



UEL Research & Knowledge Exchange Conference 2013

Call for Abstracts

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Title of Abstract:	Community engagement using World Café: The Well London experience.
Key Theme/ Key words:	Community engagement, World Café; Health & Wellbeing; Well London

Abstract (No more than 400 words):

In 2006, the Big Lottery advertised a call for proposals for intervention programmes to promote well-being in communities, with a special focus on increasing the uptake of healthy eating choices, increasing levels of healthy physical activity, and enhancing mental health and well-being. The London Health Commission brought together a partnership (the Well London Alliance) including the University of East London, which prepared and delivered a proposal called Well London.

The aim of the Well London programme was to use community engagement and development approaches to design and deliver a three year programme of coordinated project interventions targeted at twenty of the most deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) across twenty London boroughs.

In July 2007, funding of £9.4m was awarded. The first stage of the programme was to design and deliver the Well London Community Engagement Process (WLCEP) to involve the targeted communities in identifying the important challenges they faced in improving their wellbeing and in developing a portfolio of projects which would address these.

The first phase of the Well London programme was launched across twenty boroughs in London during late 2007. Following the successes of Phase 1, a second phase of the Well London programme began in 2012 in 9 new areas.

Well London employed a multistage community engagement process which informed the overall project strategy for each intervention area. The Community Engagement Team (CET) at The Institute for Health and Human Development at UEL developed an approach which built on best practice, and the experience of key organisations with a reputation for effective models of

engagement and relationship building including the Bromley-by-Bow centre in Tower Hamlets. WLCEP used elements of Whole Systems thinking and Future Methods including the World Café and Appreciative Inquiry. This process has been further refined in Phase 2 to include an element of Participatory Budgeting in commissioning projects identified during the community engagement process.

The CET established and used key principles to guide the design of this innovative community engagement process. Principles included building collaborative partnerships, working with whole-systems, privileging community knowledge and working with the deficit of experience in each area. These principles were then operationalised throughout the preparation and delivery of almost 60 World Cafés, which were the first open community activities of the Well London community engagement process.

Our research reflects on and summarises the lessons learned when employing innovative, inclusive and transparent community engagement for health promotion.