



Overcoming Challenges

Annual Review 2009



About Community Links

Community Links is an innovative charity running community based projects in east London and sharing local lessons to create national change.

Newham Opportunities and Challenges

- Newham has the youngest population in the UK, with over 40% of residents aged under 25.¹
- 58% of Newham children live in poverty.²
- Newham's population is set to increase by almost 65,000 by 2016.³
- 6% of households in Newham live in temporary accommodation.⁴
- As home to the 2012 London Olympics Newham is attracting attention from around the world.
- A child born in Newham is twice as likely to die before the age of one as a child born in Richmond.⁵

Many of the people we work with struggle to overcome difficult and complex problems. Everyday we see the impact that living in poverty has on the lives of local people; poor health, inadequate housing, debt problems, children excluded from school, troubled teenagers caught up in anti-social behaviour or themselves victims of crime. We also see how people are able to turn their lives around when given the support and help they need to tackle their problems.

Our network of 60 community projects reaches over 30,000 vulnerable children, young people, adults and older people every year, empowering individuals and communities to build their own ladders out of poverty and towards a brighter future.

And our programme of national work shares the local lessons across the country to widen the impact of our projects and generate lasting social change.

A Newham child is twice as likely to die before their first birthday as one born in Richmond



Overcoming Challenges

Last year was particularly challenging as the recession began to impact on people's lives.

We continued to take our extensive services to where they are most needed; services that are essential as the economic climate worsens, for example, advice, training and into-employment support. Requests for our assistance have increased dramatically: the number of people seeking advice on debt has doubled and the number of young people registering for our employment programmes has tripled.

However whilst demand is rising, the funding available to support this work is being tightly squeezed. The external environment has changed rapidly as a result of the recession and Community Links is adjusting in response. Although we wouldn't have chosen the circumstances, the challenges we face provide an opportunity for us to transform our organisation.

We are already doing more with less. This year we will focus locally on both reach, performance and impact. We will review our business model, develop a new programmatic approach to fundraising and launch income generating businesses to help build our sustainability.

And we are also issuing our own challenges, using our influence at national level – with some noticeable success – to ensure that stronger, more connected and more caring communities are at the heart of renewed economic systems.

We are also delighted to be launching our new strategy **Shared Vision: Lasting Impact**, which clearly sets out our programme for the next five years, the outcomes we are seeking to achieve together, and how we plan to measure our impact, under four key strategic aims:

- Raising aspirations
- Extending opportunities
- Tackling poverty
- Strengthening communities

In this short document, we report on some of our achievements over the last year. We are deeply grateful to all of our supporters and partners for their on-going commitment during what is a challenging time for us all.

To hear more about our ambitious plans for the future or to arrange to visit us, please get in touch, we'd love to see you!



Geraldine Blake
Chief Executive
geraldine.blake@community-links.org

Raising Aspirations

Our aim is to help local people reach their full potential – empowering them to take steps towards a better life:

Our extensive programme of **children's work** enables children aged 5 to 11 to play freely and safely and experience positive activities. Children are encouraged to take part in 'deep' play, building confidence, solving problems and, through our Play Rangers scheme, taking on responsibility and learning leadership skills.

Our **youth work programme** engages young people, keeping them safe and for some provides a positive alternative to hanging about on the streets getting caught up in anti-social behaviour or crime. Our youth volunteering programme helps 100 young people to develop personal skills and confidence.

Innovative projects like **Play, Sow and Grow** offer new experiences to the whole community. Through **Links UK**, our national programme, we share our learning with policymakers and practitioners and we enable the people we work with to build new networks, tell their own stories and influence policy at a national level.



Over 1,200 young people enjoyed positive activities, building up their skills and confidence



150 young people attended our first youth-led conference





In 2008/09:

- 1,568 children enjoyed fun, safe and inclusive activities.
- 1,236 young people enjoyed positive activities whilst building their skills and confidence.
- More than 100 young people were involved in volunteering.
- Over 5,000 signatures on the End Child Poverty Campaign petition to the Prime Minister were delivered to Downing Street by Courtney, David and Daniel, three children from our Arc in the Park project.

Our People

Three children from one family, only 6 to 9 years old, always seemed to be hanging around in the area, unsupervised for long periods of time. Working with the local school, I was able to meet their mum. She told me she suffered from depression and a lack of support, bringing the kids up herself. To escape, she would often go to the bingo hall to get away from everything. I spent some time talking to the children and they soon felt confident enough to attend our club; quickly improving their social skills and gaining in confidence. The oldest child has now become a spokesperson for the club's Children's Panel. All three have made great improvements. Mum also feels happier that her children are happy. She now has support in difficult times which has given her an incentive to get more involved in her family's welfare.

**Sonja Crichlow, Play Co-ordinator,
Jack Cornwell Estate**

Extending Opportunities

Newham has London's highest rate of young people who are not in employment, education or training. Community Links supports young people at times of transition to progress from school to college, training or employment, empowering them to make a positive contribution to their own lives and to the community.

Through **Education Links**, our registered school, we provide a second chance for a meaningful education for young people who have been permanently excluded from mainstream education.

Our youth team **training and employment initiatives** include challenging business days with some of our

corporate supporters. The value of these opportunities in broadening young people's horizons, developing their confidence and raising their aspirations cannot be underestimated.

Employment Links supports unemployed people to overcome obstacles and progress into full time sustainable work.

Our **training in advice and community development** targets local people who find it hard to access training because of a lack of formal qualifications or because of language and cultural differences.

140 formerly excluded students regularly attend our school



875 young people supported through our Connexions and Youth Employment projects



In 2008/09:

- 875 young people received education, training and employment advice and support from our Connexions and Youth Employment projects.
- 140 young people were given a second chance of education through our Education Links project which registered as an independent school.
- 2,000 young people were supported to enter stable employment with help from our Employment Links programme.
- 29 local people gained an accredited OCN Level 3 qualification after participating in our welfare rights and community development training courses.



Tackling Poverty

We know that people need to be able to meet their basic material needs – adequate income, appropriate housing, a safe and stable environment – before they can begin thinking about a better future for themselves, their families and their communities.

In an area where 58% of children live in poverty, it is essential that local people receive practical help to enable them to lift their families above the poverty line.

■ Our **open door and outreach advice services** offer support and advocacy on welfare benefits, housing and debt, enabling people to access their basic entitlements and helping to alleviate the crippling financial and emotional stress

faced by people living in poverty.

■ The number of people consulting us about spiralling debts has more than doubled over the last year. Debt is a short-term solution to a crisis, but the long-term impact can be devastating. Our advisors help clients to find their own solutions, to prioritise debt, negotiate with creditors and budget for the future.

■ We challenge the system and the rules that keep people in poverty, taking the issues faced by those people coming through our doors to the doors of Westminster. Our **Need NOT Greed** campaign calls for a modern, flexible welfare system, helping people into work, gradually coming off benefits whilst not being thrown further into poverty.



1,000 people every month receive advice on welfare benefits, housing and debt issues



Our advice services were rated A1 by the Legal Services Commission





In 2008/09:

- Over 1,000 people every month received advice on welfare benefits, housing and debt issues. Just under 9,000 through our Open Door Service with a further 3,400 seen at outreach locations.
- £1.3 million has been successfully generated for our clients in additional benefit payments and tax credits by our advice work. All income that local people were entitled to but were unable to access by themselves.
- 50 families attended a rally in Trafalgar Square as part of our engagement in the End Child Poverty coalition.
- The Need NOT Greed campaign was launched in the House of Commons with the Secretary of State for the Department of Work and Pensions.

Our People

Peter has lived in Canning Town all his life, with his children and now grandchildren. He has overcome many challenges; each generation of his family has experienced poverty and struggled to find secure employment.

He is a well known figure in the community and although he has serious heart problems he volunteers with his church regularly. He has friends who help him out with an informal job here and there but at times he has had to go without, especially when he was being moved from one benefit to another. We talked about his problems but also his dreams – what he ideally wanted was to start up his own local gardening business: a van with his name on it.

Over a period of benefit cuts and delayed processes, we supported Peter to get a CV sorted out and helped him into a formal secure job that would allow him sick leave; a gardening job with the council – full time, £6 per hour. He is adapting to the changes and since getting the job he has helped set up meetings with his local councillor and MP as part of the Need NOT Greed campaign aimed at changing policy to help people make a smoother transition into formal employment.

Maeve McGoldrick, Campaigns Co-Ordinator

Strengthening Communities

We work to strengthen communities, helping people feel safer, building bridges between ages and cultures, and shaping a better society for all. Our community is changing, with major physical regeneration projects transforming our borough, including the Olympic site.

Our **community development team** empowers local people with the skills to make a difference to their communities. We have assisted local people to set up community childcare projects and food co-operatives. We also train people with the skills to campaign on behalf of their local community.

Our highly successful **youth inclusion projects** work with young people who

have been identified as being most at risk of offending or anti-social behaviour – engaging young people in a range of diversionary activities and challenging unacceptable behaviour.

Our sports programme **S Team** is helping to reduce conflict on isolated estates, using sport to bridge differences between young people and reduce tensions and anti-social behaviour. Local people report that

this results in better relationships in the community.

Nationally we bring people together to collaborate on new ideas for social change through our **Chain Reaction** project and the **Council on Social Action**, which we proposed to the Prime Minister two years ago and now lead from Community Links.



29 local people gained qualifications in welfare rights or community development



Local people organised 60 community activities with our Development Workers' support



In 2008/09:

- 100 young people deemed at risk of offending took part in diversionary activities, helping them to overcome low self-esteem and raising their aspirations.
- 1,000 people participated in our five community events and family activity days bringing people from diverse communities together to have fun whilst encouraging community cohesion.
- 60 community activities, including Toddler Groups and “Nifty Fifties” were organised by local people, with support from our Community Development Workers.
- 1,000 people from 17 countries, more than a quarter of whom were aged under 21, attended our first international event, Chain Reaction, which was addressed by the Prime Minister.
- 600 people engaged in activities at Rokeby, our new Community Hub combining advice, family and youth services in one purpose built local centre.

Our Supporters

We are grateful to everyone who supports our work including:

3i Group	Clifford Chance LLP	The Hadley Trust	Lovells LLP	Sustain
Accenture	Daycare Trust	Harris Charitable Trust	Make Your Mark	Serenity IT
AES	Department for Children, Schools and Families	Haymills Charitable Trust	Man Group plc Charitable Trust	Shopzilla Europe
Anonymous Trusts	Department for Farming and Rural Affairs	Heart of the City	Morgan Stanley	Standard Bank
Allen & Overy	Department for International Development	Henderson Global Investors	Morris Charitable Trust	State Street
Apax Partners	Department for Work and Pensions	Hermes Fund Managers	NB Real Estate	Tate & Lyle
ARAMARK	Deutsche Bank	IBM UK	Network 2012	Thames Water
Ballymore	The Drapers' Company	ING	Newham Warm Zone	The Bank of New York Mellon
Barclays Capital	The Worshipful Company of Dyers	Investec	News International	The Robert Gavron Charitable Trust
BBC Children in Need	East Foundation	iPhelion	NM Rothschild and Sons Ltd	The Worshipful Company of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators
Bear Stearns	EBM Charitable Trust	Jack Petchey Foundation	Office of the Third Sector	The Worshipful Company of Founders
Berwin Leighton Paisner LLP	Electoral Reform Services	J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust	Parity	TPG
Best Before Media	Emmanuel Kaye Foundation	KPMG LLP	Private Equity Foundation	Triodos Bank
Big Lottery Fund Play	Esmée Fairbairn Foundation	Lacim/Maclis Charitable Trust	Prospectus	UBS
Big Lottery Fund My Place	Fidelity International	LankellyChase Foundation	Reed Smith	v , the youth volunteering charity
Broadgate Estates	The Worshipful Company of Fishmongers	Learning & Skills Council	Ricoh Europe Plc	The Vinci Foundation
Business in the Community	Founders Company	Legal Services Commission	The Rose Foundation	Vinci Park
Cabinet Office	Four Winds Trust	Legal and General	Royal Docks Trust	Weinstock Fund
Canary Wharf Group	Fremantle Media Ltd	Lehman Brothers Foundation Europe	The Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts	Woodroffe Benton Foundation
The Charles Dunstone Charitable Trust	Goldman Sachs	The Lennox and Wyfold Foundation	Salters' Company	XL Capital
Chartered Secretaries Company	Gordon Murray Design Ltd	Linklaters LLP	Sandy and Zorica Glen Charitable Settlement	
Chevron Limited		London Borough of Newham	SDP Charitable Trust	
Chubb Insurance Company of Europe S.E		London Councils	Sofronie Foundation	
City Parochial Foundation		London Development Agency	Spark	

Finance

The summarised financial information shows the income raised for our activities, the cost of raising the income and the amounts spent on our charitable activities. The information is taken from the full financial statements which were approved by the Trustees on 23rd September 2009. In order to gain a full understanding of the financial affairs of Community Links, the full audited financial statements, Trustees' Annual Report and auditors' report should be consulted. View or download them from our website, www.community-links.org or write for a free copy to Jane Parish, Company Secretary, Community Links, 105 Barking Road, London, E16 4HQ. Email info@community-links.org or phone 020 7473 2270.

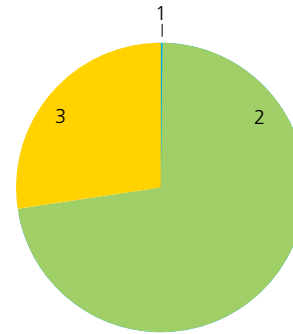


Jane Parish,
Company Secretary

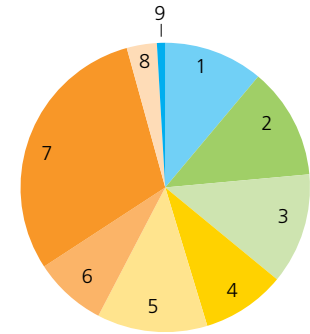
Signed on behalf of the Trustees

A note on the 2008/09 deficit

A number of factors contributed to the reported deficit. Income in the 2008/09 budget was booked to its year of receipt 2007/08 rather than its planned year of spend following technical audit review and changes in the Statement of Recommended Practice guidelines. This was reflected in the statement we made about our surplus last year. In addition a change to our contract with the Legal Services Commission to a fixed fee per case payment from an hourly basis resulted in lower fees than expected. In 2009/10 we are strengthening our management processes, investing in our fundraising capacity and adapting our business model to deliver support in a changed environment.



Incoming Resources



Resources Expended

Incoming Resources £9,771,582

	£
1 Investment Income	18,294
2 Other Unrestricted Income (mainly contract income)	7,080,416
3 Restricted Income	2,672,872

Resources Expended £9,931,855

	£
1 Children's Work	1,102,393
2 Youth Work	1,236,765
3 Education Links	1,231,897
4 Community Work	928,487
5 Special Projects and Development	1,226,035
6 Links UK	809,111
7 Employment Links	2,971,207
8 Cost of Generating Income	334,003
9 Governance Costs	91,957

Net Outgoing Resources

-160,273

Get involved!

Inspired? Then get involved! Everyone can play their part in supporting our daily work, and our plans for the future. For more information, visit www.community-links.org

Corporate Partnerships

We are passionate about developing excellent, rewarding partnerships. These include opportunities for your employees to volunteer and make a meaningful difference in the community while gaining practical experience, skills and insights. Contact Anna Mothes on 020 7473 9649, anna.mothes@community-links.org

Fundraising events

Sign up to our excellent fundraising events, as a personal or team challenge, online www.community-links.org/get-involved. Contact Emma Taylor on 020 7473 9661, emma.taylor@community-links.org

Trust Partners

Private Trusts and charitable foundations help us to develop new and innovative work and strengthen existing projects. Contact Toni Theisinger on 020 7473 9682, toni.theisinger@community-links.org

Turn a Life Around Appeal

Together we can continue to turn thousands of lives around. Join us by making a monthly donation online at www.community-links.org/get-involved or contact Ruth Uwimana on 020 7473 9672, ruth.uwimana@community-links.org

Opening Doors Appeal – Personal Gifts

Gifts to our Opening Doors Appeal are keeping our doors open for the next generation, and providing opportunities for innovation. To discuss how you might make your own personal impact, please contact Ian Robinson on 020 7473 9650, ian.robinson@community-links.org

Wills and Legacies

Donations in wills or legacies represent the best way possible of ensuring the continuation of our work far into the future. If you would like to discuss a legacy, please contact Ian Robinson in confidence on 020 7473 9650, ian.robinson@community-links.org

Endowments – investing in future sustainability and innovation

Endowments provide income forever. A generous donation of £250,000 has helped us to set up the Community Links Foundation. You can add a gift to the Foundation, or make a separate endowment, in family, trust or company name. Please contact Ian Robinson on 020 7473 9650, ian.robinson@community-links.org

Our Values

To generate change. To tackle causes not symptoms, find solutions not palliatives. To recognise that we all need to give as well as to receive and to appreciate that those who experience a problem understand it best. To act local but to think global, teach but never stop learning. To distinguish between the diversity that enriches our society and the inequalities that diminish it. To grow – but all to build a network, not an empire. To be driven by dreams, judged on delivery. To never do things for people but to guide and support, to train and enable, to simply inspire.

Our Trustees

May 'Dare
Mike Green
Stan Harris
Stephen Jacobs
Haydn Powell
Charles Richardson
Fiona Rawes
Gavin Rennie
Jane Thompson
Althea Baker

Sources:

1 ONS, Census, 2001
2 Newham Household Panel 2006
3 Newham Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2008
4 & 5 www.londonpovertyprofile.org.uk

The text in this review is available in large print

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