



**Old Ford**  
Housing Association



**GOLD AWARD**  
**WINNER 2008**

Building Cohesive Communities

# **Cohesion**

making it happen

Old Ford Housing Association  
Best Practice Guide to Managing Community  
Resources to Promote Community Cohesion

## Acknowledgements

Written by Martin Cooper with Lawrence Darani and Robert Foster.

Red Ochre would like to thank all the team at Old Ford Housing Association, in particular Fokrul Hoque, Dominic Curran, Mark Luetchford and Christine Hevey, as well as Leanne Baxter, Rohney Malik and Muna Hersi for further information and comments.

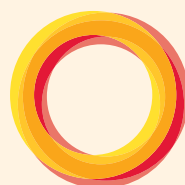
Thank you also to the marketing and design teams.

Thank you to all those who were interviewed, in particular Sade Fafunre, John Shore, Sylverius Thomas and Leena Parmar,

at Old Ford as well as June Mason and David Anderson at Department for Communities and Local Government.

Finally, thank you to all other organisations that were profiled and individual representatives who were interviewed and provided feedback.

[www.redochre.org.uk](http://www.redochre.org.uk)



**Old Ford**  
Housing Association

Part of Circle Anglia

## Contents

<b>Forewords</b>	<b>4</b>		
<b>Overview</b>	<b>6</b>		
Introduction	6		
What is the guide?	6		
How to use the guide	6		
Who is this guide for?	6		
What is Old Ford Housing Association?	7		
<b>Background to community cohesion</b>	<b>8</b>		
What is community cohesion?	8		
Definitions	10		
Old Ford's approach to sustainable communities	11		
Old Ford's context	12		
Try this: Understanding your area	12		
<b>Old Ford's approach to community cohesion</b>	<b>13</b>		
<b>Interculturalism</b>	<b>14</b>		
Example 1: Geezers and boxers project	14		
Example 2: Ashram Housing Association	16		
Example 3: Intercultural management committees	18		
Try this: Intercultural activities	19		
<b>Partnership</b>	<b>20</b>		
Example: IT and Skills for Life	20		
Example 2: Holly Street Partnership Youth Project	23		
Example 3: The Housing and Sport Network	24		
Try this: Effective engagement	25		
		<b>Commitment and leadership</b>	<b>26</b>
		Example 1: Eastside Youth Centre	26
		Example 2: Somerset County Council's Gypsy and Traveller Service	27
		Example 3: Harmony House	28
		Try this: Long-term commitment to communities	29
		<b>A holistic approach</b>	<b>30</b>
		Example 1: Lefevre Park	30
		Example 2: The Poplar HARCA Family Intervention Project	32
		Example 3: Construction Training Initiative	33
		Try this: Never assume anything	33
		<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b>	<b>34</b>
		Why it matters	34
		The Old Ford approach	34
		The Matrix Standard	35
		Try this: What does monitoring and evaluation mean to your organisation?	36
		<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>37</b>
		<b>Further information</b>	<b>38</b>
		<b>Contact</b>	<b>38</b>

## Foreword: Circle Anglia



I am delighted to introduce this “Best Practice Guide to Managing Community Resources in Order to Promote Community Cohesion”.

In 2008 Old Ford Housing Association won the prestigious Gold Award from the (then) Housing Corporation for its work in building community cohesion. The award recognised the impact of Old Ford’s “intercultural” approach and the way in which they used community resources to bridge the divides between people of different backgrounds and cultures.

Following this award, the Housing Corporation and Old Ford agreed a knowledge-sharing programme of their best practice. This guide grew out of that programme. We want it to be something that will serve as a “one-stop shop” for the sector; where any community organisation, housing provider or anyone with an interest in housing can pick it up and use it to find out about the wide range of resources available to help build community cohesion in their area.

Old Ford is one of seven RPs (registered providers) that form the Circle Anglia group. We also have two support and care organisations, a telecare company and a commercial sales business. Throughout the business, our motto is to provide “so much more” to our residents. We do this by playing a central role in making places where people will want to live, work, learn and play. The work that Old Ford does in this area is truly inspirational and I congratulate them on this guide.

I hope you enjoy reading it.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Rogers".

**Mark Rogers**

Chief Executive, Circle Anglia

## Foreword: Communities and Local Government

What is a cohesive community? It is a community where everyone feels secure, valued and engaged. It is a place where differences are respected but where people have a shared sense of belonging. It is a place where people interact with others in a meaningful way.

Having cohesive communities matters for many reasons. They make people feel safe; they help foster the further building of social capital. They enhance people’s life chances in a range of areas, from reducing crime to improving physical and mental health. They make communities better places to live, work, learn and play. They make them more sustainable.

But it is much easier to say that we need cohesive communities than it is to create them. This takes a lot of hard work and action by a variety of agencies, statutory and voluntary, public and private. It takes a commitment of many years, sometimes a generation, to get the balance right. It needs support from central and local government, but most importantly the understanding and commitment of local people on the ground.

There are many different types of community organisation and many types of resource. It could be a housing association with a large community centre, or a time bank with people willing to donate a few hours a week. This guide is about how all of those resources – buildings, time, people, and expertise – can be employed to best use in order to promote community cohesion. Managing community resources is at the heart of building cohesive communities, because if people see a fair allocation and division of resources, differences are far less likely to arise between them.

This guide is an example of how this might happen in practice. I would like to congratulate Old Ford on winning the Housing Corporation Gold Award for their work in this area and to thank them for creating this guide to help share their knowledge with other organisations.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kay Andrews".

**Baroness Kay Andrews OBE**

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State

Department of Communities & Local Government





# Overview

## Introduction

**It is vital that a variety of organisations communicate their experiences in promoting community cohesion if we are going to work together in our communities to help tackle fear and isolation. Tension and division in our communities often happens when people feel afraid and isolated from their neighbours. This can breed a fear of difference and spread the idea that others are getting a better deal. This guide highlights the experience of Old Ford and other housing organisations in working with local people to build community cohesion in a transparent and equitable way. Increasing our understanding of how best to do this for all people is vital in the creation of sustainable and cohesive communities: places where people want to live, work and play, and bring up their families in a safe and secure community where they know their neighbours and feel at home.**

### What is the guide?

This guide summarises Old Ford Housing Association's (hereafter, Old Ford) experience of managing resources to promote community cohesion. Old Ford, a partner in the Circle Anglia group, won a Housing Corporation Gold Award for community cohesion and this guide showcases Old Ford's best practice as well as others' work in this field. It aims to give readers inspiration and practical advice on what to do to promote community cohesion in your area, drawing on this best practice from around the country.

### How to use the guide

Reading the guide from start to finish will give you a good understanding of Old Ford's work and other examples of building cohesion. The first section outlines some background to community cohesion and why it is important. There exists a significant amount of research and literature in this field already and this section is intended to only provide some brief context and background to Old Ford's work. The guide then introduces Old Ford's "pillars" of community cohesion and highlights examples of each pillar at work, both at Old Ford and for other organisations and communities. Finally, the guide looks at monitoring and evaluation, why it matters and how measuring what matters to you can reinforce best practice.

You may also wish to use the guide to find particular examples most relevant to your organisation, follow up references for further information, or use it to start thinking practically about what your organisation already does, and about things that you may wish to improve upon within your organisation in the future.

### Who is this guide for?

Old Ford is a large housing association, so whilst the guide may have particular relevance to larger organisations that manage community facilities, it is also aimed at anyone interested in community resource management, as well as those who design and/or commission such facilities.



**In May 2008 Old Ford won a prestigious "Gold Award" from the Housing Corporation for their work in "Building Cohesive Communities". The Housing Corporation – whose roles are now split between the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) – established the Gold Award to recognise excellence in the social housing sector. The judges for the award said of Old Ford: "The sheer mix of people across cultural, religious and generations using the resources provided has established a working model for cohesion."**

**As a "Gold Award" winner, Old Ford undertook a knowledge-sharing programme with the Housing Corporation in order to spread best practice in community cohesion in the housing sector. This included presenting at conferences, setting up a special website ([www.ofhagoldaward.org.uk](http://www.ofhagoldaward.org.uk)), and holding two open days to showcase its best practice.**

## What is Old Ford Housing Association?

Old Ford is a housing association that owns over 4,000 properties in the London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Havering. It was set up in 1997 as the successor to the Tower Hamlets Housing Action Trust and inherited a community based regeneration scheme. It provides high-quality homes for its tenants but also aims to help create genuinely sustainable communities:

places where people will want to live, work and play. It has a thriving community development programme, delivering services in partnership with the local community. It owns eight new or refurbished community centres, including a purpose-built youth centre, a building that hosts a credit union and an IT suite. Old Ford's community development

team numbers over 19 staff and 13 sessional workers. About 20% of its staff are also local residents.

Old Ford has a strong commitment to working with everybody in the area to achieve the regeneration of the area for the benefit of everyone, including our tenants. It's not just about physical regeneration – it's helping the community to have a say in their own neighbourhood.

[www.oldford.org](http://www.oldford.org)



### Not one size fits all

**This guide provides the background, approach and examples of Old Ford Housing Association's best practice. Although every place has similarities, they also vary in their geographical and historical situations and challenges for cohesion. The guide is not a blueprint for others, but intended to provide inspiration and ideas for what might be achieved and help others to adapt to what works in their area.**

### Circle Anglia

Old Ford is part of the Circle Anglia group, one of the UK's largest providers of affordable housing, managing nearly 50,000 homes in London, East Anglia, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Surrey, Kent and Essex. The Circle Anglia group provides a range of affordable housing choices, including general needs, supported and sheltered housing, along with a range of responsive care, support and maintenance services. The group builds approximately 1,500 new homes per year, including affordable homes for rent and shared ownership, together with market, rent, private sale and commercial properties, in order to cross-subsidise and maximise their affordable

housing programme. Maintaining local identities is crucial to Circle Anglia. The inclusive group structure means that each housing association retains its own local structure and identity while benefiting considerably from membership of a large group. Together the group employs over 1,600 staff and provides services for over 180,000 people across the UK.

Circle Anglia is committed to creating sustainable communities and enhancing the life chances of its residents and service users. It believes that its role is far wider than housing management and works to share best practice both across the group and externally. It works in partnership with local

authorities, private developers and the community sector to ensure it serves the local communities where residents and service users live. Old Ford residents have benefited from the financial strength of belonging to the group, by sharing costs of back-room functions and accessing the experience and management strength of the group structure. In turn, Circle Anglia benefits from the wealth of experience of community regeneration that Old Ford brings to the group. For instance, Circle Anglia is promoting Old Ford's knowledge and experience of cohesion across its partners so that best practice can be shared and built upon.

[www.circleanglia.org](http://www.circleanglia.org)

# Background to community cohesion

## What is community cohesion?

Figure 1: Concept and policy timeline



Source:

Adapted from The Institute of Community Cohesion, [www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk](http://www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk)



## Definitions

There are many definitions of community cohesion, from official government definitions to those found in academic reports and from organisations working to create it. Language around the concept may also vary depending on what needs and issues are being addressed. In this sense, there needs to be scope for local communities to arrive at their own interpretations of what cohesion means in their areas. Reviewing some of the definitions below will help to establish what cohesion means to your organisation and to the local community.

### The Commission on Integration and Cohesion

The Commission on Integration and Cohesion proposed a definition that there is cohesion (and integration) in a community where:

- there is a clearly defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and different communities to a future vision for a neighbourhood, city, region or country
- there is a strong sense of an individual's rights and responsibilities when living in a particular place – people know what everyone expects of them, and what they can expect in turn
- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities, access to services and treatment
- there is a strong sense of trust in institutions locally to act fairly in arbitrating between different interests and for their role and justifications to be subject to public scrutiny
- there is a strong recognition of the contribution of both those who have newly arrived and those who already have deep attachments to a particular place, with a focus on what they have in common
- there are strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and other institutions within neighbourhoods.

Source: Our Shared Future (final report, 2007.) Commission on Integration and Cohesion

**A cohesive community is one that is in a state of wellbeing, harmony and stability. Policy and practice about community cohesion are about how everyone involved in a community can work together to create such cohesion.**

Source: Community Cohesion and Housing: a good practice guide, Perry, J and Blackaby, B (2007), Chartered Institute of Housing and the Housing Corporation: London

**Cohesion is about encouraging positive relationships between different groups (all groups, not just on ethnic lines for example).**

Source: "What works" in Community Cohesion (2007), Department for Communities and Local Government: London

### The Government

The Government's response to the Commission set out the following definition:

Community Cohesion is what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together. A key contributor to community cohesion is integration, which is what must happen to enable new residents and existing residents to adjust to one another.

It also set out a vision of an integrated and cohesive community, based on three foundations:

- people from different backgrounds having similar life opportunities
- people knowing their rights and responsibilities
- people trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly.

And three key ways of living together:

- a shared future vision and sense of belonging
- a focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside a recognition of the value of diversity
- strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.

Source: Cohesion Delivery Framework, Overview (2009), Communities and Local Government: London

### What cohesion means for Old Ford

Old Ford sees the creation of cohesive neighbourhoods as central to the development of knowledge, contact and respect between people. The local community is characterised by powerful interconnections of loyalties, social and economic status, traditions, historical legacies and culture. There are high degrees of social mobility, diversity and migration, and identities are multiple and shifting.

Old Ford believes community cohesion is crucial to:

- community empowerment and people coming together to solve problems and trusting one another
- equality and perceptions of fair treatment
- preventing crime and antisocial behaviour
- wellbeing and a sense of belonging
- freedom from prejudice and discrimination
- equality of access to services.

### Old Ford's approach to sustainable communities

For Old Ford, best practice involves focusing on the creation of a sustainable community and the enhancing of the life chances of local residents. It involves the social, physical and economic regeneration of the area through a high degree of resident involvement. Old Ford's approach aims to change the lives of people for the better by meeting the needs and priorities of local communities. It does this by acting – a lot of people talk about the importance of community development and a lot of people use a lot of long words to describe concepts and ideas.

The success of Old Ford is that it has consistently turned policy into reality. It is an effective conduit of policy concept through to reality. It has changed people's lives – not just talked about it but it has found the academic and policy dialogue of use as it steers funding to areas of national priority and provides a wider context to help turn words into reality.

The adoption and interpretation of cohesion, within the context of urban regeneration, sustainable communities and life chances, is one such piece of the jigsaw. The relationship it has with the community has been forged over many years of working together – it is now seen as part of the community not just the landlord.

### Sustainable communities

Old Ford aims to help people create mixed communities by empowering them to exert more control over local services that meet their identified needs without compromising the needs of future generations.

### Life chances

Old Ford believes in services that offer meaningful and tangible ways to assist people to connect with their community and to enhance their own lives through increased opportunities for activities, training, health, work and play. They also seek to change power structures and remove the barriers that prevent people from participating in the issues that affect their lives.





## Old Ford's context

Old Ford is located in East London, in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets in the wards of Bow East and Bow West. The area has traditionally been associated with the white working class – the stereotypical Eastender fond of pie and mash and known for their cheery good humour – as well as being a settling place for immigrants arriving to the United Kingdom.

The people provided a home for Huguenots fleeing persecution in France and Irish escaping from famine, and as the area welcomed Jewish refugees from central and Eastern Europe in the 19th century, it offered a home in the second half of the 20th century to Bangladeshi, Somali and Eastern European immigrants. People come from many places and have joined others in

leaving their mark on the area. The Romans were one of the first to do this with the Roman Road, that still hosts the local market, named after them. The area itself is named after a river crossing that travellers crossed on their way to the City of London. Yet although close to an engine of the world's economy it has never benefited fully from the fruits of its people's labour.

There are high levels of deprivation in Bow East and West, with poor health and unemployment being particular issues. And there are other areas in East London that suffer from similar problems. The local election results in May 2006 saw the British National Party (BNP) make significant electoral gains in specific parts of the country, including the borough of Barking and Dagenham, also in East

London. A mixture of class, poverty and migration, has created tensions that some have sought to exploit to foster fear and intolerance, but there is a radical tradition in the East End that is still building communities of interest.

East London has a proud history of resistance to racism based on interaction of many different cultures. Many of these groups – including the white community – are subject to crude stereotypes and assumptions. Old Ford has spent time listening to local people to get an understanding of the community and its context but more importantly it has worked with the community for many years in identifying projects and delivering improvements.

Old Ford keeps in contact with Polish and Lithuanian shopkeepers who have opened shops in the area serving their communities, as they are a valuable link to those communities.

- Try organising a series of events where local residents can explore local history and individual life stories and celebrate their neighbourhood. Local schools may like to be involved as older people can go into classes and help children understand what life was like for older residents when they were young children.

For more information see:

- *Cohesion Delivery Framework, Overview* (2009) Communities and Local Government: London
- [www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/cohesiondeliveryrevised](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/cohesiondeliveryrevised)
- Monitoring and Evaluation section of this guide.

Useful sources of help are:

- [www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk) for statistics such as census information.
- local authorities and local partners (such as the Police or NHS Trust) will also hold local information
- residents surveys
- citizen panel surveys
- voluntary and community sector studies
- local university studies
- talking to local community groups or branches of larger charities such as Age Concern or Friends of the Earth
- anecdotal evidence and your own sense of what the issues are that need addressing
- establishing links with shopkeepers or café and restaurant owners, and engaging with them about your work and their customers. For example,

### Try this: Understanding your area

Cohesion in your area will vary depending upon geography and history, residents' personal socio-demographic characteristics and residents' attitudes. Doing primary and secondary research on your area will help you to gain a better understanding of the context you are working in and of the needs you are addressing. Understanding your community, and not making assumptions, is essential if your approach to cohesion is to be inclusive. For example, many people would assume that Bow has a predominantly BME population, however 74% of the population is white. It is not possible for all of us to be experts and seeking advice and communicating will ensure that we are better placed to understand the community issues we are addressing.

## Old Ford's approach to community cohesion

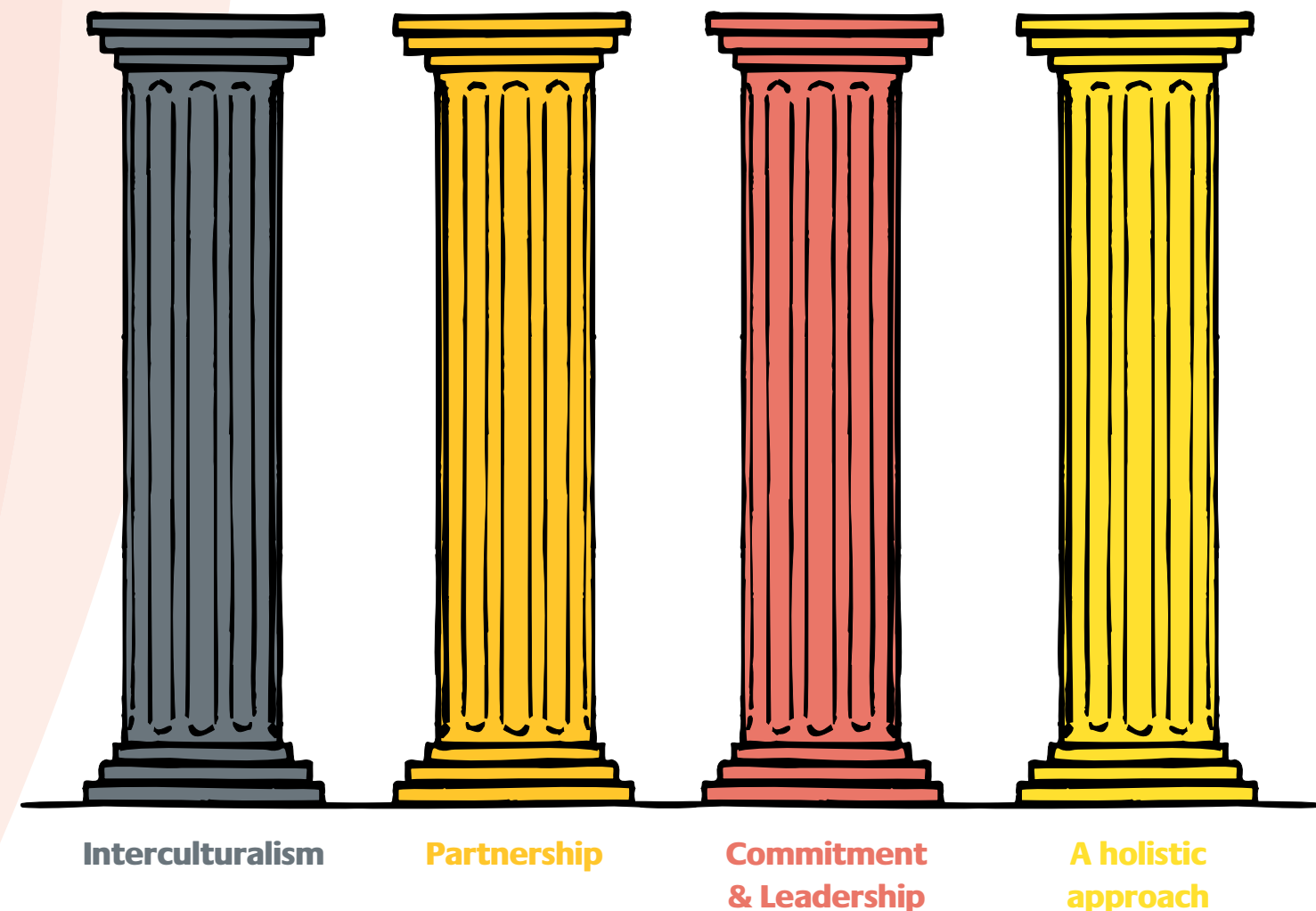
There are four themes, or "pillars", that provide the foundation to Old Ford's approach to community cohesion. These are:

- interculturalism
- partnership
- commitment and leadership
- a holistic approach.

All of these themes can benefit any approach to community cohesion. They are not prescriptive sets of ideas but simply provide a frame for thinking about particular sets of activities that Old Ford and others are involved in to create community cohesion. The most important pillar is "interculturalism", which acts as a thread throughout all of Old Ford's work. As well as forming one of the chapters in this guide, interculturalism also appears in all of the other pillars.

The following chapters on each of these pillars:

- explains the background to what each one means and why it is helpful
- provides three examples of how and why they matter in Old Ford and other's work
- suggests what you can begin to do to use them in your own work.



# Interculturalism

Concepts and ideas that may once have been needed can sometimes lose their relevance. Over time, Old Ford has found that the concept of “multiculturalism” is unable to provide a robust enough response to contemporary socio-economic challenges. Multiculturalism encouraged people to live in proximity to, and in tolerance of, each other’s differences, but it was a tolerance often reinforced by ignorance of other cultures. Old Ford has found that challenging this way of thinking and behaving has been necessary to bring meaning and direction to their work in promoting cohesion.

At the heart of Old Ford’s approach to managing community resources to promote community cohesion is a way of recognising difference but also focusing on commonalities. This approach is called “interculturalism” and it can be thought of as a thread that runs through and informs all their work on cohesion.

Through this intercultural approach, people not only exercise tolerance of differences and celebrate them, but also gain real understanding of each other’s faiths, cultures and backgrounds, and understand the commonalities that bring people together, rather than just the differences that separate them. Old Ford is not opposed to multiculturalism and in their view; it has created a vibrant, diverse society that has brought many benefits. However, their experience has found that it can also make it possible for communities to live side by side with little understanding of each other. This can breed fear and intolerance.

Interculturalism is also about a broad definition of culture. It includes, but is not limited to, respect and understanding of race and faith. An intercultural approach also considers relationships between

all groups and a wide awareness of barriers to interaction in the community. For example, as well as race and faith, this might also be around gender or “youth culture”, about culture determined by class and age as well as respect and understanding of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. All of us identify with a wide range of cultures – and cohesion is about widening our understanding of the complex community of individuals we live in and what their cultures bring to each other lives. Not a melting pot but a place built on respect for and welcoming of difference.

Old Ford sees cohesion as an opportunity to strengthen the links that bind us together as members of the local community whilst celebrating and sharing knowledge of what makes us different. For them, interculturalism is a methodology to consolidate and refresh the benefits of the multicultural society rather than to undermine its achievements.

## Example 1: Geezers and boxers project

Sometimes communities of culture can develop separately, not just through racial, gender, national, cultural or religious boundaries, but also among people of different ages. Youth culture is a particularly strong and vibrant tradition in England and the older generation have always struggled to relate to their successors, but there is a danger that the strength of those cultures can cause distance, breeding fear and lack of respect.

Old Ford runs a boxing project for local young people. It has 56 regular attendees, all of whom are local residents. As well as giving them discipline and technical knowledge



**As part of Old Ford’s “Gold Award” win, the judges applauded the decision to promote cohesion and cross-cultural interaction by avoiding single-community initiatives. “This is particularly courageous, considering the prevalence of established Bangladeshi and Caribbean-targeted work. It predates a similar approach advocated by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion. It is highly evident that cohesion and a community-first approach to housing and community development were key objectives from the beginning.”**

about boxing and how to defend themselves, the training has a range of impacts on the participants’ health and wellbeing.

As well as helping the individuals involved and the local area through boxing, the project aims to increase cohesion and interaction between people of different ages. To do this, the scheme developed an intergenerational project with the same young people in the boxing club.

In the local area there has sometimes been mistrust or lack of interaction between young people and the elderly. Old Ford has partnered with Age Concern and a local group of Old Ford tenants and residents called “The Geezers Club”, on a project to create greater understanding between young and old. It is early stages for the project, but the young boxers and Geezers Club members have already come together in several meetings. The young people heard a member of the club talk



***Both groups have shown remarkable enthusiasm for the project. Simply by interacting and sharing stories around a common activity, they have gained a better understanding of each other that has been helpful in breaking down barriers between younger and older people.***

Sylvester Thomas, Area Youth Work Manager

about his life in the East End post-World War Two. They talked about what life was like when he was growing up, what the struggles and challenges were, the impact of the war on his family and relationships, and how the neighbourhood came together.

Some of the older people in the Geezers Club have also been boxers or trained in boxing when they were younger. As a former boxer himself, the member also showed the young people a catalogue of his fights and clubs. This provided them with a common talking point

and both generations found that whilst the details of their lives might be different, they shared many experiences.

Working in partnership with Hi8us – a media and training organisation – the next step in the project is to produce a DVD. The scheme aims to train young people in interviewing skills and techniques. They hope to interview members of the Geezers Club about their lives and capture the experience on DVD. In this way, the awareness of commonality among young and old can be promoted to a wider audience.

A diverse range of projects for different age groups is provided by Old Ford – from exercise and a shared interest in boxing to artistic expression

## How to gain a real understanding of each other? Meaningful interaction

A related concept to Interculturalism is the Communities and Local Government’s guidance on “Meaningful interaction”. Interaction between all different groups of people can be effective in building community cohesion if it is positive. For interaction to be meaningful, it needs to be more than superficial and sustained over a period of time. The Commission on Integration and Cohesion report said meaningful interaction was when: “Conversations go beyond surface friendliness, in which people exchange personal information or talk about each other’s differences and identities, people share a common goal or share an interest, and they are sustained long-term.”

**Asking people whether they have friends from different backgrounds is one simple way in which this can be measured. Different background could refer to, age, employment status, faith, ethnicity or nationality.**

**For more information:**  
[www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/meaningfulinteraction](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/meaningfulinteraction)  
[www.communities.gov.uk/communities/racecohesionfaith/communitycohesion/cohesionpublications/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/racecohesionfaith/communitycohesion/cohesionpublications/)



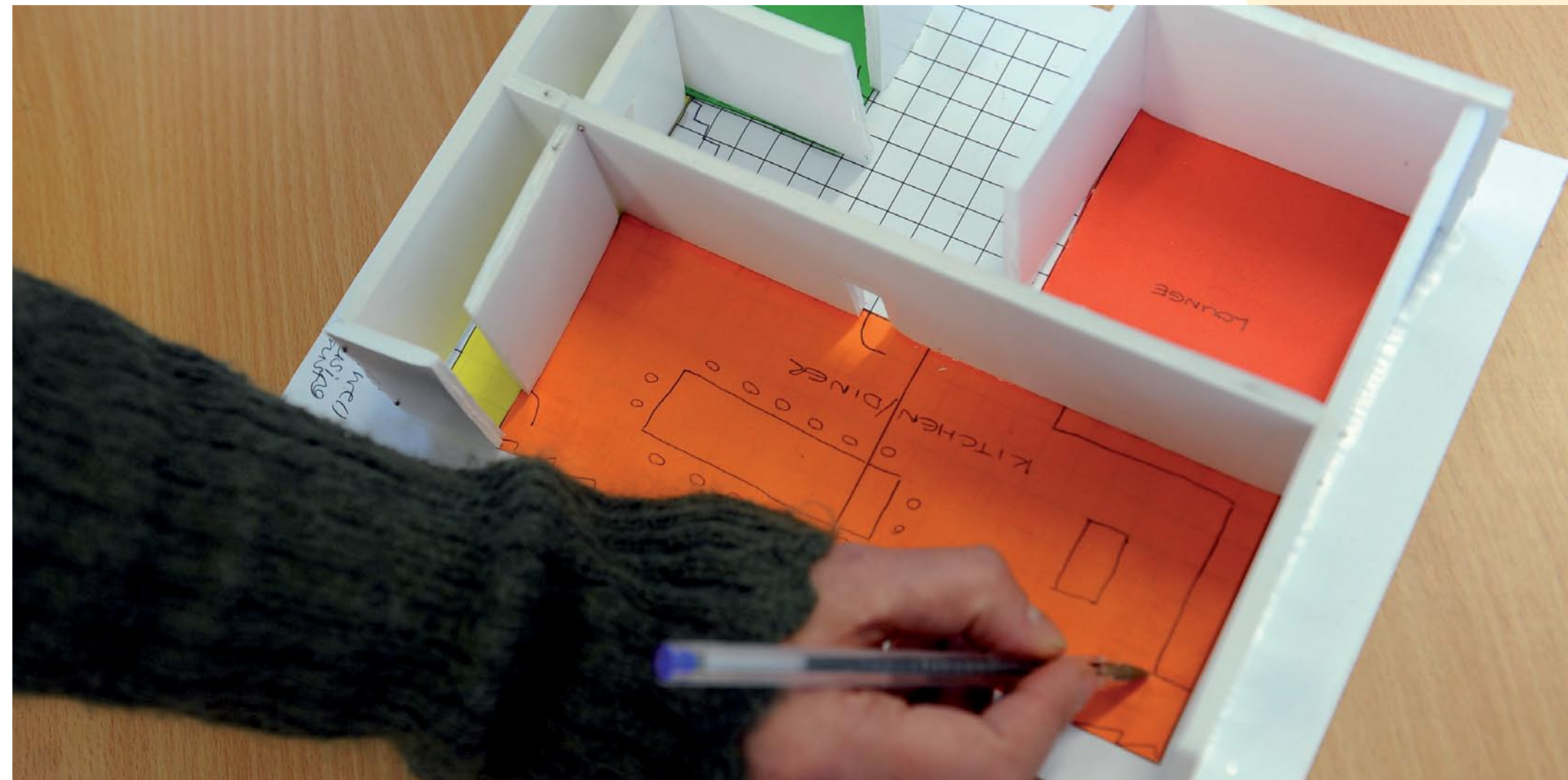
## Fit for purpose: exercise classes for all

An established voluntary sector organisation approached Old Ford about hiring a venue in order to put on exercise classes for Bangladeshi women. The organisation had funding in place for the classes and explained that the women felt excluded from using gyms and other exercise facilities due to cultural and religious barriers. As a result they were vulnerable to increasing health problems associated with lack of exercise.

Old Ford was happy to provide the venue but said that it had concerns about the effect on other communities of targeting this resource at a particular group of people only. There were women from other groups who also had health problems as a result of cultural, religious and other barriers and their failure to access exercise facilities. For example, many Somali women who shared the same Islamic

religion as the Bangladeshi women had similar experiences and were also avoiding gyms. Similarly, some women of European and Afro-Caribbean background had reservations about going to gyms due to a lack of confidence or intimidation when exercising in front of men.

For Old Ford, it became clear that this was a wider issue that it could change for the Bangladeshi group and also for the others. It agreed to provide free use of community facilities as match funding to the exercise class, on the basis that the sessions were open to all women in the area and yet still with attention and sensitivity around the issues faced by the different groups. The voluntary organisation managed to renegotiate funding for the classes and now runs popular sessions, suitable for all women, regardless of background.



## Example 2: Ashram Housing Association

Ashram is an intercultural Midlands-based Housing Association that provides community-inspired housing and services. They are a not-for-profit organisation with charitable status and have been a Registered Social Landlord since 1994.

Although they originally set out to meet the needs of South Asian communities living in the Midlands, Ashram has come to serve, support and empower a diverse cross-section of tenants, residents and communities. Over time, in order to effectively bring diverse communities together

they recognised the importance of moving from being a specialist Black and Minority Ethnicity provider, to a mainstream organisation working to meet the needs of a diverse cross section of communities.

Their work as an intercultural organisation is centred on the four main principles: engage, partner, deliver and influence. This approach is evident throughout its work in a range of areas including sport, community design and advocacy (mental health and domestic violence). This means that the principles behind their work are also transferable to a wide variety of different contexts, allowing the organisation to be flexible and for others to apply these same principles to their work environments. For Ashram, interculturalism is a

dynamic and inclusive process that fosters positive dialogue between cultures and people. It builds on our commonalities and creative potential to pursue social justice.

## Interculturalism through design

One of Ashram's aims is to create safe spaces for people to engage in intercultural dialogues and to equip people with the skills and resources to positively engage in the world in which they live.

They have found that contested space is often the source of what divides communities and closes down positive participation in the civic life within and between neighbourhoods. The important role that "place-shaping" can have

in creating cohesive communities, has led Ashram and Birmingham City University to create the Centre for Urban Design Outreach and Skills (CUDOS). One of the central aims of CUDOS is to redress the cultural imbalance and lack of diversity within the urban design profession. This is being achieved by opening career pathways into further education, training and employment, particularly for people who are economically deprived or displaced, and whose ideas and ability to influence the built environment are currently marginalised. This includes those from working class backgrounds, people in Muslim communities, as well as many women.

Ashram's partnership with Birmingham City University

challenges this skills/opportunity deficit by providing ongoing access to design workshops to all of the community. Through the architecture and design workshops, participants from a diversity of backgrounds gain the key skills and self-confidence to engage as equal partners in development projects. Some decide to study further and pursue careers in the built environment. By putting people at the heart of design, CUDOS brings alive its practice and diversity of thinking. Their partnership with industry and the mixing of individuals and groups in the design workshops create a two-way transfer of knowledge. This fosters intercultural links and empowers everyone to collectively improve their built environment.



## Further information

**Ashram Housing Association Limited**

**Fairgate House**

**2nd Floor, 205 Kings Road**

**Tyseley**

**Birmingham B11 2AA**

**[www.ashramha.org.uk](http://www.ashramha.org.uk)**

**See also: *Building Community Cohesion by Engaging with Muslim Communities*, Jas Bains (2007), Ashram: Birmingham.**

**[www.ashramha.org.uk/article.asp?id=801](http://www.ashramha.org.uk/article.asp?id=801)**



### The samosa story

Lorraine, a white British lady, and Mrs Ahmed, a Somali lady, live only one street away from each other in Bow. Despite living close by for many years they had never met, spoken or interacted in any way. Old Ford encouraged them and other residents to get involved in the committee of their local community centre. At the beginning, they were in conflict and each thought the other was making unfair claims on resources. There was apprehension, mistrust and misunderstandings about each other's motives, cultures and beliefs.

As time went on and they worked on the same committee, these tensions began to recede. Both gained an insight into the other's situation and began to understand and accept each other's point of view. As they worked on the issues facing the community they found the commonality that existed between them and their backgrounds.

One day when talking to Lorraine, the community regeneration

manager at Old Ford knew that a quiet revolution had taken place. They were discussing the community centre, when Mrs Ahmed's name came up. Lorraine casually mentioned that Mrs Ahmed had come to her house the previous evening and as she knew Lorraine liked samosas, she brought a plate full of fresh samosas that she had made. For Lorraine, this was a casual point in the conversation and not of great significance as it had been happening for a while and they would meet socially as neighbours.

In that natural interaction and sharing of food and culture however, it was clear that Old Ford's policy of interculturalism had brought Lorraine and Mrs Ahmed through a series of changes. Firstly, from being unaware of each other's existence; then to wariness about each other's motives and background; to being friends, working together to help build a better future for themselves and their communities.



they share rather than those that divide them, including resources. This means that people of different ethnicities, faiths, ages, disabilities and other backgrounds can sit together on the management committees and make decisions on resources and activities.

This was not an immediately popular decision for all members of the community however, and for Old Ford, risks had to be taken in order to establish the approach. For example, the Bangladeshi community wanted a centre just for their own needs, but Old Ford knew that, while being popular with certain groups of people, this would entrench divides within the wider community. They persevered through some criticism to ensure that their facilities were accessible to all.

However, over time, the interaction between the different committee members increases understanding of different points of view, reduces the scope for conflict and helps to ensure that no community is perceived as getting special attention or more resources, than another community. Once in process, those who were

sceptical or hostile to the idea could see the benefits.

Furthermore, Old Ford can still cater for specific groups and specific needs, but rather than that happening in isolation, other groups and communities are aware and involved through the management committee and this happens under the "intercultural umbrella" of shared community centres.

### Try this: Intercultural activities

Activities or events are one way in which people can gain a real understanding of each other and find the commonalities we all share. As well as race, faith and cultural backgrounds, they can also bring together people of different ages, host communities and new arrivals and others. Try taking these steps to reach out to your community and get them involved:

- Not everyone can be an expert. Staff, volunteers and management committees, as well as consultations play a crucial role in providing alternative perspectives and understanding
- Be aware that different cultures may have different ways of interacting that you may not be used to. Individuals in groups may defer to elders or other community leaders in a way that can limit your communication with individuals within a specific community.
- Think about those who are less visible as well to ensure all people are part of the activities.

### Living experience: intercultural staff

Fokrul Hoque is the Community Regeneration Manager at Old Ford and grew up in Tower Hamlets. His story reflects the potential for separate development of communities and lack of shared identity even in an area where there was close proximity to different groups of people.

As a child Fokrul went to a primary school with children from a wide variety of backgrounds. Later on he went to a secondary school with about 20% of the pupils also from a Bangladeshi background. By the time he had left this school, 98% of the pupils were from a Bangladeshi background and the remaining 2% were from a Somali background.

At weekends, like many boys across the country, he would head down to the local community centre, take part in activities and mix with his friends as well as with volunteers and staff at the centre, all of who were from a Bangladeshi background. This

was in an area of about 50% Bangladeshi background people and 50% from other backgrounds.

Unsurprisingly, on reflection, Fokrul grew up with little understanding of other cultures. He realised that the closest he came to interacting with people of the white British community for example, was through the TV soap, *Eastenders*. His understanding of the Indian community was via Bollywood films – great entertainment perhaps, but not a substitute for real understanding.

When leaving education and moving into work, he was confronted with a range of different individuals and groups and had to quickly learn and make adjustments to learn about other people. It was then that he realised how multiculturalism may be helpful in the short term but over the long term it had encouraged his separate development as a youth, from other people.

what individual's needs are. An intercultural staff team can also help to make links with different individuals and groups and reassure them that they are welcome.

- Activities that provide a common goal, either in the interest of participants, building skills or enjoying something can help to build interaction and cohesion.
- Keep talking to participants and facilitate interaction gradually and gently. Neutral settings can help.
- Diversity training that reassures people that they can ask about differences can be very helpful, as people may be worried about using the wrong language or of unintentionally upsetting others.
- Try going to shops or places where members of a particular group congregate.

### Example 3: Intercultural management committees

Old Ford's community centres are run to meet the needs of a range of different communities. At the heart of this process are the management committees that oversee the use of the community centres for classes and activities.

Conflict in the community can arise due to misunderstandings and suspicions about resource use

and allocation. As such, it is crucial that all residents can potentially be part of such committees to oversee the management and allocation of resources. Old Ford's community centres are managed by committees made up entirely of residents so that users and local people can influence and shape their services.

This is most effective when combined with an intercultural approach, when thinking and deciding about who sits on the committees. In this approach, all different communities are represented and encouraged to interact and find the things that



## Partnership

All organisations are part of complex and fluid patterns of interactions, alliances, relationships and networks between the people and organisations around them. Working in partnerships is frequently important in order to achieve outcomes for individuals and communities. There are many kinds of partnership and housing associations and other community organisations come together for a variety of reasons.

The key organisational partnership is with the Local Authority – the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. It is a four-star performer – the highest category; and “improving well”. During the last seven years, the council’s performance has steadily improved, rising from three stars in 2002 to four in 2008. It actively seeks to build partnerships with local organisations. It recognises Old Ford’s role in the area of Bow – or in the local planning LAP5 – by engaging with organisationally and setting joint aims and objectives. The Local Area Agreements, the Local Strategic Partnership and the local sustainable community plan all set the framework and retain strategic control for the Local Authority. Links are not just organisational but creative and dynamic – Old Ford is now the deliverer of the youth service in LAP5 and has been allocated funds from the Working Neighbourhood Funding stream to tackle worklessness.

Cohesion is a complex and multifaceted concept and, as such, partnerships with all the main players (including the private sector) must be built. Promoting cohesion will be most effective in addressing the issues involved by bringing together a range of expertise. As a key enabler in the Bow area Old Ford has the opportunity to make partnerships

with a wide range of organisations, both large and small. Old Ford aims for relationships where each partner brings something unique to the partnership and the total of these applied resources to a common purpose creates an outcome greater than the sum of its parts. Old Ford’s most important partnership is with the community within which it works. Its commitment towards residents’ involvement has resulted in three of their eight community centres being 100% managed by resident/user committees. Local people work in partnerships as intercultural groups confident that the process is beneficial to both their own community and wider society.

Old Ford has initiated projects to improve local infrastructure, physical environments, learning opportunities, vocational training routes, local enterprise, capacity-building, health and wellbeing, and social networks. Partnerships have been created with a whole variety of third sector organisations in the

local area – some new, some well-established – that share its aims. By coming together for common purpose, the whole community can benefit.

### Example 1: IT and Skills for Life

IT and Skills for Life is one of the training and employment projects run by the Community Development team at Old Ford. It offers local people flexible ways to gain IT and other literacy and numeracy skills. This includes accredited IT qualifications such as CLAIT (Computer Literacy and Information Technology) and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes in partnership with other organisations.

### Complement and share

The IT and Skills for Life project has a number of areas in which it improves people’s life chances and builds cohesion. Institutional

partnerships play an important role in helping the project to achieve its aims and meet the needs of local people. For example, it works with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets to deliver ESOL training; Tower Hamlets College to deliver adult literacy and adult numeracy; and a user-run mental health centre, Bow Haven, to deliver IT training for clients with mental health issues. It also co-ordinates BowNET, a local network of education and training providers that meets three times a year to network and disseminate best practice, and innovation.

For IT and Skills for Life, the first stage of partnership is being open-minded about who it can involve and then going out into the community to make connections and form relationships with other providers. What it doesn’t do is also important. For example, it doesn’t aim to compete with colleges and the nearby Idea Store, or duplicate existing classes available locally. It finds out how it might be able to complement them or work together.

That means partnerships can work in different ways. Sometimes it does the delivery and a partner provides administrative and recruitment back-up; in other cases the roles are reversed. The project has found that its partnerships also need to be flexible so that they can be set up more efficiently, to exploit opportunities as they arise. Through building partnerships it has found that it is more able to reach new audiences and offer its services to every person in the local community.

Internal partnerships are also part of the IT and Skills for Life project. It works closely with the Information, Advice and Guidance Centre to help people access education, training and employment. With Eastside Youth Centre (see the “Commitment and Leadership” section of this guide), it shares space and works with the young people to deliver IT training. It also works with the Old Ford Construction Training Initiative (see “A Holistic Approach”), taking referrals and providing IT training to its students.

## What makes an effective and efficient partnership?

- Acknowledgement by all participants about what has brought all the individuals or organisations to the table and an ability to understand how this can change or shift.
- Clarity and openness about individual expectations and mutual agreement on common purpose and agenda.
- Agreement on the scope of the partnerships intended locations and levels of action, variety of functions, range of desired outcomes and time-scales.
- An individual or organisation capable of playing a leadership role, acting as inspirer, mediator and/or facilitator between the partnership participants.
- Understanding the resources, skills and capacities that are needed to meet the partnership’s objectives.
- Appropriate organisational and legal structure if required.
- Transparency, representation and accountability both within the partnership and externally.
- Communication, with clarity of language and regular dialogue and feedback so that your vision can be shared, problems can be solved, conflict can be resolved and success is celebrated!
- Methods for measuring and evaluating the partnership processes and common and individual outcomes and agendas.
- Flexibility and willingness to adapt the partnerships purpose, participants or process in response to evaluation or changes in context.

*Source: Adapted from “Partnership Alchemy”, pp253-266 in Zadek, S (2004), Tomorrow’s History, Greenleaf: Sheffield.*







## Resources

Partnerships take resources to implement. The experience of the IT and Skills for Life project shows that having someone to manage the process of partnerships and look at the bigger picture can help to sustain their success. The training, advice and employment management at Old Ford also encourage the management of the project to expand and innovate, and follow ideas, allowing staff members to lead on areas where partnerships can contribute to the aims of the organisation and have an impact.

## Interculturalism: Partnering the community

The project's main partner is the community. The project has a diverse staff team and volunteers from the local area – from individuals in their early 20s to those in their 60s, from varying cultural backgrounds.

The clients of the project are also from a range of backgrounds and the project itself has a diverse range of male and female clients, as well as those coming from different ethnic and religious backgrounds and age groups. It also trains people with mental health issues.

It targets hard to reach groups but is inclusive; it doesn't specifically target one group to the exclusion of others. Instead, targeting is about organising the offer to appeal to the hard-to-reach and to address barriers, whilst being clear that everyone is welcome.

These individuals and groups come together and interact in meaningful ways through the computer training. As the tutors interact with clients who are receiving computer training, they build boundaries across age, faith, ethnicity and disability through the common objective of learning new skills. IT is becoming more and more central to everyday life through email and the internet, wherever

## Other examples of Old Ford partnership working

**Old Ford has established a number of community-led partnerships, such as cultural celebrations (including an Eid party), which all members of the community – of different religions and none – helped to organise. The London Borough of Tower Hamlets' education department supports the construction-training programme and Lifelong Learning supports Old Ford's IT training programmes.**

you are from; in this sense, people find a sense of commonality around a day-to-day issue. Rather than simply gaining new skills, if properly monitored and managed in a safe environment, connections between people and social networking skills can be developed for everyone involved.

**Old Ford has a five-year contract to deliver centre-based and detached youth work for the council's Youth and Community Services Directorate in the Bow area.**

**Old Ford works closely with the Metropolitan Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams and contributes to the work of the local Crime Reduction Partnership. This close working with the local police has reduced crime and antisocial behaviour across the Bow area.**

## Example 2: Holly Street Partnership Youth Project

The Holly Street Estate consists of 500 mixed tenure homes in Hackney, originally built in the early 1970s.

**You don't have to be in a densely populated city like London to form partnerships. Even somewhere rural, you might have the local authority, a village hall, a college. They want to know what you're doing and they might be able to help, or receive your help. They might provide tutors, or you might be able to help them recruit, so making a class or activity viable. In Bow, we're based in the same area as our clients, so we know what's going on and what their needs are. You can't be exclusive about the organisations you work with. All have something to offer and all have needs. And the more you work together, the better you will jointly serve your community.**

John Shore IT and Skills for Life Manager

Major regeneration of the estate took place between 1994 and 1997 and housing is owned by five registered providers (RPs). Despite an improved environment, the area still had a high level of deprivation and social issues including antisocial behaviour and drug dealing rings (involving young people). As a result and following Operation Gamma run by the police in 2006, Circle 33, a fellow member of the Circle Anglia Group and one of the registered providers on the estate, provided the lead for Holly Street Young People Partnership.

The Partnership includes involvement from a huge range of public agencies including, London Borough of Hackney (LBH) Youth Service, LBH Youth Offending Team, Connexions, LBH Sports and Leisure, LBH Community Safety Team, Hackney Play Association, Evergreen Play Association, Haggerston Youth Inclusion Programme, Youth Forum, Metropolitan Police – Safer

Neighbourhoods Team, Greenwich Leisure Service and all the RPs in the area.

The partnership has three strands of work: resident's involvement, worklessness and a youth project. This youth project comprises of a youth centre, the Holly Street Youth Committee and the employment of a Youth Partnership Manager. It works mostly with young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). The project organises a range of activities with its partners that are designed to increase the young people's skills, fitness levels, education and employment opportunities.

## Youth Committee

One of the most innovative parts of the project is the youth committee. This consists of 14 active members who attend all partnership and executive meetings to discuss and direct what they would like for their



area. In this way, the project is a partnership with its beneficiaries and driven by young people for young people. The Committee has a clear voice on the larger Borough-wide Youth Committee and the Local Strategic Partnership and the local authority are committed to considering their views at a strategic level. It works alongside the Residents Association to develop intergenerational projects such as food growth and a musical.

Many of the young people who were previously involved with criminal activities are now going on to university or employment. They realise that getting involved with positive experiences really will empower them and their aspirations have been significantly improved. There has been a reduction in crime, fear of crime, increased community cohesion and joint working by statutory, voluntary and community sectors. Local young people have a stronger voice and are empowered to actively engage in the management of the estate. Partnership working has been instrumental to the success of this project and the Council has used the Partnership as a model for their future youth service provision in the borough.

### Further information

**Bina Omare**

**Assistant Director Community Development & Growth**

**Circle 33 Housing Trust**

**1-7 Corsica Street**

**London N5 1JG**

**020 7447 3128**

**Bina.Omare@Circleanglia.org**

**www.circleanglia.org/circle-33**

## Example 3: The Housing and Sport Network

Ashram Housing Association set up the Housing and Sport Network in early 2009. It aims to increase knowledge sharing and partnership working between the housing and sport sectors in the development of community based sports projects.

Over several years of working with sport projects and housing, Ashram Housing Association noticed that the housing and sport sectors have much to offer each other in terms of promoting participation in sport and capitalising on the social benefits that sport can bring. Many housing providers recognise that sport can be an effective means to engage with people and bring benefits to communities in a variety of areas including public health, community cohesion, worklessness and neighbourhood safety.

Partnering with housing associations enables sports organisations to engage more effectively with people in some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. Supporting community infrastructure development in these areas has the potential to bring great sporting and social benefits. Despite this, they found that the two sectors rarely work in partnership.

As a response, they set up the Housing and Sport Network to provide an interactive information hub for knowledge sharing and partnership working between the sectors. Membership of the network is free and enables users to access a searchable database to locate projects throughout England. In essence, the network provides a web-based information and good practice resource for housing and related professionals, and sporting organisations currently involved in



or wanting to develop and support community based sports projects.

The Housing and Sport Network aims to promote collaboration between the housing and sport sectors in order to support the development of community based sport projects to improve people's health and wellbeing and increase participation in sport in the lead up to the 2012 Olympics and beyond.

### Further information

**Ashram Housing Association Limited**

**Fairgate House**

**2nd Floor, 205 Kings Road**

**Tyseley**

**Birmingham B11 2AA**

**www.housingandsport.org.uk**

**www.ashramha.org.uk**

### Try this: Effective engagement

These are some ways in which you can reach out to your community and discover what your residents, clients or population are interested in and then involve them.

A door-knocking programme can be a useful way of engaging face to face. Have a specific reason for knocking – eg invite them to a neighbourhood event. Remember to take their contact details (with their consent) and always follow up later on as sometimes people will commit to attending an event but need reassurance or reminding that they are still welcome later on. Using local residents (who are properly

trained) can help foster cohesion between neighbours.

It is not always clear to communities what services exist in their area, and as in Old Ford's case, that they don't always have to be tenants in order to use them. In this sense, it is useful to undertake outreach anywhere where people congregate. The Information, Advice and Guidance Centre at Old Ford has had great success leafleting at the nearby Idea Store on a Saturday as this is market day. Religious buildings, community centres, libraries, nurseries, festivals and fairs are all places where you can have a stand or leaflet.

Target the most disadvantaged or disengaged who will vary by area and could be part of many different groups.

New arrivals in the community will be particularly useful to think about as their lack of knowledge of the local area means they are at most risk from exclusion. This is particularly true if they have arrived from outside the country.

"Ideas walls" or "suggestion boxes" and other ways to engage without requiring face-to-face contact with staff or officials can sometimes be useful tools to help you listen to the opinions of your communities.



## Commitment and leadership



**The activities delivered to young people are the vehicle for cohesion. The way in which we run these activities then creates a safe space for meaningful interaction across groups, resulting in the enjoyment and personal development of young people as individuals.**

Sade Fafunre, interim manager,  
Eastside Youth Centre

Ensuring that the aims of community cohesion are central to all activities requires someone or some people to take responsibility for leading initiatives within an organisation. A strategy to manage community resources to promote community cohesion must also be responsive to the needs of that community and owned by the people responsible for its delivery.

Most importantly, Old Ford seeks to fulfil its commitment to empowering residents to build their own capacity in order to help meet their own needs. This must be done not only through determined and practical actions, but also through long-term commitment and resource allocation. Old Ford has, from the beginning of its existence, recognised the need to invest substantial resources in community development.

As a founding member of the Local Strategic Partnership, Old Ford consistently is part of the strategic discussions about local delivery and can judge how it can best work with others. This can take many forms and it judges carefully where and how to make the most effective contribution. Sometimes Old Ford must take the lead, and sometimes

its role is to “lead from behind”, providing encouragement, capacity-building and support to help small community-led organisations achieve the change they want to see. Effective leadership makes the point that we all have equally valid contributions to make to a common purpose.

Recognising local leadership has created confidence that Old Ford is a listening organisation that respects and considers what local people say. Effective power-sharing ensures that local people can contribute to a range of improvements. This virtuous circle of community leadership means that both residents’ and local people’s views are taken into account, and their commitment and leadership is sustained over the long term.

### Example 1: Eastside Youth Centre

Eastside Youth Centre is a purpose-built centre hosting a variety of activities for young people aged 13-19 years of age. The role of commitment and leadership are

central to its success in attracting large numbers of young people from a variety of backgrounds

The centre runs a range of programmes and activities that are at the heart of promoting cohesion. Current activities and services include:

- drama workshops
- music and dance workshops
- arts and crafts
- sexual health clinic
- accredited training
- trips and residentials
- youth participation
- junior youth club
- football
- job club.

### Commitment to the whole community

The centre is committed to being of service to all young people in the area. Sade Fafunre, interim manager of Eastside Youth Centre seeks new members by sending out timetables and a list of activities the centre

is running to schools and other community groups in the local area. This helps to ensure that Eastside is well used by a wide variety of people. It can still be challenging to involve the entire community however. At the moment, young people from the white and Somali communities use the club, but not as much as Old Ford would like. Eastside are currently making sure that these young people are aware of the activities and that they know they are welcome to get involved at any time in order to address this issue.

### Leading successful activities

Making sure that the activities reflect young people’s needs is vital to their success. Sometimes Eastside take the lead in developing activities and other times they focus on encouragement. The centre engages young people and identifies what activities they are interested in before following up and providing them. This ensures the activities are well attended and the young people have ownership of them. One-off, stand-alone activities are particularly

important in getting new people involved in the club. These make it easier as young people can come on their own or with others and have something structured to do once they get there. They also have a chance to meet other people and feel welcomed. Allowing the young people to lead also supports high attendance rates.

The centre runs football training and games where the young people take charge of their own warm ups and one of them referees. Experience has shown that if they are allowed to lead on those issues and take ownership then they are more likely to come along.

Staff commitment is vital in encouraging people to get together and interact. They often know that there are different individuals from different groups who can play a lead role so facilitate them to work on something together. Engaging in the same project, means they have to compromise, communicate, share and talk and they all have a vested interest in something. This meaningful interaction fosters cohesion.

### Example 2: Somerset County Council’s Gypsy and Traveller Service

The Gypsy and Traveller team at Somerset County Council deal with all issues regarding Gypsies and travellers. This includes dealing with illegal encampments, the provision of transit site and residential site accommodation for Gypsies and also information on accommodation issues for the traveller community.

The service is highly visible and can be a very sensitive area of work that creates much public debate. The service liaises between Gypsies, the local communities and local authorities to minimise tensions and help to show that everyone can contribute and commit to cohesion.

Sometimes this requires actions that are bold and brave in order to lead in encouraging integration and mutual respect. An example of how the Gypsy and Traveller team have brought communities together is at a transit site, near





Bridgwater in central Somerset. The seven-acre site boasts a children's play area that is available for use by the local residents as well as site occupants. Through talking to each community and demonstrating their commitment to improving the site for everyone, the local people and site residents supported the idea. An advisory group has also been created which represents the views of the local community and recognises local leadership in the management of the site.

Through a mixture of provision and enforcement, the Gypsy and Traveller team managed a traveller service for the benefit of the whole community. The Service recently won a Chartered Institute of Housing Award for their work bringing together the gypsy and traveller community and the local host community.

### Further information

#### Gypsy Services

#### Somerset County Council

#### County Hall

#### Taunton TA1 4DY

#### 01823 355439

#### [gypsyservices@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:gypsyservices@somerset.gov.uk)

#### [www.somerset.gov.uk/somerset/ete/gypsy/](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/somerset/ete/gypsy/)

### Leadership and commitment

Leadership and commitment forms step one of the seven steps to community cohesion as identified by the Home Office report, *Community Cohesion: SEVEN STEPS A Practitioner's Toolkit* (2005). This report explains that both are essential to the development of community cohesion and that someone should take responsibility for managing and inspiring the changes required to build cohesion. It argues that there is no single leadership model for cohesion and much will depend on the area or aims of the individuals, organisation, partnership or project. Some areas will respond to high profile leadership with publicity, whilst others will find that a less visible approach will succeed.

### Example 3: Harmony House

Harmony House is a large Community Centre in the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham. In the past the focus of the organisation was on empowering asylum seekers and refugees. The local host population were not aware of its resources and availability.

With the appointment of a CEO, Community Development Worker and a Centre Manager the organisation was able to develop a mission of full commitment to asylum seekers, refugees and the whole community. Harmony House felt that at a time in which the area that has two BNP councillors locally and 24 across the borough, they needed to show added commitment and leadership to address the socio-political climate. In leading, sometimes their task was to simply understand the host populations concerns. At other points, they had to challenge their perceptions by myth busting and developing community cohesion by leading on events to address this situation.

For example, Harmony House ran an event for Older People's Day called "Age Takes Centre Stage." Barking and Dagenham has a large elderly white community, some of whom have felt left out and neglected

by politicians, local authorities and organisations. There was a perception that resources being allocated by the local authority to other groups did not take into account their needs and were deemed to be unfair. There has been a large influx of immigrants into the area as well as inward migration from central London from largely African communities. In addition, the older people felt that a type of regeneration had occurred where people with more disposable income and different lifestyles have made an enormous impact on the character of the area.

The challenge for Harmony House was how to initially address the host population's fear of the pace of change that has been unprecedented for the area, with changes in demographics and with the closure of the car marker Ford's plant at Dagenham.

### Committed to leadership

The event had a theme that was to celebrate and thank older people for their commitment and leadership. They called the event, "The Elders Meeting." This took place in a special room they called "the sacred space". The borough's Mayor, who is originally from Nigeria, gave a speech about the role of African Elders in his country and how they are integrated and revered. There was also a reading of poetry by teenagers from the hairdressing college and children from Harmony House's nursery gave a red rose to all the elders and thanked them. They also ran a slideshow about the history of the East End that demonstrated the contribution that many immigrants over the years have made to the culture and make up of London.

Over 70 participants from the community, local authority and local organisations attended. Harmony



House have followed this up with other projects to keep participants involved and are currently planning a "wisdom group" of elders from the white, Somali and Turkish communities to share their accrued wisdom and offer leadership on community issues.

In this way, Harmony House seeks to achieve its aim of not just leading the community but helping practitioners in the community to become "community champions" by initially taking the lead but then remaining as a "community anchor" for advice and support. In this way, a balance between leadership and commitment is most effective in managing resources efficiently to create cohesion.

### Further information

#### Harmony House

#### Baden Powell Close

#### Dagenham

#### Essex RM9 6XN

#### 020 8526 8200

#### [enquiries@harmonyhouse.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@harmonyhouse.org.uk)

#### [www.harmonyhouse.org.uk](http://www.harmonyhouse.org.uk)

### Try this: Long-term commitment to communities

Particularly in the current economic climate, there is a great challenge for Housing Associations and community organisations to be able to commit resources over the long term to their communities. However, there are a number of strategies that Old Ford and others use in order to help invest substantial resources in community development.

- By providing match funding for community-driven projects, perhaps in the form of access to venues or matched project funding, you can demonstrate your commitment to supporting local communities and increase your impact.
- Skills and training both for staff, residents and members of the local community can ensure that even if projects close or organisations diminish, individuals have learnt and developed new abilities that will benefit them in the long term.

- Putting resident involvement at the heart of what you do and empowering individuals to lead will also help them to create cohesion over the long term. There are many ways that residents can get involved, for example through governance, Boards, monitoring and evaluation, estate inspections, events and as staff. Including them in focus groups, or asking them to test your service standards can make you more responsive, and give them greater ownership of your service.

For further information and potential sources of funding for long term financial commitment, see for example:

[www.funderfinder.org.uk](http://www.funderfinder.org.uk)

[www.governmentfunding.org.uk](http://www.governmentfunding.org.uk)

[www.j4b.co.uk](http://www.j4b.co.uk)

[www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/funding.asp](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/funding.asp)

[www.trustfunding.org.uk](http://www.trustfunding.org.uk)



## A holistic approach

Whether you are a small community organisation, a large housing association or any one of the diverse groups that make up the housing and regeneration sector, your organisation's goals and aims will involve working in different spheres across a wide-ranging agenda in order to achieve your aims.

Old Ford has never been solely concerned with housing and they aim to make neighbourhoods a better place for all people to live, work, learn and play. This means that it is involved in the development and delivery of a range of community support services, covering areas such as:

- lifelong learning
- health and wellbeing
- crime reduction
- access to employment
- environmental improvement
- community enterprise
- youth services.

It has initiated projects to improve homes, local infrastructure, physical environments, learning opportunities, vocational training routes, local enterprise, capacity building, health & wellbeing and social networks. Old Ford understands that all its activities

– the landlord function and the community enterprise, education and development functions – are interlinked.

For Old Ford, a holistic approach has ensured that it implements sustainable systems that are tailored to real demand, not simply devised to take advantage of available funds and revenue budgets. Strategies such as “match funding” ensure that value can be added across activities. Finally, in looking at the “big picture”, Old Ford provides services not just for its own residents but also for the whole community, because building cohesive and sustainable communities will be more effective if it involves everyone.

### Example 1: Lefevre Park

Lefevre is a housing estate in Bow. As part of an overall development programme for the estate, Old Ford, partners and residents worked together to develop a new park space. In order to ensure that residents were at the heart of the process, Old Ford began a planning and consultation process one year before any actual physical works took place. Thinking holistically about a large project takes preparation and research into the needs of the community and what

was best practice in park design had to be carried out.

The technical department at Circle Anglia and the community development team at Old Ford also realised that significant time and expertise was needed to bridge the technical nature of the estate and park design, and the engagement of residents in that process. To do this they worked with the Environment Trust on the planning process, having a meeting once a month for eight months on various aspects of the regeneration.

In developing the park, Old Ford continually sought to think about and question where it could link with other aspects of the organisation and community. For example:

- Growing Concerns, a gardening and landscaping social enterprise set up by Old Ford, dealt with plants, trees and landscaping
- the caretakers were responsible for park maintenance
- property services dealt with the housing issues
- Furniture on the Street is also a social enterprise set up by Old Ford; it created the benches for the park.
- architects provided expertise about play and parks, what worked in design and engaged residents in those issues
- “Secured By Design” – the official UK Police flagship initiative that involves the principles of “designing out crime”, helped to ensure the area was safe. It made small design decisions, such as including two steps up into the park so that cars can't drive into it. Making small, intelligent design decisions like this is preferable to turning the park into a “gated community”.



**The park was hugely significant within the overall development programme and incorporated residents involvement throughout the whole process. It was a complex project and a learning curve for everyone involved but by talking through our thoughts, concerns and aspirations and focusing on how everyone could benefit from the park – the park has been a great success and is now flourishing.**

Christine Hevey, Head of Community Development, Old Ford

### Interculturalism: sharing space

In planning, designing and creating the park it was also crucial that it became a space for all of the community. In the consultation process, some vocal residents preferred that the park did not have facilities or applications for teenagers, as they were concerned they would dominate or disrespect the area. During several meetings and workshops, Old Ford and partners talked through all concerns and emphasised the benefits to cohesion and for the local community of creating a space that could be used by all people.

As a result, the park has open spaces, benches and walls to sit on, a flat area for football games and a play space for younger children. The park also uses unique geographical features and symbols to improve the environment and contribute to a collective sense of pride and belonging.

Each group or individual uses the space in his or her own way. It is not always full of events, activities or people, but part of its value is also in the calmness and safety that means, whether residents are passing through or just sitting on a bench for a moment, they feel a greater sense of belonging and well being.

### Public spaces that facilitate interculturalism

The Demos publication *Equally spaced? Public space and interaction between diverse communities*, by Hannah Lownsbrough and Joost Beunderman, sets out four characteristics of good quality public space that can contribute significantly to meaningful interaction and cohesion. They are:

- Be flexible in the use of space, understand the grain of people's everyday lives and reflect it in the design of public space;
- Aim to create the setting for “trusted” spaces, where people feel secure to take part in unfamiliar interactions;
- Foster positive interactions but don't promote them: take an indirect approach to changing behaviour;
- Embrace creativity and innovation in finding new and imaginative uses for spaces that will transform interactions between people.

[www.demos.co.uk/publications/equallyspaced](http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/equallyspaced)

**“As social beings everyone needs some form of identity to feel that they are part of something bigger, to be supported, to be understood, to be part of history. A successful feeling of belonging comes from people feeling part of the economy, of politics, of their local area, of the nation. Through a more holistic feeling of recognition and belonging, people may feel more part of wider society.”**

Source: *Belonging in Contemporary Britain (2007)*, Alessandra Buonfino (with Louisa Thomson)  
The Commission on Integration and Cohesion: London

See also: *Guidance on Building a Local Sense of Belonging (2009)*, Communities and Local Government: London

[www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/senseofbelonging](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/senseofbelonging)



## Example 2: The Poplar HARCA Family Intervention Project

Poplar HARCA (Housing and Regeneration Community Association) owns and manages around 8,500 homes in Poplar, East London. Over the last ten years, they have sought to improve not just the housing and estates but also the lives of all people in the area by investing in homes and the environment and providing an award winning community, social and economic regeneration programme.

This holistic approach also has benefits for specific projects. Safety and security is a priority for Poplar HARCA's residents and their tenancy enforcement team work closely with the police and other agencies to tackle drug dealing, antisocial behaviour, vandalism and more serious crimes. Although these measures work to an extent, it is not a long-term solution and can move the disruptive residents to other areas without dealing with the issues causing antisocial behaviour.

In light of this situation, Poplar HARCA funded a Family Intervention Project (FIP) social worker for one year to work with a number of disaffected families with complex and multiple problems. Traditional social services struggled with these families, or families rejected the help and support available and continued to corrode community spirit. They were often dismissed as "lost causes". Poplar HARCA wanted to change this situation not only for the future of the families but for the community as well.

Having a dedicated, experienced worker meant that they could spend the time and resources necessary to provide holistic and focussed care to the families. The contract the

families agreed with the FIP worker worked towards the families being able to cope independently. It also sought to increase the educational, training and job opportunities for all the family. The FIP worker provided intensive, holistic support and facilitated a range of specialist services such as counselling, budget coaching and parenting support.

### Co-operative service

The FIP also brought together other agencies, such as mental health teams, social services and various police departments to work on difficult cases. FIP supported each organisation involved to recognise the benefits that various services can gain from each other, thus creating a co-operative service instead of working in isolation.

The FIP project achieved positive outcomes for individuals, families and communities. For example, the number of complaints from neighbours was reduced significantly and the level of antisocial behaviour decreased. Evictions also decreased and the project improved the related children's attendance at school. As a

result of avoiding legal fees normally involved in these issues, FIP saved Poplar HARCA at least £45,000-£55,000.

The one-year project has been so successful that mechanisms are in place to make the FIP worker a permanent role within Poplar HARCA as well as to persuade other housing associations in the borough to adopt the idea. By taking a holistic approach, Poplar HARCA has shown that enforcement, prevention and intervention can work together to help create a safe environment and increase community cohesion.

### Further information

**Poplar HARCA**

**167a East India Dock Road**

**Poplar**

**London**

**E14 0EA**

**020 7510 0500**

**[www.poplarharca.co.uk](http://www.poplarharca.co.uk)**



## Example 3: Construction Training Initiative

The Construction Training Initiative (CTI) is one of the Training and Employment Projects run by the Community Development team at Old Ford. It assists individuals to gain training and work experience in various aspects of the construction industry, including bricklaying, carpentry and painting & decorating.

After six months successful participation, trainees begin a site work placement and attend college on day release in order to

achieve their trade specific NVQ Level 2. Whilst its focus is training, education and employment, it takes a holistic approach to fully realise the potential of the trainees and to maximise the impact of the project across Old Ford's activities.

As well as the CTI scheme, trainees also benefit from the Information, Advice and Guidance centre that is run by Old Ford and allows them to access information, support and assistance on employment. It also provides employability training and "back to work" benefits advice along with signposting to childcare support and welfare rights.

The scheme is also involved in other activities. For example, Old Ford also set up "Furniture on the Street", a social enterprise working with local people to provide contemporary, sustainable, outdoor furniture and fencing systems to local authorities, other Housing Associations and businesses. Furniture on the Street provided park benches for the Lefevre Park development (see A Holistic Approach in this guide). By thinking about the big picture and through understanding of how their activities connect, they have created additional value for the organisation and individuals.

### Try this: Never assume anything

Particularly when working to a holistic agenda, it is crucial to be careful about making assumptions:

- Gaining a holistic picture of community cohesion and the needs you are addressing cannot, by its nature, be done by one person. Not assuming that people are experts can help in understanding a range of perspectives.
- User-based design, or joint application development with communities has the

potential to consider the needs of the community in a wider context than normally seen in mainstream programme development.

- Stay focused and try not to lose the vision of what you are trying to achieve. "Mission drift" can happen in projects and organisations if all the people involved aren't kept on track.
- The impact on community cohesion cannot be guaranteed and trying to stay flexible and

looking for opportunities to link together your activities and work where appropriate can help to create additional value for everyone.

- Effective monitoring and evaluation can help ensure that your linked social, environmental and/or economic aims and impacts are understood and managed efficiently. See the monitoring and evaluation section of this guide for more information.



# Monitoring and evaluation

**Good monitoring and evaluation helps Old Ford to know when and how they are accomplishing their social, environmental and/or economic mission. Monitoring and evaluation is core to understanding the effectiveness of best practice and constantly developing activities to effectively meet needs.**

## Why it matters

Monitoring and evaluating the impact of their activities and actions means organisations are better able to:

- Make good decisions by clarifying the ways in which your organisation is working and achieving its objectives. This helps with decisions such as where to allocate resources and which activities are most important.
- Get people involved in helping to ensure that time and resources are invested are well spent. When people help to measure or evaluate the effects of something they've been involved in, they can see change for themselves and take part in celebrating it.
- Be accountable by earning and building trust. Old Ford has a responsibility to the communities it serves and affects. Communication and transparency are an important part of building a relationship of mutual trust and understanding. Undertaking measurement and evaluation and communicating the results helps to report progress to the people who matter to Old Ford.
- Build a brand or identity by identifying the core values and impacts we have, it is easier to know more clearly what we have to offer and help to bring others to our cause.
- Secure investment or funding which is crucial to every sustainable organisation, and

clarifying goals and measuring impact for how social benefits are achieved helps to create effective business plans and funding proposals.

- Local authorities and others may be faced with tight budgets over the next few years as the economy changes. It is therefore essential that the value that housing associations and community groups create is demonstrated and subsequently acknowledged and supported. Effective measurement and evaluation will be a key part of winning support in these times.

## The Old Ford approach

Some parts of what organisations are required to measure are straightforward. Whilst an organisation must take into account

the opinions and needs of its stakeholders, often a single group of stakeholders – funders or large contract holders – determine what gets measured and therefore what gets valued.

Finding out how to measure what matters to our residents is a journey and we are constantly seeking to improve how and what we measure. We are working with others in Circle Anglia to identify best practice in this area. Like most organisations, it is necessary to keep track of outputs or the easily countable things that come as a result of activities, such as numbers of people reached or numbers of qualifications attained. At the end of each quarter Old Ford are asked by external funders to submit monitoring information on all our projects. Old Ford recognises that this is only the start of telling our story and it is essential to know more about the impact of our work in order to check

that our activities are having the effects we intend and are helping to achieve our mission.

In order to fully monitor and evaluate our work, Old Ford proposes to measure all community development activity reported to Circle Anglia in three ways:

- Outputs refer to the direct products of the activities (otherwise known as deliverables) and are quantifiable. For example, this could include the numbers of training projects delivered and the numbers of people who participated or the numbers of people that use the community organisation on a weekly basis.
- Outcomes refer to the effects of an activity/organisation in relation to what was intended, and are concerned with processes and explanations of why things have worked the way they have. They tend to be qualitative but can sometimes be expressed quantifiably. For example, if the goal of a training project was to enable participants to find employment, this analysis would consider the increased employability of the participants, perhaps using data about the numbers of people that secured

employment as a proxy to indicate the project's success. While outcomes are often measured against the original objectives or goals of the project or organisation, unintended outcomes should also be considered.

- Impact refers to the broader long-term effects of the activity/organisation and the impact it has had both on its target groups and on the community as a whole. This will be assessed by looking at impact on customer satisfaction and on looking at wider impact in the community. This links with a housing organisations wider role in the community – we will seek to engage with Local Strategic Partnership and demonstrate how

Old Ford can impact on Local Area Agreement targets identified in local sustainable communities strategies.

## Measuring life chances in business plans

Old Ford is also developing a new “life chances” question that will ask participants to assess how their life chances have improved by taking part in the range of community development activities. For example, if they perceive that by taking part in the activity they have more of a chance of achieving their reasons for attending – so if someone signs on to an IT course to gain self-confidence we will ask them if the desired outcome has been achieved.

## The Matrix Standard

The Matrix Standard is the national quality standard for any organisation that delivers information, advice and/or guidance on learning and work.

A vital strand in Old Ford's development activity is training and employment work, which includes a comprehensive information, advice and guidance (IAG) service. Before undertaking the standard, Old Ford wanted to deliver an even more comprehensive service by bringing in a more formalised and unified approach to quality.

“Our staff were incredibly passionate about supporting clients and meeting their needs, but we tended not to question our practice and were not always clear about the bigger picture of how the service overall was performing,” explains Leanne Baxter, Training and Employment Manager. “In some cases being highly supportive of clients over the long term was leading to a degree of dependency

rather than enabling clients to truly move on.”

Using the matrix standard has meant that the IAG service is transparent and that service users, staff and managers are clear on what they are doing and why. It also focuses on the effectiveness of their client evaluation and feedback and how they promote and make our service more accessible. Listening to the service users is key to the IAG service and the main community languages (English, Somali and Bangladeshi) are spoken by staff. It also helped to ensure that literature is in user-friendly language and easy to understand. The standard also helped to develop new links in the community and the IAG service now also deliver outreach to mental health groups as well as young people, older people and parents. The service goes to those who can't access them.

For more information:  
[www.matrixstandard.com](http://www.matrixstandard.com)





### Try this: What does monitoring and evaluation mean to your organisation?

Use windows of opportunity to your advantage. Ideally M&E needs to be planned before a project, improve practice during it and identify the lessons learnt at the end of it. Initial application forms can double up as a way of collecting information on what people's expectations are and where they are when you come into contact with them.

These "baselines" provide you with data that you can follow up later on to see what has changed. For example, at the beginning ask, eg why you want to do this event, make new friends, gain a new skill- and at the end ask – did you make new friends, did you gain any new skills? This could be one way of measuring perceived improvement in individual life chances.

Determine what your community needs most. Knowing what your project or organisation needs to deliver for the local community is important to making measurement and evaluation effective and relevant. If local people think that "quality", or the way in which you run your project or organisation is important, you can aim for meeting an externally validated mark, like the Matrix standard.

Measuring of cohesion: Old Ford monitors use of services to ensure all parts of the community are catered for. It has not yet started monitoring specifically the impact of cohesion although surveys of and by tenants could be used for this. There are, however many surveys that are already carried out that measure attitudes in relation to cohesion.

The General Household Survey measures neighbourliness. In

the year 2000 just under half of people (46%) said that they knew most or many people in their neighbourhood, while more than half (58%) felt they could trust most or many people in their neighbourhood. The British Crime Survey measures the proportion of individuals who perceive that people in their neighbourhood "help each other". In 2000, 45% of adults interviewed in the British Social Attitudes survey (BSA) agreed that "most people can be trusted". The Citizenship Survey measures perceptions of cohesion. In April-September 2008, 82% of people perceived their community as cohesive, agreeing that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds got on well together. This figure is unchanged since 2007-08, but represents an increase from 80% in 2005.

There are other sources of measuring and Old Ford intends to track the impact of its activities on cohesion by tracking these existing indicators. It will engage with Tower Hamlets to consider the use of the assessment tool that Government have introduced to help understand the impact of local authority activity on cohesion.

Cohesion Impact Assessment Tool (2008) Communities and Local Government: London

[www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/communitycohesiontool](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/communitycohesiontool)

Citizenship survey. (Statistical Release) (2009) Communities and Local Government: London

[www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/citizenshipsurveyq2200809](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/citizenshipsurveyq2200809)



## Conclusion

There can be no grand design about how to create community cohesion. Every place is different and each place can learn from others. An individual or organisation working on its own cannot achieve community cohesion, but it can be effectively addressed through focusing on the four pillars outlined in this guide:

- partnering with individuals, groups and organisations in the community
- demonstrating commitment and leadership and allowing both to flourish

rather than competing and by being clear, accountable and fair in how we use our resources, we will be better placed to meet our aims. By sharing our values and celebrating our commonalities as well as our differences, we are also better placed to make cohesion happen.

Cohesion, in the end, is just a word to sum up a community which is where anyone would like to live – a place where we know and respect our neighbours. A place where we feel happy and secure – where our children are safe and our old people treated with dignity. Cohesion is more than a code word for "race

- seeking the bigger picture and working holistically for social, environmental and economic community development
- working interculturally by recognising difference and focusing on commonalities.

Whether natural, financial, human, manufactured or social, our resources are precious and these pillars can also help to ensure they are used effectively. By co-operating

relations". Old Ford's experience has shown that it is so much more than this. Old Ford's aim is to create a place where the old and the young, white and black, Asian or African, women and men, atheist and Hindu, Somali and Pole, disabled and able-bodied, gay and straight, recent immigrant and indigenous population feel at home and feel part of a welcoming community that values people equally as individuals with their own identities.



## Further information

As well as those references and organisations profiled and listed in the guide, you can also visit the following for further information:

The Race, Cohesion and Faith unit at the Department for Communities and Local Government features useful publications, guidance and links to related concepts and work.

[www.communities.gov.uk/communities/racecohesionfaith](http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/racecohesionfaith)

[www.communities.gov.uk/communities/racecohesionfaith/communitycohesion](http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/racecohesionfaith/communitycohesion)

The Institute of Community Cohesion (iCoCo) is a not-for-profit partnership which aims to build capacity at all levels and in all local and national agencies to promote community cohesion.

[www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk](http://www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk)

The Housing Corporation established the Gold Award to recognise excellence in the social housing sector. Although it closed in November 2008 and was replaced by the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), you can still find out more by visiting the Gold Award and Housing Corporation websites:

<http://gold.housingcorp.gov.uk>

[www.housingcorp.gov.uk](http://www.housingcorp.gov.uk)

For further information about Circle Anglia visit its website or contact:

Mark Luetchford  
Head of Sustainable Communities  
Circle Anglia  
12 – 27 Swan Yard  
Islington  
London N1 1SD

[Mark.Luetchford@Circleanglia.org](mailto:Mark.Luetchford@Circleanglia.org)

[www.circleanglia.org](http://www.circleanglia.org)



## Contact

Old Ford Housing Association

General enquiries:

Contact Centre

Freephone: 0800 073 0427

Tel: 020 7204 1550

Fax: 020 7204 1517

Visit us, or post your enquiry, to:

Old Ford Housing Association  
73 Usher Road  
Bow  
London E3 2HS

Or visit the website at:  
[www.olford.org](http://www.olford.org)

Community Regeneration  
Enquiries

Christine Hevey

Head of Community Development

020 7204 1502

[Christine.hevey@circleanglia.org](mailto:Christine.hevey@circleanglia.org)

Design/layout:

Steven Prizeman, Society Media, [www.societymedia.co.uk](http://www.societymedia.co.uk)





**Old Ford**  
Housing Association

Part of Circle Anglia