

**BROOKLYN BOTANIC GARDEN  
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
STRATEGIC PLAN  
2003-2005**

**Prepared by  
Michele Israel, Director  
Educational Consulting Group**

**August, 2002  
(REVISED FEBRUARY, 2003)**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Page</b>
I. Introductory letter from the Vice President for Education	3
II. Executive Summary	4-5
III. Mission and Vision Statements	6
IV. SWOT	7
V. Department History and Profile	8
VI. Strategic Issues, Primary Strategies, Goals and Objectives	9-17

## **I. Introductory letter from Sharon A. Myrie, Vice President for Education**

November, 2002

I am pleased to present Brooklyn Botanic Garden Education Department's 2003-2005 strategic plan, which establishes steps to address issues critical to the Department's growth and success in meeting constituent needs and interests.

The yearlong planning process evolved from two primary Brooklyn Botanic Garden (BBG) initiatives. The first was a 1995 Long-Range Vision Plan for BBG (revised in 1999 by BBG President Judy Zuk) that included a section on program upgrades and development for the Education Department. Several of the proposed initiatives materialized; others are still in development and will be addressed, in part, by the department's three-year strategic plan.

The second initiative is the recent development and implementation of the institution's Master Plan, which incorporates significant Education Department needs into the Garden's overall physical enhancement. The Education Department viewed the proposed additions and expansions of instructional, learning, and office space as opportunities for reflecting on programming growth and change to appropriately utilize these projected capital changes.

As a new member of BBG's leadership team, charged with directing the Education Department, I saw these initiatives as stepping stones to developing a plan that would support proposed programmatic and capital changes, while articulating a clear departmental vision. The planning process met these goals, while providing staff a unique opportunity to thoughtfully review and strategically consider important concerns.

I am confident that the strategies we propose will enhance the department's offerings and enable us to more effectively serve our existing and potential audiences, while supporting our professionalism and service delivery. We understand that as we implement the strategic plan, we will have to continuously evaluate our goals and objectives to fulfill our program mission and mandates.

I would like to thank all those individuals who gave their time and effort to help shape this document, particularly Judy Zuk for supporting the planning process, the Education Department staff, who shared their hopes and visions for how the Department could grow, and Education Committee members, whose insight and ideas fed our strategic direction.

It is my hope that we will continue to provide youth and adults the best educational programming that is offered in a public garden.

Sharon A. Myrie  
Vice President for Education

## **II. Executive Summary**

In the winter of 2001, the Brooklyn Botanic Garden's (BBG) Education Department undertook a strategic planning process to develop a plan for assessing, strengthening and re-organizing existing educational programs, as well as developing programs within the context of the Garden's Master Plan.

The Garden hired a consultant, Education Consulting Group (ECG), to facilitate the strategic planning process. ECG conducted a comprehensive examination of the department which consisted of: interviews with 38 staff and Board members, education partners and other cultural institutions and botanic gardens; development of a "SWOT" analysis in which staff examined the department's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; development of mission and values statements; and seven focus groups with 87 program constituents, including teachers, interns, and Garden Guides, as well as participants from our continuing education courses, community horticulture and horticultural therapy programs, and parents whose children participate in the Children's Garden.

Our organizational partners and focus groups praised the Garden's programming on many fronts. From the Children's Garden to Project GreenBridge, our programs succeed in enhancing our audiences' environmental awareness. The Department's active, hands-on approach to education was also considered extremely effective. For example, our teacher training initiatives were noted as especially helpful in demonstrating to teachers how they can "bring the Garden to the classroom" through simple plants purchased at the grocery store — an important point when budget cuts and reduced field trips limit teachers' ability to bring their classes to the Garden. Our adult education participants praised the diversity and the academic quality of the classes, noting that their involvement in the programs enabled them to interact more with the Garden. GreenBridge constituents lauded the program's extensive outreach efforts and services that provide physical resources—from knowledgeable staff-led technical assistance to actual gardening supplies—and enhance the value of community gardening.

But our organizational partners and focus groups participants also cited challenges, which helped staff think critically about how they could improve their ability to deliver programs. For example, a primary concern across programs was the need for stronger evaluation mechanisms to ensure that we are meeting constituent needs and aid us in better monitoring changing educational trends.

Several teachers thought we should create a 'teachers advisory board' to assist with the development of evaluation procedures, and to help us more closely link program materials with existing learning standards. The absence of ongoing, in- or after-school programming for, particularly for high school students, was also noted. Although the Garden offers over 100 internship opportunities a year, some teachers thought that both they and their students would benefit from an ongoing program specifically geared to

meet their academic needs. Others sought greater diversity in program offerings, particularly classroom-based services.

Parents expressed a desire to have follow-up educational materials kits that families could use to continue their children's learning process at home and be more involved with their children's programming, especially in the Children's Garden. Some interns were interested in more orientation, especially around issues of pedagogy and classroom management. Adult education students wanted us to consider varying the levels of our classes in the certificate programs so that "beginners" could first benefit from the basics. GreenBridge participants encouraged us to broaden our base in under-served neighborhoods, perhaps using community gardens as a vehicle for such expansion.

Coupled with the Garden's Master Plan, these conversations provided staff with a comprehensive overview of what they do well, and what skills and programs they need to strengthen. The primary outcome was that the strategic planning process succeeded in building upon the reorganization of the Department's infrastructure by strengthening its capacity to run existing programs and conceptualizing and developing new programs. Staff also had the opportunity to immediately put these 'lessons-learned' into practice. In summary, staff:

- Created a vision for the Garden's Education programs in the context of the larger vision for the institution's future, as set out in the Master Plan;
- Learned how to better identify and act upon the strengths and opportunities for linkages among department programs.
- Started to integrate more stakeholders —program participants— into the program development and evaluation processes.
- Developed better strategies for meeting learning standards in current and future programming,

A strategic planning committee identified the key strategic issues, primary strategies, and goals and objectives. Team members were:

- Ainsley Caldwell, Director of Children and Family Programs
- Pat Jasaitis, Coordinator of Urban Composting Project
- Ellen Kirby, Director of Brooklyn GreenBridge
- Barbara Kushner-Kurland, Coordinator of Teacher Education
- Trish Lindemann, Director of Continuing Education Programs
- Ted Maclin, Manager of Children's Garden and Exhibits
- Kirsten Munro, Director of Institutional Funding
- Sharon Myrie, Vice President of Education
- Julie Warsowe, Manager of Community Horticulture

The team identified five strategic issues to address over the next three to five years. Strategic issues are those that are of critical importance to the long-term viability and success of the Garden's education programming. The actual work plan and timeline for

approaching these issues is currently in development, and will be included in the final strategic plan. In brief, the issues are:

- i. Improving staff development opportunities that promote professionalism and quality service delivery;
- ii. Developing a more effective recruitment and training system for interns, volunteers, and contract instructors;
- iii. Strengthening evaluation methods;
- iv. Improving mission-driven program planning, development, enhancement and implementation; and
- v. Improving outreach to community organizations to increase participation in and access to existing programs and resources.

In identifying these strategic issues, the Education Department has thoughtfully acknowledged its service gaps and needs and considered approaches to address them by building on its programmatic strengths. A critical aspect of the planning process was the resultant dialogue among staff that allowed for an in-depth sharing of ideas and concerns, a practice that the department plans to continue as it implements its improvement strategies.

### **III. Mission and Vision Statements**

#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Through plants and gardening, Brooklyn Botanic Garden's Education Department provides pathways for experiences that:

- Foster a sense of wonder
- Stimulate learning
- Strengthen relationships among individuals, communities, and the natural world, and
- Encourage environmental responsibility

Brooklyn Botanic Garden's Education Department is committed to:

- Promoting the importance and value of plants, gardens, and gardening;
- Providing creative and experiential programs that meet the educational needs of people of all ages and address multiple ways of learning.
- Making Brooklyn Botanic Garden and gardening accessible to people in diverse urban communities.
- Pursuing lifelong professional development and supporting and valuing each other as a community of educators and learners.
- Building on our tradition of public service and children's education programs.

#### **VISION STATEMENT**

**IN DEVELOPMENT**

**IV. SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)**

The SWOT is a result of the Education Department’s thoughtful self-analysis. By identifying the Department’s key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, staff was able to consider future strategic programming. This process also enabled staff to note critical issues—ones that need immediate attention—and honestly assess what they would not be able to undertake given existing resources and/or programmatic obstacles.

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committed, experienced, and resourceful expert staff that works well as a team</li> <li>• Varied educational programming serving diverse audiences of all ages, needs, and interests</li> <li>• School programs are linked to academic curricular mandates and performance standards</li> <li>• Programs offer hands-on experience with plants</li> <li>• Education Department draws from and builds on extensive BBG resources, including plant collections and gardens</li> <li>• Education Department has established ongoing partnerships with broad range of academic, community, cultural, and gardening organizations/entities</li> <li>• Dedicated and committed volunteers</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal staffing issues that have a negative impact on staff morale, retention, and productivity</li> <li>• Minimal and/or absence of assessment of programs to gauge their impact on program participants and actual participant needs and interests</li> <li>• Minimal and/or absence of audience development tools that gauge interest and needs of existing and potential audiences.</li> <li>• Insufficient data-base management systems</li> <li>• Absence of uniform development, reviews, and upgrade of learning materials</li> <li>• Challenges meeting multiple and diverse demands, needs, and interests of widely varied audiences</li> <li>• Strong reliance on volunteers for program operations and fulfillment of program goals</li> <li>• Space limitations including access to, and structure and availability of classrooms.</li> <li>• Limited inter-departmental relations</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive outreach to varied audiences through multiple events that reach diverse, inclusive Brooklyn audience</li> <li>• Potential for partnerships and collaborations with multiple community-based, gardening, academic, and like institutions to enhance visibility and resources</li> <li>• Developing new programs to address new or expanded existing audiences (teachers, special education students, after-school programs, etc.)</li> <li>• Building on growing community interest in and application of gardening and horticultural practices</li> <li>• Building on BBG’s resources to address gaps in gardening and green space in urban environments</li> <li>• Enhance use of technology to broaden programs, and diversify and reach out to new audiences</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of and/or decrease in program funding</li> <li>• Limited scope of funders regarding program services</li> <li>• Decrease and/or absence of constituents seeking additional services department does not provide</li> <li>• Decrease and/or absence of revenue-generating audiences</li> <li>• Changing school environment that has an impact on and dictates type of programming</li> <li>• Organizational competitors offering similar programs</li> <li>• Organizational competitors drawing staff away from BBG with more incentives</li> <li>• Audience expectation of BBG offerings may not be addressed</li> <li>• Audience understanding of education offerings may be hindered by audience perception of BBG as driven by large scale, public events (rather than grasp of multiple service levels the garden offers)</li> </ul>



## V. Department History and Profile

Founded in 1910, Brooklyn Botanic Garden was envisioned as more than a scientific institution: it was conceived as a garden that was for and about people, no matter their age, background, or skill. In 1914, BBG's *Children's Garden* was founded as the first such program of its kind in the United States. Its founder, Ellen Eddy Shaw, believed that investing in young people early on in their lives would encourage future generations of adults to develop a sense of stewardship toward the natural environment in their home communities, and beyond. Miss Shaw's vision continues to this day — the Garden is now considered one of the country's leading centers of informal environmental education for children, reaching 150,000 children and teachers a year.

The Garden is known for its extensive outreach, a history of quickly and thoroughly responding to constituents' needs, a commitment to hands-on, inquiry-based methodology, and with 52 acres and 12 specialty gardens, its tremendous educational resources. Our education initiatives can be divided into four categories: (1) **On-site Programs** for children and families, such as the *Children's* and *Discovery Gardens*, *Early Childhood Programs* and *Internship Programs*; (2) **School Programs**, which include *Project Green Reach*, *School Workshops* and our *Teacher Training Initiatives*; (3) **Community Outreach**, coordinated through *Brooklyn GreenBridge*, the Garden's community horticulture program, which in 2001 helped us engage over 40,000 Brooklyn residents in community gardening activities. Working with block associations, community gardens, schools, and social service organizations, GreenBridge extends the resources of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden to a multitude of Brooklyn residents, including individuals and groups with special needs through its horticultural therapy program, and; (4) **Adult classes** (over 175), provided through the **Continuing Education Department**, that reach over 3,000 registrants per year, with leisure and professional classes, and trips focusing on aspects of horticulture, gardening, and related fields. The Certificate in Horticulture and the Certificate in Floral Design offer serious amateurs and professionals intensive training.

Our programming incorporates first-hand experience with plants and nature, and accommodates different learning styles and educational needs through a combination of inquiry-based workshops, hands-on activities, group discussion, lectures, tours, and training. Although our primary focus is plants, the methods we use and the subjects we teach, for example gardening or basic botany, also include instruction in math, literacy skills, and cultural traditions, (i.e. ethnobotany). In this way, we are able to meet the needs of different audiences, from teachers in need of more intensive science instruction, to students who can better learn math by applying ideas in a real-life setting, like the Garden.

Brooklyn Botanic Garden's educational offerings demonstrate how an urban public garden functions as a living classroom and learning laboratory, providing a broad and varied interactions with plants to a diverse constituency.

Our program participants not only enjoy the natural beauty of the garden, but also delve more deeply into the nature and science of botany in an experiential fashion. The Education Department continually explores ways to further our participants' environmental awareness and appreciation, and, in this regard, seeks to enhance and grow its programs, refine and develop new resources, and develop outreach strategies to broaden our interaction with the community.

## **VI. Strategic Issues, Primary Strategies, and Goals and Objectives**

**STRATEGIC ISSUE I:** Improving staff development opportunities that promote professionalism and quality service delivery, as well as offer collaborative venues for education staff to reflect on and share their projects, practices, challenges, and successes.

### **RATIONALE:**

Ongoing professional development is key to helping educators inquire into their practice, refresh existing and gain additional skills, acquire emerging information, and implement new ideas and methods. While the Education Department values professional development for its constituents, it has not built into its infrastructure such opportunities for staff. Staff may voluntarily participate in conferences and workshops, but there is no departmental mandate to engage in internal and external activities that bolster professionalism and practice overall. More structured professional development would:

- Enable all department personnel—full-and part-time staff and interns—to gain knowledge, skills, and materials to better serve constituents.
- Invite staff to keep up to date with latest practices in their respective disciplines.
- Provide venues for reflecting on programs and practice to ensure achievement of goals and objectives and that services are pedagogically sound and appropriate.
- Facilitate the establishment of group-oriented, inquiry-based examination of staff practice and programs; in other words, creating an internal culture of learning that prompts staff to intellectually review their work (much like the inquiry work they encourage program participants to undertake).
- Serve as a form of professional incentive, enabling staff to share their expertise, knowledge, and successes with their colleagues.
- Expose staff to innovative programs and experts in their field.

### **PRIMARY STRATEGY**

Develop structures and processes for formalized professional development using internal and external resources to support staff and meet program objectives.

**GOAL:** Incorporate professional development into the practice of staff's work to increase their skills, performance, and job satisfaction and enable staff to meet other strategic goals.

**OBJECTIVES:**

**I. Establish a process to regularly identify staff development needs and resources.**

**ACTION STEPS**

1. Develop survey of staff skills, needs, and interests regarding professional development (e.g., writing skills, how to publish your work)
2. Identify and place priority on common needs, taking into consideration what skills are needed to implement the strategic plan.
3. Create a list of internal and external training opportunities.

**II. Develop a process to ensure that all staff has access to regular on-going professional development opportunities.**

**ACTION STEPS**

1. Set aside specific dates for ongoing department-wide training
2. Develop a structure within the Department to encourage sharing and reflection time
3. Set aside time for at least two additional approved training opportunities each year for each staff member

**STRATEGIC ISSUE II:** Need for effective volunteer, intern, and contract instructor development to ensure efficient and appropriate service delivery, and meeting this group's needs as significant Department constituents.

**RATIONALE:**

The Education Department greatly relies on volunteers, interns, and contract instructors to deliver services, support programmatic activities, and develop materials. Programs such as Project Green Reach, the Children's Garden, and Continuing Education might have to significantly reduce or eliminate services without the aid of these individuals, who provide vital contributions to programming.

While training and supervision of this pool exist, the Department has recognized gaps in the way it manages these individuals. Because they are crucial to programming, interact with constituents, disseminate information, and represent the Garden, the Department sees a need for more recruitment and oversight of interns, volunteers, and contract instructors, largely to ensure program quality and effectiveness. The Department seeks to improve this aspect of its services by working in conjunction with the Garden's Director of Volunteer Services and his staff.

Moreover, the Department recognizes that this important group is also viewed as a constituency who benefits from their involvement in the Garden. In this regard, the Education Department provides a service and must ensure that it meets the needs of those

helping to run and sustain important programming. For example, the Department should help interns gain the professional and educational experience they seek from their work, and be mindful of volunteer skills and interests to ensure they are appropriately applied and met.

### **PRIMARY STRATEGIES**

- Establish baseline training and performance expectations
- Establish methods for effective recruitment and training

**GOAL:** Improve the recruitment, training, placement and evaluation of volunteers, interns, and contractor instructors to ensure the quality of their contributions to educational programs and address their needs as significant department constituents.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

#### **I. Analyze programs in terms of appropriate volunteer, intern, and contract instructor roles.**

##### **ACTION STEPS**

1. Determine current roles of volunteers, interns, and contractor instructors in programs.
2. Compile staff expectations of the contributions made by volunteers, interns, and contract instructors for each program
3. Determine appropriate roles of volunteers, interns, and contract instructors based on analyzing action steps 1 and 2

#### **II. Revisit and improve existing recruitment, training, placement, and evaluation structures and processes.**

##### **ACTION STEPS**

1. Research other institutional models to determine ways that they recruit, train, and evaluate their volunteers, interns and contract instructors
2. Review and refine appropriate organizational structures for overseeing volunteers, interns, and contract instructors
3. Pool institutional resources (Science/Garden Resource Center, Horticulture, Education staff) to design an integrated, intensive training period for college program interns

#### **III. Create a support system uniquely appropriate for the respective needs of volunteers, interns, and contract instructors.**

##### **ACTION STEPS**

1. Create formal and regularly conducted review mechanisms, including focus groups, surveys, evaluations, and observations.
2. Strengthen Garden Guide Committee's role in supporting volunteer needs and interests.

3. Build upon existing strategies to identify internal and external resources that could potentially this group's social support needs.
4. Establish standards for contract instructors.
5. Reinforce and, where deemed necessary, lengthen existing training for respective groups.

**STRATEGIC ISSUE III:** Need for adequate evaluation of program impact on our constituents to determine whether program goals, objectives and outcomes have been met, and assess needs of existing and potential audiences in terms of program planning and development.

**RATIONALE:**

Program evaluation is essential to the development, implementation, and continuity of quality educational services. It should be formalized, ongoing, and reviewed frequently to ensure that programs are addressing constituent needs and demands, achieving goals and objectives, and modified and/or developed appropriately in response to evaluative feedback.

Currently, there is no standard approach to evaluation in the Education Department; some programs have implemented informal review processes, which are often output-based and sporadically administered. There is little by the way of outcome measurement to best identify the actual impact of services on constituents, particularly from an educational perspective. It is not enough to know how many teachers, for example, participated in professional development offerings, but to understand what they learned and how they applied this knowledge in their practice (if that is the final goal of the service provided). Such understanding of impact facilitates improved programming, allowing for a rethinking of original ideas and goals, program change, and a more realistic approach to service delivery.

Ongoing evaluation would also enable the Education Department to identify audiences visibly absent and/or not benefiting from existing programs. For example, if evaluation tools indicate that a minimal number of schools from certain neighborhoods is participating in services, then the department can implement outreach and engagement strategies to involve schools not presently part of the department's network.

**PRIMARY STRATEGY:** Develop a structure for evaluation that measures program content and delivery, audience, and staff.

**GOAL:** Enhance and develop evaluation processes to gauge program effectiveness and better meet individual program goals and objectives.

**OBJECTIVES:**

**I) Establish a system to guide, coordinate, and establish continuous evaluation processes.**

**ACTION STEPS:**

1. Research evaluative methods, tools, and techniques that are used in other institutions.
2. Determine what methods can be incorporated into existing programs.
3. Create a template for incorporating evaluative component into future programming.

**II) Devise a strategy for evaluating long-running programs**

**ACTION STEPS**

1. Choose a program that is appropriate for a longitudinal study to evaluate over the long-term.
2. Hire an outside evaluator with specific expertise in long-range evaluation/assessment.
3. Define program evaluation/assessment parameters and outcomes

**STRATEGIC ISSUE IV:** Establish effective and efficient mission-driven program planning, development, enhancement, and implementation.

**RATIONALE:**

With its newly developed mission and vision statements, the Education Department has embarked on a journey to make its programs more cohesive philosophically and build into its programming scheduled time to thoughtfully review services and products that effectively meet participant instructional and learning needs.

Developing and revisiting mission-driven programs require substantial planning. However, the latter is not a commodity to which staff--charged with running their programs' day-to-day operations--can readily avail themselves. This absence of planning, however, has an impact on how staff structure and administer programs. For example, program directors require time to set, and then review and revise, program goals and objectives, build evaluative feedback into their services, and construct learning materials (sometimes referred to as curricula) that are pedagogically and developmentally appropriate. From an educational standpoint, where impact on learning and instruction is integral to the Department's services, programs cannot be completely effective if not thoughtfully reviewed and designed.

The Education Department recognizes the need to build mechanisms for enhanced program planning into its structure so that the mission is strongly embedded across services, constituent needs are effectively met, and growth potential and innovation are thoughtfully reviewed. However, the Department's challenge, in this regard, is not only building into its programming scheduled planning sessions, but also relying on limited staffing and financial resources. How does a small program team manage daily demanding services and then find the time to plan? Program planning might assist in resolving this dilemma as staff more strategically and efficiently structure offerings.

**PRIMARY STRATEGIES:**

- Set up structures for program planning (time, resources, etc.)
- Build consensus on a common educational philosophy to be embedded in and practiced across programs.

**GOAL I:** Ensure that all programs fulfill the Education Department's mission and values to better meet current and potential audiences' needs.

**OBJECTIVES:**

**I) Establish means for discussing, developing, and practicing a cross-program educational philosophy.**

**ACTION STEPS:**

1. Hold a staff and Education Committee retreat in the fall or winter.
2. Establish schedule for and conduct regular meetings to refresh the understanding of and commitment to the Department's educational philosophy.

**II) Set clear mission-driven goals and objectives for all current programs.**

**ACTION STEPS:**

1. Identify all programs and projects to be reviewed.
2. Establish working groups to review and clarify specific program goals and objectives.

**GOAL II: Strengthen the process of designing, reviewing, and implementing programs to best serve the Education Department's audience**

**OBJECTIVES:**

**I) Develop and implement permanent program planning structures and processes.**

**ACTION STEPS:**

1. Identify and document current planning processes for each program.
2. Enhance and/or establish new planning processes for each program.
3. Research comparable internal (interdepartmental, intradepartmental) and external (like institutions and/or programs, consultants) program planning strategies to identify effective models.
4. Develop and establish program-planning criteria, taking into consideration time allocation, community needs, budgeting, evaluation, etc.
5. Set aside scheduled program/project-planning time.

**II) Incorporate assessment and evaluation feedback into program planning to ensure program adherence to mission and values.**

**ACTION STEPS**

1. Develop department-wide assessment recording system.

2. Record and synthesize evaluation/assessment feedback on a regular basis
3. Create discussion group to review feedback and recommend program changes
4. Revisit status of recommendations on program-by-program basis.

**STRATEGIC ISSUE V:** Need for increasing and improving the Education Department's relationships with the community, particularly neighborhood gardeners and community-based organizations.

**RATIONALE:**

The Education Department strongly relies on its partnerships with Brooklyn and the metropolitan area, and yet recognizes that there are constituencies that do not fully benefit from its resources and programs. However, the Department believes that improved attempts to strengthen its ties with untapped communities, through on- and off-site activities, could greatly enhance its presence in and services to at least some under-served areas. Thus, staff wishes to establish mechanisms for more thoroughly reaching out to constituents to build new and expand existing relationships. The Department recognizes the value of building on BBG's current strategies for audience development.

The Department also places great value on community interaction—bringing different participants from neighborhoods together to share and foster their appreciation for gardening and environmental action. This is particularly true for Brooklyn GreenBridge, a program that has as its primary goal to bring the Garden directly to communities.

However, staff feel that this aspect of their work could be strengthened with several goals in mind: to enhance BBG's visibility in Brooklyn at large, create neighborhood gardening venues for communities that do not have ready access to BBG, utilize community gardening venues as BBG demonstration sites, and generate a BBG-led, borough-wide gardening network to enhance the capacity for shared resources. (Having a more diverse constituent base will improve our programs and ensure the relevancy of our programs, thus better meeting the needs of our community.)



## **PRIMARY STRATEGIES**

**GOAL:** Improve neighborhood gardeners' and community organizations' access to BBG educational resources to encourage horticulture and gardening activities in diverse urban communities.

**OBJECTIVE I:** Develop a strategy for diversifying and expanding our constituent base.

### **ACTION STEPS**

1. Determine who is participating in our programs and benefiting from our resources.
2. In conjunction with the goals and objectives of each program, and taking into consideration those we already serve, determine ways to target populations not fully utilizing our offerings and services.
3. Set up an ongoing dialogue with these targeted populations to identify the barriers that prevent them from using BBG educational programs.
4. Determine and implement methods for overcoming these barriers (that departmental and organizational resources can address).

**OBJECTIVE II:** Build a network that will include various community organizations to share resources and information among a broader constituent base.

### **ACTION STEPS**

1. Building on information gathered in Objective I, identify existing and new community organizations such as youth organizations, community gardens, neighborhood associations, civic and religious organizations (working in conjunction with the Director of Government Affairs) to formulate an organizational network.
2. Determine common interests/linkages between BBG and community organizations.
3. Develop a structure to sustain the network on an ongoing basis.
4. Develop viable feedback and evaluation mechanisms between the community network and the Education Department.