

Press Release...

Thursday November 27, 2008

Young People, Business, Government and Third Sector leaders meet in London to form a Chain Reaction

“Chain Reaction is the start of great things to come”

The Prime Minister Rt. Hon Gordon Brown, MP

LONDON – Last week the first Chain Reaction event took place on London’s Southbank – launching a new movement that recognises that, although we all have the power of our own actions, none of us can change the world alone - not governments, not businesses, not charities - we succeed when we work together.

Chain Reaction aimed to bring together people from different worlds to connect with each other, collaborate on the development of new ideas and commit to social change. In an economic environment where the first cost cutting measure is to restrict conference attending and sponsorship is being pulled, Chain Reaction obviously struck a nerve. We were joined for a two day programme by over 1000 people, at least 200 of whom were aged under 21, from 16 countries, community organisations from up and down the country and beyond, artists, social entrepreneurs, bloggers and techies with new tools to try out, business leaders (among others, CEOs from the BBC, Royal Mail, IBM, CBI, BITC, Accenture) and a stellar line up of Ministers, including a visit from the Prime Minister, who made Chain Reaction his first stop after the Economic Summit in Washington.

One of the key messages from Chain Reaction was that, in a time of change, we can either become more divided, or we can take the opportunity to find a new way of doing things.

“One can” said Dr Victoria Hale, key note speaker and founder of One World Health, “view the world in two ways: from the perspective of the problem, or from the perspective of the opportunity... We generate unique opportunities and invent creative solutions. We are ambitious, we are exacting, we are passionate, and we will change the face of the world, one (issue) at a time”

The Prime Minister said, *“...the recognition that the principles that govern enterprise and social and community action are not at odds with each other, but (that) rewarding and celebrating hard work and effort, responsibility and concern is actually the way forward for every modern society.”*

Chain Reaction used new technologies to connect with the wider world – and at one point on Monday was one of the top ten terms being used globally on the ‘Twitter’ network, meaning we started getting calls from people in California asking what this was all about! You can find links to all the films, you tube shorts, blogs, pictures, tweets and discussions on the Chain Reaction website and conversations begun in the presentations and workshop sessions continue on the

Chain Reaction Network.

But this is just the beginning. Success for Chain Reaction must be judged against a bigger vision – not just the people who met there and the plans we made together but by what we do together in the weeks and months ahead. The Chain Reaction team are drawing out the big ideas that started to emerge and working hard to keep the momentum going – watch this space.

We'll be continuing to support people to connect, collaborate and commit and hope that others will work with us! Visit www.chain-reaction.org to get involved

Please see selected photography from the event attached. If you would like to receive additional photography, please contact Laura Hyde at laura.hyde@community-links.org

To receive more information about Chain Reaction please contact Laura Hyde at laura.hyde@community-links.org or Geraldine Blake at geraldine.blake@community-links.org .

CONTACTS

Laura Hyde
Chain Reaction Events Manager
laura.hyde@community-links.org
07951 278809

Geraldine Blake
Head of LinksUK
geraldine.blake@community-links.org
020 7473 9651

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. **Chain Reaction** is a new annual event bringing together community activists, policy makers, businesses leaders and young people from across the world to: **Connect:** We are all connected. Meet different people and make new connections to share learning and ideas for building a better world **Collaborate:** We succeed when we work together. Work with others to develop new ideas for social action. **Commit:** We all have power: Commit to taking forward new actions for positive social change and to making a difference together. Chain Reaction is a project of **Community Links** and forms part of the programme of the **Council on Social Action** www.chain-reaction.org

2. **Community Links** is an innovative charity running community-based projects in east London. For 30 years we have helped thousands of children, young people, adults and the elderly in deprived neighbourhoods. The national team **linksUK** leads our programme of national work of training, consultancy, research, publications and demonstration projects sharing the local lessons across the country to widen the impact of our projects; inform policy makers and practitioners and generate lasting social change. www.community-links.org

3. **The Council on Social action (CoSA)** is a unique cross sector body that brings together leaders from Private, Public and Third sector to act as an advisory body to the government around the area of Social Action. The Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Gordon Brown is the Chair for the CoSA and David Robinson serves as the Vice-chair. The Council was announced by the Prime Minister in 2007 and is currently studying a range of subjects as diverse as obstacles and incentives for volunteer engagement to social clauses in procurement. www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_action.aspx

4. **Partnerships** Chain Reaction is supported by government departments (Cabinet Office, DfID, DCLG and DEFRA), international businesses (including Thomson Reuters, Accenture and Google) third sector organisations (among them NCVO and bassac) and intermediary organisations (including Heart of the City and Business in the Community).

5. **Background information** about the event can be found on the website www.chain-reaction.org