



Project Brief: A joint proposal by IARS, ROTA, LVSC and LCF

BUILDING AN EVIDENCE-BASED BUSINESS CASE FOR COMMUNITY REASSURANCE IN LONDON

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I. Background, Purpose and Aims

This brief describes a joint project to be led by Independent Academic Research Studies (IARS) and delivered in partnership with Race on the Agenda (ROTA), London Civic Forum (LCF) and London Voluntary Service Council (LVSC). The timeline for the deliverables described in this project brief is 1 April 2007 – 30 March 2008.

In February 2007, IARS was commissioned by Government Office for London (GOL) to carry out a project on the role of community groups on community reassurance in London. Community reassurance is defined as the “need that is created prior and/ or after an ‘emergency incident’ (e.g. terrorism, health incidents, flooding, transport incidents, protests), to build trust, confidence and cohesion in communities and minority groups”. Having collected new empirical data through a consultation event and discussions with the project steering group (ROTA, LVSC, LCF and GOL) and the larger advisory group (Appendix I). IARS produced a report which found that:

- ✚ There is work already being carried out by small voluntary and community sector (VCS) groups but not enough information about it. Links are yet to be established between these ongoing projects and current structures for community reassurance.
- ✚ The Emergency Planning Officers of local authorities would benefit from the support of local VCS groups to their structure.
- ✚ The Civil Contingencies Act and other accompanying regulations provide for a better coordination between the provision of emergency services by public services and VCS organisations. However, these provisions are yet to be fully implemented in all London areas. Local Authorities could be encouraged to respond better to their statutory obligations but also be presented with a “business case” for proactively engaging front-line community groups in delivering community reassurance in their areas. There are enough case studies in the community to show the way to go about implementing the Act’s provisions, but not enough information about them. The report recommended carrying out additional research and awareness raising programmes on identifying and learning from successful ongoing VCS projects in community reassurance. This should lead to:
 - Better coordination. Greater Awareness. Consistency. Implementation of the Civil Contingencies Act in all London areas.

II. Project deliverables and objectives.

IARS’ report presented several case studies of effective practices. Southwark and Waltham forest appeared as an example of a local authority taking a proactive approach to community reassurance. Further research needs to be carried out to check whether other Local Authorities have similar positive experience. The GOL Community Reassurance Strategic Group that was set up after the consultation event to take forward the recommendations (see Appendix II for members) would benefit from a case study approach to community reassurance. This would provide the Group with an evidence base and a ‘business case’ on how statutory agencies and Local Authorities in particular could link with VCS organisations working on community reassurance, as defined above. IARS is proposing to work with ROTA, LCF and LVSC to deliver the following:

A. IARS will:

- ✚ Carry out desk research to identify any additional best practice examples of Local Authorities – apart from Southwark and Waltham Forest – whereby local VCS groups successfully coordinate with existing structure to deliver community reassurance in the area.

- # Select three case studies (Local Authorities) to acquire a better understanding of how they collaborate with VCS organisation in their area to deliver coordinated services in community reassurance and examine ways of involving their local Councils for Voluntary Service.
- # Do a comparative study to understand the different approaches that the identified 3 case studies adopted to community reassurance and VCS engagement as well as the different benefits resulting from these approaches both for the VCS and Local Authorities.
- # Carry out fieldwork with VCS organisations in the identified 3 case study Local Authorities to understand how they coordinate with the Local Authority and what sort of communication channels they have been made available to them.
- # Identify the gaps and challenges that these community groups face while delivering their work.
- # Construct an action plan that will allow a better linkage between these community groups and current structures e.g. Resilience Team in GOL, the Civil Contingencies Secretariat in the Cabinet Office.
- # Ultimately, to prepare an evidence-based "business case" and devise a best practice toolkit that will allow other London Boroughs to reproduce the good practice identified by the study so that they can benefit from a better coordination between their existing emergency structures and services provided by community groups in their area.

B. LCF, ROTA and LVSC will:

- # Act as an advisory group.
- # Comment on: detailed project brief, draft questionnaire, draft and final report.
- # Provide contacts for the fieldwork.
- # Disseminate information and help increase awareness.

III. Methodology of the Research Project

Phase 1: Literature Review (July 2007 – September 2007): The review is already underway and aims to follow up the findings from the Community Reassurance report putting them in the 'Southwark context'. It will get to grips with the Civil Contingencies Act and identify examples where its provisions were successfully delivered. The desk research will identify best practice examples of Local Authorities that are successfully engaging with their local VCS groups in delivering community reassurance. The desk research will conclude with an interim report which *inter alia* will prepare the next phase of the project.

Phase 2: Field work (September 2007 – December 2007) – The fieldwork will engage qualitative methodologies such as interviews and questionnaires with: (a) Officers from at least 3 Local Authorities that appeared as case studies in the desk research (b) Officers from VCS organisations delivering community reassurance services in the 3 case study areas (c) Officers from the GOL steering group.

Phase 3: Report & awareness raising (January 2008 - ongoing) -The primary outcome of this phase would be the production of a report, an evidence-base "business case" and toolkit that would combine the primary and secondary research into a highly reflexive and refined product. The report could be issued to all major stakeholders including London LAs. An event could be held to increase awareness of small VCS organisations.

IV. Staff, evaluation and quality assurance

IARS will have the responsibility for the delivery of the research objectives. Elena Noel, chair of IARS will be the main contact. She will maintain close contact with the Community Reassurance Strategic Group by attending its meetings and by providing regular updates to its members. Mr. Dale Coker, Deputy Director of IARS will manage the IARS research Team and Project. A Project Officer will be identified to carry out the project and 3 volunteers will be engaged. Dr. Theo Gavrielides, chair of the GOL Community Reassurance Strategic Group, will ensure that the research objectives are delivered as agreed. Lorraine Dongo will be the representative for LCF, Alison Blackwood for LVSC and Dr. Theo Gavrielides for ROTA.

The IARS management Board will monitor performance, finance and delivery. The Deputy Director will provide a monthly report to the IARS management Board. IARS monitors and evaluates the take up of its services by analysing the organisations and individuals using its services, the subject matter, and geographical location, type of support given, how it was dealt with and how long it took. Monitoring information is analysed quarterly and fed back to the Management Board to assess gaps and trends. IARS reviews its work progress annually through externally facilitated away days.

APPENDIX I: ORIGINAL PROJECT STEERING GROUP

London Voluntary Service Council *[key stakeholder]*
London Civic Forum *[key stakeholder]*
Greater London Authority
City Parochial Foundation
London Councils
Capacity Builders
Muslim Council of Britain
Race on the Agenda *[key stakeholder]*
Women's Resource Centre
Partnership for Young London
Faith Works
Consortium of Lesbian Gay Bisexual & Transgender Organisations
Greater London Volunteering
Government Office for London (GOL) *[key stakeholder]*
Independent Academic Research Studies (IARS) *[key stakeholder]*

APPENDIX II: GOL COMMUNITY REASSURANCE STRATEGIC GROUP

Metropolitan Police Service, London Voluntary Service Council, LB Southwark, Third Sector team, Government Office for London, London Civic Forum, Commission for Racial Equality, Race On the Agenda, Metropolitan Police Authority, Communities and Local Government, Salvation Army Emergency Services Coordinator (National level), Independent Academic Research Studies, Community Cohesion Team, Government Office for London, London Resilience Team, Government Office for London
London Councils, Greater London Volunteering

APPENDIX III: THE PARTNERS

IARS is a non-profit social policy think-tank run by volunteers. We work with the voluntary and community sector towards achieving community cohesion and the application of the principles of equality, human rights, restorative justice and alternative dispute resolution. We achieve these aims by carrying out research and by informing strategic decision makers about the issues affecting groups that are easily exposed to discrimination (e.g., Black minority ethnic groups, lesbian-gay- bisexual and transgender people, the elderly and disabled and the mentally ill) and victimisation (e.g., children, the homeless and refugees). IARS aims to provide policy and research support and expertise to our voluntary and community sector partners as well as public and private organizations to improve the academic and practical knowledge in the fields we cover. (www.iars.org.uk)

LVSC brings London voluntary and community sector organisations together to learn and share best practice and to create a co-ordinated voice to influence policy makers. We provide up-to-date information on management and funding, advice and support for voluntary and community groups, a library and information service, practical publications and short courses for those working in the sector. LVSC also hosts and services networks including Third Sector Alliance, Voluntary Sector Forum, CVS Network, Second Tier Advisors Network and CASCADE (www.lvsc.org.uk)

ROTA is a social policy think tank devoted to issues that affect Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities in London. We are committed to working towards achieving social justice and the elimination of discrimination and promoting diversity, human rights, equality of opportunity and best practice. We achieve these aims by informing London's strategic decision-makers about issues affecting the BAME voluntary sector and the communities it serves and by making government policy more accessible to London's BAME organisations. ROTA is also the home of MiNet (Minority Network), a government funded network for networks. MiNet serves London's BAME organisations by providing a voice in the development of regional policy. (www.rota.org.uk)

LCF engages the capital's civil society in the regional governance of London through democratic debate and effective consultation. Through cross-sectoral working groups set up to look at specific policy issues, the Civic Forum informs the Greater London Authority, the London Assembly, and other pan-London organisations, about the issues that affect the lives and opportunities of those who live and work in London. This is led through our projects which include London 2012 (Olympic and Paralympic Games), Promoting Community Cohesion, Combating Discrimination and Promoting Equality, Community Safety and Policing, Active Learning For Active Citizenship and How London Works. We have a membership which has over 1300 organisations in our network drawing on a cross section of organisations from the voluntary and community, private and public sectors which include specialist equalities