



**WEST LONDON COMMUNITY COHESION PATHFINDER**  
*THE LONDON BOROUGHES OF BRENT, EALING, HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM,  
 HARROW, HILLINGDON, HOUNSLOW*

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**Good Practice In Community Cohesion**  
 September 2003

THE WEST LONDON COMMUNITY COHESION PATHFINDER	GOOD PRACTICE IN COMMUNITY COHESION
<p><b>The need for cohesive communities is ever more present</b> in a time when global upheaval is resulting in increasingly more diverse communities, where communications have reduced the size of the world we live in, and changes in the way we work can both increase or reduce opportunities for employment.</p> <p>West London is widely recognised as having adopted successful strategies to manage the development of diverse and new communities for the economic and social benefit of the large majority of the people who live and work there. However, success is not guaranteed and work constantly needs to be developed and monitored to maximise community cohesion. To this end, a successful bid was made to the Home Office for status as a Community Cohesion Pathfinder.</p> <p><b>The West London Community Cohesion Pathfinder (WLCCP) is funded for eighteen months</b> from April 2003 to September 2004. A key objective of the Pathfinder is to develop and promote learning and working across the Public, Private, and Voluntary sectors, and to build up good practice through the cross-fertilisation of working practices.</p> <p>The WLCCP is structured under <b>three strategic themes</b>, each being led by one or more sectors, with representation and contribution from other sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Theme group 1:</b> Communications and Dissemination</li> <li>• <b>Theme group 2:</b> Public Sector meeting the challenge of community cohesion</li> <li>• <b>Theme group 3:</b> Community development and strengthening community and voluntary activities</li> </ul> <p><i>This summary highlights findings from the report into Good Practice in Community Cohesion produced as part of the work being undertaken by Theme Group 3.</i></p>	<p><b>A cohesive community is one where there is a common vision and sense of belonging for all communities</b>, where the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances are positively valued, and those from different backgrounds have similar opportunities. Work is taking place across West London to build such communities by enhancing the quality of people's lives through cultural understanding, increased opportunities, greater participation, and by striving to break down the barriers that have the potential to divide communities.</p> <p><b>The West London Community Cohesion Pathfinder undertook research</b> to identify Good Practice in community cohesion, and to identify the strands that lead to successful working. In doing so it looked at how projects in West London are meeting the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century by</p> <p><b>identifying projects that ...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage disaffected white communities</li> <li>• Overcome fragmentation or hostility within communities</li> <li>• Support newly arrived communities</li> <li>• Work in schools to build community cohesion</li> <li>• Deal with problems in areas of social housing</li> <li>• Undertake interfaith activities</li> <li>• Work with young people across communities</li> </ul> <p><b>inviting examples of work around ...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Education, Training, Business &amp; Employment</li> <li>○ Crime &amp; Safety</li> <li>○ Advice &amp; Information, &amp; Health</li> <li>○ Counselling &amp; Social work, &amp; Mediation</li> <li>○ Arts, Sports &amp; Leisure</li> <li>○ Community &amp; Cultural Events</li> <li>○ Translation &amp; Interpretation</li> <li>○ Children &amp; Childcare</li> </ul>

<b>How do you Measure Good Practice in Community Cohesion?</b>	<b>How did we decide which projects to include in our report?</b>
<p>Identifying and measuring Good Practice in community cohesion is not a straightforward task due in part due to its qualitative characteristics. Unlike good practice in management or quality assurance, good practice in community cohesion cannot be identified through point scoring or meeting specifically defined criteria. Good practice can be demonstrated in small or subtle ways. It can also be demonstrated in unquantifiable indicators such as dedication, innovation, enthusiasm, and determination, all of which were evident in the work of many of the people and groups we spoke to.</p> <p><i>We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and applaud the good work of all of the research respondents, who individually and collectively are working towards enhancing community cohesion in West London.</i></p>	<p>In June 2003, over 3000 quantitative surveys were sent out to organisations in the Voluntary Sector. Qualitative questionnaires were also sent to the Public Sector. In total, we received 215 responses from which we selected 50 projects for inclusion in the report (30 from the Voluntary Sector and 20 from the Public Sector), across a range of themes.</p> <p>For practical reasons it was not possible to include in the main report all of those who contacted us who had an example of good practice. Instead, we highlighted a representative sample. Those included in the report were selected to cover a range of themes across the six boroughs aimed at building cohesive communities and widening opportunity and inclusion.</p>
<b>INTERVIEW FINDINGS</b> <b>BARRIERS TO DEVELOPMENT &amp; CONCERNS FOR THE FUTURE:</b>	<b>INTERVIEW FINDINGS</b> <b>LEARNING FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF OTHERS:</b>
<p>To aid further work that is being undertaken by the West London Community Cohesion Pathfinder, the research also identified some of the barriers to growth, and concerns for the future, that projects said they were facing:</p> <p><b>A LACK OF CORE FUNDING</b> <i>... that keeps a project from operating from a secure base, generates a sense of insecurity, and can result in a dependency on the goodwill of volunteers.</i></p> <p><b>A LACK OF AFFORDABLE &amp; ACCESSIBLE PREMISES</b> <i>... that can hinder a projects growth through a lack of service-user point of contact and a secure, well equipped base from which to coordinate both work and staff.</i></p> <p><b>THE NEED FOR PAID STAFF</b> <i>... without whom a project can be held back from networking and fundraising activities. Paid staff also increase the sustainability of a project through the undertaking of core work and through the support of volunteers.</i></p> <p><b>ACHIEVING RECOGNITION</b> <i>... which is as fundamental to growth and security not least through the support it can lend to funding applications. Recognition also increases community credibility, and is a boost for workers.</i></p> <p><b>ENAGAGING IN PARTNERSHIP WORKING</b> <i>... which is integral to future growth and can increase the strength of a project by generating new ideas. However, partnership working diverts time away from core service provision, and projects constrained by time are less able to develop partnership working.</i></p>	<p>One of the key objectives of the research was to generate good practice through lessons that can be learned from the experience of others. We extracted a number of key points that others could learn from and which would help develop good practice:</p> <p><b>NETWORKING &amp; FORUMS</b> <i>... that lead to working together across communities, faiths, cultures and ages.</i></p> <p><b>PROMOTION AND CREATING AWARENESS</b> <i>... that encourages cohesiveness through developing an understanding in others of community needs and how these are being met by local projects and initiatives.</i></p> <p><b>FUNDING</b> <i>... that can otherwise threaten the sustainability of a project yet its pursuit can divert time away from valuable work.</i></p> <p><b>TEAMWORK</b> <i>... that leads to greater understanding between people</i></p> <p><b>OBJECTIVES &amp; LIMITS</b> <i>... that lead to the delivery of effective services</i></p> <p><b>SERVICE USER REPRESENTATION</b> <i>... that ensures the need of the target group are being sufficiently met</i></p> <p><b>CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF VOLUNTEERING</b> <i>... that develops the shared understanding that comes through working together.</i></p>

## THE 'WHAT WORKS?' SEMINAR

On 30th September the first West London Pathfinder 'What Works?' seminar took place and was a great success. The seminar was held to both reinforce and expand the research undertaken for the report into Good Practice in Community Cohesion. It also enabled people across sectors to contribute to the future cohesion of West London by sharing with us their knowledge and their views, and provided an opportunity for delegates to exchange ideas and information amongst themselves. In this we saw networking at its very best. Some found support and like-mindedness in others that they had not previously encountered, and it seems likely that support networks and partnership working will grow from the meeting of minds.

39 voluntary sector and 34 public sector representatives, participated in workshops that enabled us to gain further insight into successful community cohesion working and yielded information that both complimented and built on the findings arising from the interviews cited in the report.

## GOOD PRACTICE CONCLUSIONS

This report identified good practice in many areas of the work that projects and initiatives are undertaking. Here, the successful strands are summarised:

### **Promotion and Raising Awareness**

Avenues used by projects to promote their work and raise awareness in the community included inviting local professionals to participate in training courses, and inviting the wider community to networking events and meetings. Self-promotion reaps benefits such as sponsorship, encouraging new volunteers, and creating recognition and validation in the community.

### **Partnerships**

Good practice was evident in the ways that projects and initiatives build partnerships with other organisations and agencies. Building partnerships with local employers also has the potential to generate sponsorship as well as be a possible source of employment for project users.

### **Information sharing**

Networking is key to success, as are opportunities to share ideas, and look for inspiration in the work of others. Projects often feel they are in competition for resources and because of this, the willingness of respondents to share information demonstrates particularly good practice.

### **Fund-raising**

Many projects supplement their income through fundraising, such as producing a book that can be sold, and acting in a consultative capacity to pass on expertise and knowledge. More common fundraising includes hall hire, coffee mornings, and event and activity charges.

### **Committee Members**

More than one group emphasised the importance of encouraging a diverse range of committee members. This ensures that different perspectives can be included on a range of relevant issues and can result in different groups in the community being made aware of the work of a project.

### **Recruitment**

Good practice was also apparent in the recruitment of both volunteers and paid staff. Great efforts are made to engage people from a range of age groups, backgrounds, and ethnic minority groups.

### **Role Models and Leadership**

By presenting themselves in a positive way, workers develop role model aspirations in young people. Young people are also encouraged to take responsibility in activities, thus learning leadership skills, which increases peer status in a constructive way and encourages others to aspire to similar achievements.

### **Learning Environments**

Some respondents pay particular attention to creating environments that enhance a client's learning capacity, such as using equipment to meet a special need, creating participation between students to aid the development of social networks, or holding classes in familiar or creative environments.

### **Enthusiasm**

Without exception, all of the projects and initiatives that have been cited in the report demonstrate enthusiasm for what they do in abundance. The value of this cannot be underestimated.

## COMMUNITY COHESION CONCLUSIONS

Projects and initiatives in the West London Community Cohesion Pathfinder undertake a wide range of activities and work that contributes to bringing communities closer together. Their work results in reduced isolation, the bringing together of communities who might not ordinarily meet, increased employment opportunities, and greater community participation. This is achieved through:

### Community outreach and emotional support

The work of many projects and initiatives involves community outreach and emotional support, which increases an individual's self-esteem and confidence thereby improving their capacity to engage with the local community. Additional benefits are also thought to derive from increasing a person's confidence such as improved mental and physical wellbeing.

### Volunteering

Many of the people who work on projects and initiatives are unpaid and between them donate vast amounts of time and goodwill. Interviewees stressed how volunteering does not just benefit the recipient of the volunteers time, there are also great benefits for the volunteer who may themselves otherwise be isolated. Volunteering also gives individuals the opportunity to learn new skills.

### Increasing cultural understanding

Many projects are endeavoring to promote different faiths and cultures to reduce ignorance and enhance integration. Projects promoting different cultures have done so through events, celebrations, seminars and workshops. Forums are also being developed to encourage discussion, and highlight problems that need to be addressed.

### Stabilising new communities

There are many groups whose objectives are to smooth the transition of newly arrived communities into a new and unfamiliar environment. New arrivals can be traumatized, fearful, and uncertain of the future. Refugee groups provide support and information to enable new arrivals to stabilise their health, find their way around a new environment, and develop social networks.

### Engaging disaffected youth

Many responses were received from projects that target a range of young people including young people from BMER groups, young people with special needs, and young people living in deprived areas. Project activities include sports, IT, music, numeracy and literacy. Young people are encouraged to develop leadership skills and be role models for others. Through such activities, young people widen their opportunities and enhance the way they engage with their communities.

### Increasing skills & employment opportunities

Projects that strive to increase people's opportunities to employment not only help to get people off benefits and into work but also contribute to increasing an individual's confidence and self-esteem. Courses identified during the research were found to target a range of potential students including women, young people, people with special needs, and people from BMER groups. Some courses are designed to increase basic skills, some are vocational, others are more recreational. Social networks often develop through the courses, which bring communities together and reduce isolation.

## TRANSLATION SERVICE

Per perkthim me telefon te perbledhjes se raportit, ju lutemi kontaktoni Sherbimin per Perkthime ne 020 8583 2299 dhe tregoni referencen **WLCCP – What Works TG3 Oct 2003**

للتلقي ترجمة على الهاتف لموجز التقرير، برجاء الإتصال بخدمة الترجمة على الرقم 020 8583 2299 وإقتباس رقم الإشارة: **WLCCP-What Works TG3 Oct 2003**

برای ترجمه تلفنی خلاصه گزارش، لطفاً با قسمت ترجمه با شماره ۰۲۰۸۵۸۳۲۲۹۹ تماس گرفته و شماره رفرنس **WLCCP - What Works TG3 Oct 2003** را ذکر کنید.

आ रिपोर्टनु सारांश, गुजरातीमा टेडिशन द्वारा समझवु छेय तो, महेरबानी करी ट्रांसलेशन सर्विसने आ नंबर पर फोन करे: 020 8583 2294 अने आ रेकरन्स नंबर जख्खावो: **WLCCP - What Works TG3 Oct 2003**

संक्षिप्त रिपोर्ट का टैलीफोन पर अनुवाद के लिए कृपया ट्रांसलेशन सर्विस को **020 8583 2299** पर संपर्क करें और **WLCCP वॉट वर्क्स TG3 अक्टूबर 2003** संदर्भ दें।

ਇਸ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਰਿਪੋਰਟ ਦਾ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ 'ਤੇ ਤਰਜਮਾ ਕਰਵਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਟ੍ਰਾਂਸਲੇਸ਼ਨ ਸਰਵਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ: 020 8583 2299 ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਰੈਫਰੈਂਸ ਨੰਬਰ ਦੱਸੋ: **WLCCP - What Works TG3 Oct 2003**

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اس کی مختصر رپورٹ کے بارے میں ٹیلیفون پر ترجمانی کیلئے براہ کرم ٹرانسلیشن سروس سے اس نمبر پر رابطہ کریں، نمبر یہ ہے 020 8583 2295 اور اس ریفریٹس کا حوالہ دیں، **WLCCP - What Works TG3 Oct 2003**