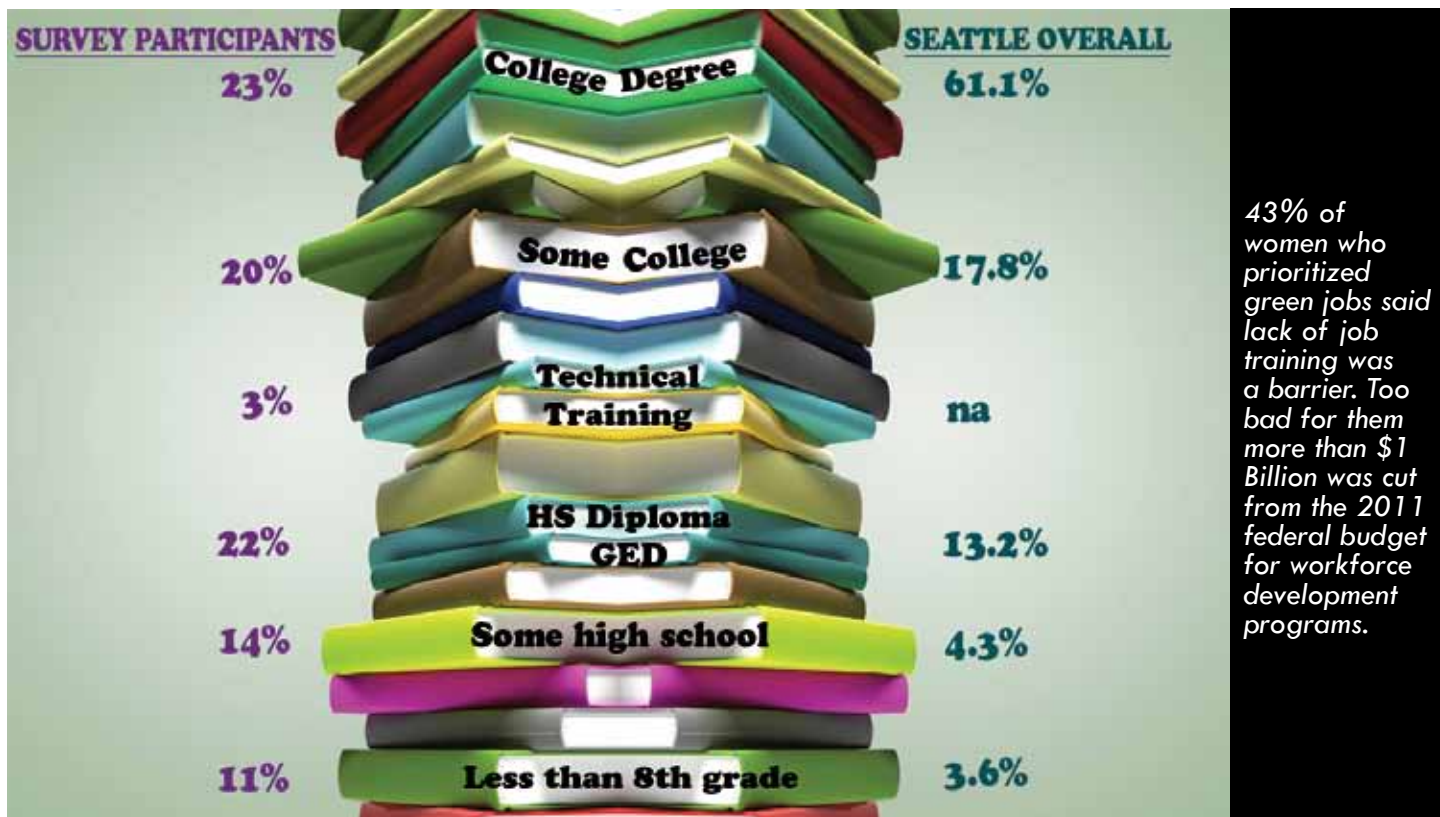
When Got Green reviewed the survey results and saw that only 20% of women surveyed prioritized Green Jobs, we were initially surprised, believing that due to high unemployment rates for our community, the issue would have been ranked higher. Yet a deeper look at responses to the question “what’s getting in the way of you landing a good, green job?” yielded some insights. 43% of women said they thought they lacked the training to get one. 17% said they thought no green jobs were available. And 15% said the work hours weren’t compatible with parenting. Through subsequent conversations with community members, we determined that in general, women of color and low income women did not prioritize the green jobs category, because they did not see green jobs as accessible to them.

The Women of Color Policy Network predicted in 2009 that “the impact and benefit of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for women of color...will be miniscule due to the disproportionately high unemployment rates among racial and ethnic minorities.”^{xviii} Survey participants’ perspectives seem to confirm that the green revolution – at least in terms of good jobs with benefits - has yet to reach low income women and women of color.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Fund accessible training programs aimed at low income women in growing green sectors and ensure that childcare and other necessary supports are funded while they are in job training.

Require green jobs training programs in industries considered “non-traditional for women” (green construction, alternative energy, etc.) to take specific steps to recruit women; address and remove gender barriers in their programs; and provide childcare assistance.

Establish community hiring agreements on publicly funded green construction projects that provide for high road jobs: good paying, livable wage jobs with benefits, for local residents. Ensure that positions low income women may already qualify for - such as administrative support, customer service, and community outreach jobs – are covered by high road jobs agreements.



Michelle Esguerra



is a journey-level, union electrician who lost her full-time job in 2009 a few months before her daughter, Clover, was born. She recently became a certified energy auditor through a federal stimulus funded green job training program. Michelle is hopeful that green jobs such as energy auditing can become career pathways for other single mothers.

Part of the reason why I entered a “green job” and started my new training, is because I wanted a job, any job – and the energy auditing industry is a growing industry, and so if it’s growing, and has some chance of being stable, then that’s where I’m going.

Having accessible training – that I didn’t have to pay for – was very helpful. Don’t get me wrong, I invested a lot in this. I still had to fight tooth and nail to get free daycare for my daughter while I was in class...

For green jobs to be accessible to other single parents, definitely the job hours need to fit daycare hours. I still want to be an electrician, but the hours are crazy. No daycare opens before 6:30 AM and usually you have to be on the job by 6:00 AM.

...While I’m a licensed electrician, that’s not necessary to do the energy auditing job. Yes, there are some physical elements and you do have to be willing to get dirty; however there is also a ton of paperwork and a certain amount of organization and meticulousness you need to possess to succeed. We need to argue that many of these skills – that women workers might already possess – would be helpful in this industry.

I think what would need to happen on the industry end, to make these jobs more accessible to women, is for them to recognize what many women's work backgrounds can bring to the auditing process. It can be just as easy to train a woman with strong computer skills and a sales background to audit a home as it is to train a person with a strong construction background to navigate unfamiliar computer programs and make a sale.

Sylvia Sabon

got her start in the construction industry through a community hiring agreement won by the Seattle-based grassroots group LELO that prioritized low income women and workers of color for Sound Transit jobs. In 2008 Sylvia was laid off from her job as an office worker with Kiewit Construction – a major contractor with Sound Transit.

I think a lot of women are asking ‘are there really green jobs?’ They’re out there looking for cashiers jobs, restaurant jobs, and clerical jobs; because when you’re looking for jobs you don’t really see a category called ‘green jobs.’

I’m an Alaskan Native, and on Sound Transit when I was working in the construction trailer, I was the only brown face around... We won a contract that made those companies hire women and people of color. That’s how I got in the door.

But more companies need to have requirements to hire people from the Rainier Valley and our communities. They should have the requirement to hire local women, local workers; Without agreements like these and buy-in from the contractors, you submit your resume, application and they most likely say ‘thank you for your time.’ And they’re going to hire someone from outside the city limits – from Gig Harbor, Auburn. And we’re saying, ‘we’re right here. Why don’t you hire us? The job site is only ten minutes away from my house’... a lot of us are going to those job shacks, signing the list, but we’re not getting hired. And we want jobs. All we want is an opportunity for a chance.

Now we have to talk about green jobs and what they mean for women of color. It rains a lot in Seattle, it’s damp and cold and it creates a lot of mold – especially if you don’t have a lot of ventilation and insulation. It will create a healthier environment if buildings can get weatherized, our children will have less asthma, and it will create more green jobs...

A number of us single parents, we went to training, we’re ready to work, but we need a more fair economy.



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: Serve the communities who are transit dependent, not auto-addicted

An African American single mother of three, earning less than \$25,000 per year, told a Got Green survey volunteer that public transportation is a key priority for her in the green economy. "I don't have a car," she said, "Public transportation is my only option."

She's not alone. According to the City of Seattle's Transit Master Plan, more than 50% of households in Rainier Beach, and more than 30% in the Rainier Valley lack access to a car^{xx}; compared to just 15% of Seattle households overall.^{xx} Despite their increased transit use and lowered carbon footprint, Southeast Seattle residents' transit requests have not been met. Our region's public transit policy is driven by the desire to get commuters out of their cars, not to increase accessibility and affordability for the communities that are less petroleum-dependent already.

In the Women in the Green Economy survey, Latinas prioritized public transportation ahead of green jobs and green homes (31%). This is consistent with data that Latinos are more likely than any other racial group in Seattle to use public transit to commute to work (26%).^{xxi}

When asked what was difficult about using public transportation in Southeast Seattle, women surveyed most frequently responded that it cost too much (33%) and that the wait time (28%) and/or travel time and inconvenience of bus/transit routes (26%) were barriers. A 2007 transit study on "overloading" on Seattle bus routes, called out Rainier Avenue as one of six routes in which passenger loads frequently exceeded 110% of capacity.^{xxii}

Women surveyed and interviewed by Got Green cited the disparity between King County Metro's bus transfer policy that allows families to get on and off bus routes within a designated period of time – to pick up groceries, kids from childcare, etc. – without paying the fare twice vs. Link Light Rail's pay per ride system. "The Light Rail costs an awful lot of money... Sound Transit says they are 'charging by the distance.' I think Sound Transit is elitist. I don't think it was designed for us," said Betty Lowe, a survey participant.

To align their services with regional transit systems, King County Metro agreed to replace their senior and disabled rider bus pass with a transferable ORCA pass resulting in a 200% fare increase to seniors and people with disabilities.^{xxiii}

Clearly the collision between increased use of public transportation (up 15 percent since 2003)^{xxiv} and decreased state and local tax revenues has created a community crisis. However this is also a moment of great opportunity to revise and rethink our public transit strategies; it is an opportunity to add a transit equity component to our local and regional transit planning process, and to reward the communities already using public transportation for being the most green among us.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Support Rainier Beach and Rainier Valley residents to develop transit priorities for our neighborhood and provide a platform for Southeast Seattle residents to impact local transit policy.



Invest the majority of City of Seattle Vehicle Revenue funds in making transit work better for low income households by improving current transportation infrastructure and replacing and improving neighborhood transportation connections.

Katheryn Flake and Betty Lowe are neighbors in their Rainier Beach apartment building.

Katheryn is a retired office worker who moved to Southeast Seattle eight years ago, because of what was then 'excellent bus service.' Betty is a lifelong Seattle resident. She recently lost her job as a teaching assistant due to school budget cuts. Both women have been outspoken advocates for accessible and affordable public transportation for Southeast Seattle residents.

K (foreground)- People look at others who ride the bus as in disparity because they don't own a car; they think bus cuts don't affect them. But it does affect you. When you get all these cars on the street and you're sitting at a traffic light, through 5 or 6 lights and can't go nowhere, it does affect you!

B (background)- It affects us all!

K - And the cost of gas is phenomenally high, and all the pollution – we're killing our own selves, just because we have a car and can drive.

... Today when we're talking about bus service and Light Rail in our community, I like to go way back to the 1960's when the great bus boycott came about. People of color got tired of going in the front door, putting their money in the box just like everyone else, and then having to go sit in the back... Both of my parents worked outside the home, rode the bus, and had to walk a mile to the bus stop because the bus did not come into our neighborhood.

During the great boycott, those people would stand at the bus stop but they would not get on the bus. The people with automobiles would come and pick them up and take them to a transfer point close to downtown... And that went on for three years – not for three days, or three months, for three years. If people would do what they need to do we could make a big change in Metro. If you hurt that pocketbook, they gonna do what you want!

B- You know Metro hasn't always been Metro as we know it. In the 60's, when my mother was cleaning houses on Mercer Island, and in Bellevue, a private company called Metropolitan Transit used to run the buses to the suburbs; and they were some of the raggediest buses you have ever seen. So we don't want a private company running our bus system.

K – No we don't. But the cuts that have already happened to busses is a disservice; it's just terrible for the South end. They need to treat our community just like they are treating the Eastside. People live here, and they would like to have a say.

When they put up those signs saying, 'This bus stop will be closed,' I told people 'YOU have the right to pick up that phone and call'... They have taken out so many bus stops, and it's too far for mothers to walk with their babies and for seniors.

So we stood out there at the bus stop with cell phones and everyone who came by, we had them call. And because they only put the signs up in English, we tried to help everybody understand. The next day they moved that sign.

B – Like Katheryn, when I see something that is wrong, I'm going to say something. I'm here – and for all those women who ride the bus, I'm going to fight for them too!



Acknowledgments

The Women in the Green Economy Project is a grassroots effort to promote the priorities and needs of low income women and women of color in Southeast Seattle in the new, green economy. Dozens of individual volunteers and organizational partners contributed to make the survey and this report possible. Thank you!

Report Authors

Brenda Anibarro
Sharon Lerman
Kristyn Joy, Got Green Operations Director

Photography

Inye Wokoma / Ijo Arts Media Group

Graphic Design

Tiffani Koyano

Interviews

Ramata Diebate, her son Dominic & daughter Ella
Michelle Esguerra & her daughter Clover
Katheryn Flake
Betty Lowe
Violet Lavatai, her son Russell and nephew Paris
Jacquel Redmond & her son Reakwan
Sylvia Sabon

Data Analysis & Research

Howard Greenwich, Rebecca Saldana & Maggie Wykowski,
Puget Sound SAGE

Marie Kurose
Rich Stolz
Elizabeth Wilmott

Founding Project Steering Committee

Brenda Anibarro
Lillie Brinker
Nicole Chu
Christina Gallegos
Theresa Fujiwara
Elaine Ishihara
Sharon Lerman
Eunice Letzing
Jill Mangaliman
Karen Zammit
Dee Williams

Project Organizing Committee

Ramata Diebate
Emma Freeman
Christina Gallegos
Lottie Jackson
Ruby Jones
Violet Lavatai
Betty Lowe
Jill Mangaliman
Khalil Panni
Karen Zammit

Interpreting & Translation

Anab Abdullahi
Khanh Nguyen
Ruth Lopez

Project Volunteers

Anab Abdullahi
Xavier Barajas
Maria Batayola
Joy Borkholder
Beata Bowen
Nori Catabay
Heather Day, CAGJ
Elana Dix
Long Duong
Lucas Franco
Ryan Garrison
Cynthia Green
Emily Inkpen
Esther Dove John
Ruby Jones
Paul Lee
Rae Levine
Ruth Lopez
Raul Mendez

Project Volunteers Cont.

Sharon Nakamura
Ricardo Ortega
Emil Paddison
Khalil Panni
Jabari Rashidi
Sylvia Sabon
Thon Saephan
Kim Vo
Long Vo
Wendy Watanabe
Barb Wiley
Bamboo Winston
Coalition of Anti-Racist Whites
New Holly Teen Center

Survey Collection Sites

New Holly Safeway
Mac Pherson's Produce
Rainier Beach Safeway
Rainier Park Medical Clinic

Got Green Staff

Michael Woo, Director
Kristyn Joy, Operations Director
Tammy Nguyen, Women in the Green Economy Organizer
Chio Saetern, Community Organizer

Funding for Got Green and the Women in the Green Economy Project has been provided by the City of Seattle Neighborhood Matching Fund, the Neighbor to Neighbor Fund of the Seattle Foundation, the Paul Allen Family Foundation, the Social Justice Fund NW, the Women's Funding Alliance, The Seattle Foundation's Environment Fund, Asian Pacific Islander Coalition Against Tobacco, and Emerald Cities Seattle.

End Notes

ⁱ Women's Economic Security Campaign; Creating Opportunity for Low-Income Women in the Green Economy; (2009);

<http://www.womensfundingnetwork.org/sites/wfnet.org/files/WESC/WESCGreenEconFINAL.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Mason, Nicole C. PhD. Race, Gender and the Recession: JOB CREATION AND EMPLOYMENT. A four part report series on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and its impact on women of color, their families and communities (2009). Women of Color Policy Network. <http://wagner.nyu.edu/wocpn/publications>

ⁱⁱⁱ Vallianatos, Mark. Transportation and Food: The Importance of Access: A Policy Brief of the Center for Food and Justice, Urban and Environmental Policy Institute (2002) http://deparments.oxy.edu/uepl/cfj/publications/transportation_and_food.pdf

^{iv} Southeast Transportation Study December 2008 Final Report, Prepared for Seattle Department of Transportation by The Underhill Company LLC. http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/ppmp_sets.htm

^v Ibid

^{vi} Source: American Community Survey 05-09. Table B25009

^{vii} See Morrill, Dick. How Seattle is Exporting Its Poor (November 10, 2010) . Crosscut.com. <http://crosscut.com/2010/11/10/seattle/20351/How-Seattle-is-exporting-its-poor-people/> for a more extensive examination of this topic.

^{viii} State Intervention in Life-Threatening Childhood Obesity JAMA. 2011;306(2):206-207.

^{ix} Monsivais, Pablo. Following Federal Guidelines to Increase Nutrient Consumption May Lead to Higher Food Costs for Consumer. (August 2011) Health Affairs. August 2011.

^x Mapping Food Insecurity and Access Seattle and King County; (May 2008). At the Table with Seattle King County Food Access Policy Council. Issue Paper No. 4

^{xi} Examples include the \$20 million pilot program in Hampden County, MA funded under the 2008 Farm Bill; Double Up Food Bucks in Michigan farmers markets; Boston Bounty Bucks; and the New York City Dept. of Healthy's Health Bucks program.

^{xii} For a successful model see the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy's partnerships in Minneapolis at <http://www.iatp.org/documents/mini-farmers-markets-expand-to-bring-local-produce-to-minneapolis-neighborhoods>

^{xiii} Emerald Cities Collaborative: Voices from the Field: Greening America's Distressed Housing (March 2011); http://www.emeraldcities.org/images/resources/ECC_DistressedHousing.fin%28WEB%29.pdf

^{xiv} Ibid

^{xv} Morgenstern, Claire. Is the Green Jobs Movement Leaving Women Behind? (2010) <http://greeneconomypost.com/green-jobs-women-8669.htm>

^{xvi} C. Nicole Mason, PhD. Race, Gender and the Recession: Job Creation and Employment. (2009) Women of Color Policy Network, NYU Wagener. <http://wagner.nyu.edu/wocpn/publications/>

^{xvii} CAUSE (Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Alliance) "Green Collar Jobs in the Green Economy." (2009) www.coastalliance.com

^{xviii} C. Nicole Mason, PhD. Ibid.

^{xix} Seattle Transit Master Plan Briefing Book, Section 3, Page 19. www.seattle.gov/transportation/tmp_bbook.htm

^{xx} Barnett, Erica, Mike O'Brien: Why I support the \$80 license fee. (August 8, 2011). Publicola.com. <http://publicola.com/2011/08/08/mike-obrien-why-i-support-the-80-license-fee/>

^{xxi} 2007 to 2009 American Community Survey

^{xxii} Seattle Transit Master Plan Briefing Book, Section 4, Page 36-37. www.seattle.gov/transportation/tmp_bbook.htm

^{xxiii} King County Metro Department of Transportation, Regional Fare Coordination Report and Recommendations (July 2011). www.metro.kingcounty.gov/am/reports/2010/2010FareCoordBudgetProvisoRpt.pdf - 2010-07-01

^{xxiv} King County Metro, Metro Online Website, Ridership-Annual Performance Chart, <http://metro.kingcounty.gov/am/reports/annual-measures/ridership.html>

Got Green is a grassroots organizing group – led by people of color, and based in Southeast Seattle – that works to ensure that the benefits of the green movement and green economy –green jobs, access to healthy food, energy efficient and healthy homes, and public transit – reach low income communities of color.

We do this by cultivating leaders - especially 18-35 year olds - to educate, advocate, organize and build coalitions.

**got
\$green?**

Environment, Equity, and Opportunity

Got Green
P.O. Box 18794
Seattle, WA 98118
(206) 290-5136

Printed on 100% PCW recycled paper

