

JULY 2018



The future of health in Newham

“Power is organised people and organised money”

Community organising maxim

ABOUT NEWHAM CITIZENS

Newham Citizens is an alliance of 20-member communities drawn from faith, education and community groups. We are part of The East London Communities Organisation (TELCO) and our membership represents over 30,000 people who live, work, and stay in Newham.

Our community organising methodology recognises that poor communities need power to make change and that such power can be found in relationships (Chambers, 2004).

The social capital within our member institutions can be understood as pockets of relational power: our community organising depends upon harnessing this. In our experience, the engagement of social networks of ‘hard to reach’ communities depends on local or indigenous leaders. These are the real representatives of people in the community and it is they who have the ability to inspire people’s belief that they can realise their goal (Alinsky, 1946). Local community leaders are ordinary citizens who have deep relational roots in the community. We support them galvanise the social capital within their institutions and so build bonds, reciprocity and solidarity. From this basis they create links to outside agencies (Warren 2001) and to the assets of those external organisations able to provide access to services (Putnam, 2000).

As the founding chapter of Citizens UK, TELCO has a strong track record of campaigning for social justice for 20 years in east London. Our successful campaigns include the Living Wage; genuinely affordable housing through Community Land Trusts; Good Jobs; Affordable Credit; Safer Streets; and Refugees Welcome. We are proud to have played a role in making ‘London 2012’ the world’s first Living Wage Olympics. Our housing campaign has also recently won 300 homes worth £90m on the Boleyn development.

Why Health?

Our vision is for “Newham to be one of the best places in London to raise a family and get good-paying jobs.” Our mission is to build community resilience and empower people to be involved in decisions which affect their lives.

Until now, our campaigns have been strongly linked to addressing health inequalities caused by issues such as low pay, poor housing, and debt. However, health has emerged as a specific and common concern among our members, some of whom have expressed the need to be more involved in decision-making. We have the capacity to connect social networks within our member institutions to outside resources. We have already had some success in relation to health services, for example enabling the Tower Hamlets Health Watch and Clinical Commissioning Group to engage with local leaders. Recommendations from our engagement and research were submitted to the Tower Hamlets Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), and are currently being implemented in the commissioning cycle over a two-year period.

Discussions between Newham Citizens and Newham CCG

Discussion between representatives of Newham CCG, Newham Citizens and Birkbeck College in July 2016 highlighted that Newham CCG has a range of ways in which they consult and engage local residents in decision making. This started with exploring the CCG's clear list of priorities for 2016/17, which included diabetes prevention; access to consistently high quality primary care; and improvements in mental health services etc.

2-year project

However, given the increasingly constrained budget and the consequent impact on health services, the CCG Board has requested Newham Citizens' involvement in a participatory budgeting process with a view to providing scrutiny and deconstructing assumptions made in developing the 2018/2019 budget.

With guidance from the CCG, Newham Citizens will also pay particular attention to hard-to-reach groups in order to ensure that a diversity of voices are heard, and taken into consideration for the 2019/2020 budget.

Using community conversations to address health issues is consistent with recent work on the 'asset based' model of health improvement, and 'empowerment based' initiatives (Domiguez and Arford, 2010; Durie and Wyatt, 2013). Identifying 'key informants' may be pivotal in achieving maximum benefit from such community based initiatives (Kesten et al, 2015). There are also examples where 'coalitions' of various community groups, universities and health departments have led to health improvements, such as a reduction in obesity in communities where obesity and associated poor health outcomes have been an issue (Liao et al, 2016).

PROPOSAL

On the request of the Newham CCG Board, it is proposed that Newham CCG, Newham Citizens and Birkbeck College undertake a collaborative 2-year project to engage the community in developing a model of participatory budgeting.

The aims of the project will be to:

1. Pilot a process for participatory budgeting in relation to people's lived experiences of the health system in Newham
2. Engage in community conversations
3. Find ways of sustaining community engagement in budgeting for, and commissioning, health services

As a two-year project, the process will use learning from 2018/2019 to inform a proactive community-led approach for 2019/2020 budget and commissioning. To this end, Newham Citizens might usefully play a role in engaging local communities through community conversations in Stratford; Manor Park; Plaistow; and Canning Town where we have access to a range of diverse community organisations where people meet to talk.

All three partners have a commitment to the Newham community and to improving health and well-being across the borough. Through this project, Newham CCG will be able to catalyse evidence-based conversations about what is working and what could be done better as we look to the 2019/2020 budget.

REACHING THE COMMUNITY

Our Organiser will use our tried-and-tested relational methodology which involves one-to-one relational meetings and "Housing Meeting" format.

One-to-one relational meetings

It is our experience that announcements and leaflets do not bring people to meetings, even on issues they care deeply about. Our method uses existing bonding social capital to create bridging social capital.

We will use one-to-one relational meetings with key leaders in designated areas. These face-to-face engagements are at the core of Newham Citizens' methodology and are critical to the way we build public relationships in order to get buy-in. We will also use one-to-one relational meetings to inform key leaders about the project and the process.

Each area will have an 'anchor institution' – a local organisation – which serves as the central place for our clusters of member, and neighbouring organisations to meet.

House Meetings

House Meetings are essentially Focus Groups where we bring people together to explore issues they care about, hear stories which illustrate the impact of these issues, and begin to find solutions.

Following initial one-to-one relational meetings, the Organiser will work with key leaders to share information about the project through more one-to-ones inside each participating institution. This is called a listening campaign and enables local leaders to identify 'key informants' to achieve maximum benefit and to cascade the message. We find that personal invitation based on relationship works better.

Key leaders taking part will be trained to lead a House Meeting and how to deal with common challenges: how to tell a story, how to stay focused, how to make sure everyone has the opportunity to share etc.

We will hold these House Meetings in places of Worship; Community Organisations; and Education institutions. It is envisaged that Community Organisers will work collaboratively with a designated facilitator from Newham CCG at this stage to engage a cross section of residents in focussed community conversations.

Group Ranking

With the guidance of Newham CCG, Newham Citizens will facilitate a Dotmocracy System in which participants will be given stickers to vote for health services and accompanying budget based on their lived experiences and health needs. By giving participants more than one vote, it is envisaged that this will help to prioritise service.

This may require participants to have a basic understanding of the budget in order to make informed decisions. It is possible that this information can be shared prior to each meeting.

ORGANISATIONAL ROLES

The intention of the project is to make a direct contribution to the health of the local community. None of the partners could effectively undertake this project in isolation, and its success will be based on the unique contribution of each.

The role of Newham CCG will be to:

- (a) provide a basic understanding of budgeting in laymen's terms
- (b) give an overview of health priorities based on the budget for 2018/2019;
- (c) Inform the design of questions for the community conversations
- (d) input into the conversations where necessary

The role of Newham Citizens will be to:

- (a) identify where local communities can be engaged in conversations about the CCG's budget priorities;
- (b) facilitate community conversations;
- (c) support follow-up conversations to measure impact.

Birkbeck's role will be to:

- (a) provide expertise project design;
- (b) support the collection and analysis of data;
- (c) ensure the project makes a contribution to a public body of knowledge on participatory budgeting

Steering Group

1. A Steering Group will be established to oversee the design, implementation and dissemination of a pilot project. Members will include:
 - i. Newham Citizens;
 - ii. Newham CCG (a key contact responsible for operational issues relating to Newham CCG);
 - iii. Birkbeck College;
 - iv. Co-opted experts from within our organisations, including a public health specialist from Newham CCG (and / or Newham local authority) to support the design of the project, and act as an expert witness in the conversations with the communities.
2. The necessary paperwork will be developed including information for organisations and participants; consent forms where necessary etc.
3. Ethics approval will be secured through Birkbeck College and / or Newham NHS (to be agreed).

COSTS**Newham Citizens:**

1. 16 days of the Lead Organisers time:

4 days in each area to engage community leaders; set up and hold community conversations, and providing training for key leaders; Lead House Meetings in collaboration with Newham CCG;

£400 / day: **£6,400**

Birkbeck:

1. 5 days of Academic support:
Design of questionnaires: 2 days
Data analysis & Project Report : 3 days

Grade 7 (Point 38): **£1,186**

Total: £7,586 for Year 1

SCHEDULE OF HOUSE MEETINGS

House Meeting Venue	Date	Leader
St Bart's Church and Community Centre EAST HAM	7 th September 2018	Paul Regan
Shpresa Programme PLAISTOW	10 th October 2018	Flutra Shega
Bryant Street Methodist Church & Community Centre STRATFORD	8 th November 2018	Elizabeth Osei
St Stephen's Church MANOR PARK	24 th January 2019	Jessica Perry
St Stephen's Church MANOR PARK	27 th January 2019	Susan Greaves
Anchor House CANNING TOWN	5 th February 2019	Samantha Nakiriya

REFERENCES:

Alinsky, Saul, D., (1946), *Reveille for Radicals*, Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press

Chambers, Edward, T., (2004) *Roots for Radicals: Organising for Power, Action, Justice* New York: Bloomsbury

Dominguez, S. and Arford, T. (2010). It is all about who you know: Social capital and health in low-income communities. *Health Sociology Review*, 19(1):114-129

Durie, R. and Wyatt, K. (2013) Connecting Communities and Complexity: a case study in creating the conditions for transformational change. *Critical Public Health*, 23(2): 174-187

Iveriegh, A. (2010), *Faithful Citizens*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd

Kesten, J., M., Griffiths, P., L. and Cameron, N. (2015) A Critical Discussion of the Community Readiness Module Using a Case Study of Childhood Obesity Prevention in England. *Health and Social Care in the Community*, 22(3): 262-271

Liao, Y., Siegal, P. Z., Garraza, L.,G. et al (2016) Reduced Prevalence of Obesity in 14 Disadvantaged Black Communities in the United States: A successful 4-year place-based participatory intervention. *American Journal of Public Health*, 106(8): 1442-1448

Putnam, R. D. (2000), *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* New York: Simon & Schuster

UNICEF (2011), *Interagency Psychosocial Evaluation Project: Final Report*. UNICEF

Warren, M. R. (2001), *Dry Bones Rattling: Community Building to Revitalize American Democracy*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press