



“Turbo-Charging PB & Localism”

A workshop at
The UK Participatory Budgeting Conference
26th October, 2015



Trying to turbo-charge Localism

- From 2009, I have been trying to turbo-charge communities via 2 major initiatives:
- The Big Lunch
- Your Square Mile
- I also helped to set up “Your Local Budget” when running the Big Society Network.
- I am a huge PB enthusiast and hope to stimulate ideas to help it flourish.
- Representative democracy is not enough. We need participative democracy.



Over Centralised UK

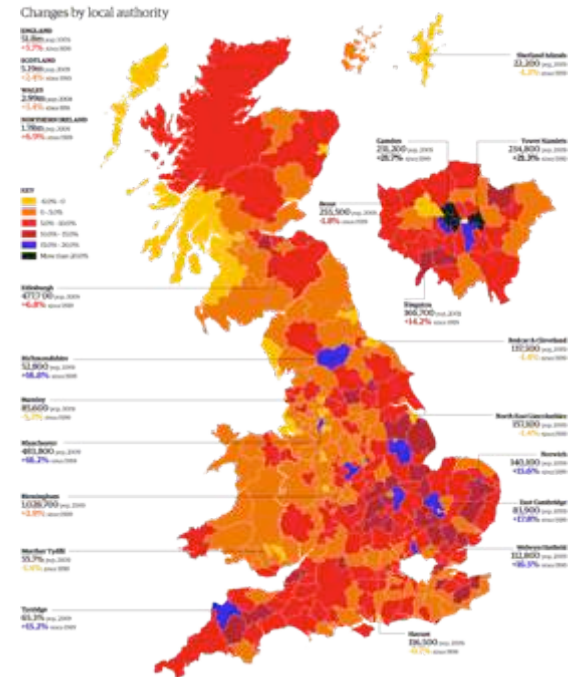
The Square Miles of the UK

- There are 93,000 square miles in the UK. 64.6 million people live in 7,500 to 8,000 of those square miles.
- Power is concentrated in only two of them: the square miles of The City and Westminster.
- Your Square Mile was set up in 2011 to enable citizens to make changes in the other 7,998 square miles.



Over-Centralised UK

- There are 37,000 communes in France; 80% of them have fewer than 1,000 residents.
- There are 290 municipalities in Sweden with an average of 31,000 each; half have less than 15,000 inhabitants.
- The average county in the USA had a population of roughly 100,000 people as at the 2000 Census.
- An average Local Authority in England & Wales covers 147,000 people.



Levels of Community Engagement

People say they are involved in local community

Community Involvement	TOTAL 2012
I actively lead community activities	8%
I participate in community activities	22%
I help people in my community but don't take part in any activities	34%
I am not involved in my community	36%

Source: Future Foundation

Actual levels of engagement

	Disengaged	Interested	Active	Highly- motivated
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May or may not be aware of community issues Does not want to participate Has few relationships in the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passively seeks opportunities to participate May demonstrate interest by donating to charity May participate ad hoc and infrequently May be part of a local group Interested in participating more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly takes part in interest groups Participates regularly Involved in multiple activities Actively recruits others to take part 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involved with leadership May start and run a new group or organisation Gets others active and motivated Teaches others how to initiate and lead activities
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isolated elderly NEETs Deprived & transient individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspired but inactive youths who want to do more Charitable donors Infrequent, ad hoc volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular volunteers Online civic participants Multi-group participants Team leaders Social enthusiasts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scout leaders Community organisers Social entrepreneurs Experienced social entrepreneurs Regional community organisers
Current estimated size*, millions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10-15 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15-20 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8-12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.5-1

Feelings of disempowerment

- In 2013-14 only 41% of people took part in any civic participation in the least year, a statistically significant decrease compared to 2012-13.
- Only 34% of people felt that they could influence decisions affecting their local area, a statistically significant decrease compared to 2012-13 (38%) and all other years since 2001.



Source: Cabinet Office's Community Life survey

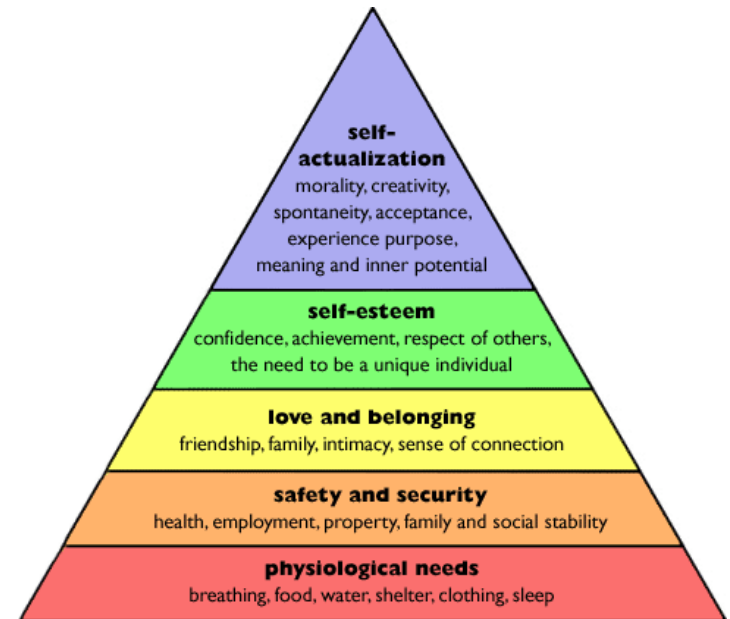
The Basis for Optimism

- Anger, frustration and a sharper interest in real democracy can be channelled into positive, creative energy and action.
- 44% of people want to be involved in decisions made by the council and 74% say it is important to be able to influence local decision-making. *Source: YSM Omnibus Survey of 2000 adults, 2012*
- So there is a widespread thirst for participation in democracy but one that isn't being quenched.



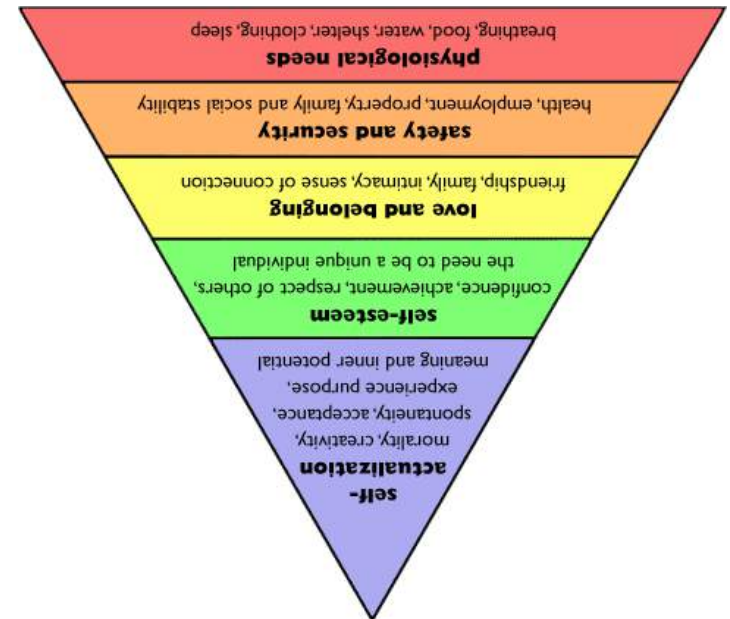
The Ladder of Citizenship

- There is a ladder of citizenship akin to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs....
- People will move up this “ladder” or hierarchy and settle at their own level.
- It is a pyramid with a broad base: a lot of people will never go beyond simple, neighbourly actions or informal community groups.



The Ladder of Citizenship

- Baby steps / simple neighbourly actions: a Big Lunch.
- Joining a hobby-based group e.g. Stitch and Bitch, football club, local choir; volunteering around a passion / knowledge.
- Starting a group or driving an existing one towards lobbying/ social change/ taking part in Participatory Budgeting.
- Starting a social enterprise or co-op.
- Expanding/ replicating social/ community enterprise.



Leveraging PB



Creating a PB Movement: Learning from The Big Lunch

The Big Lunch

- Co-founded The Big Lunch with Tim Smit from the Eden Project and June Mason led it across Government.
- The idea was to establish street parties as a “Thanksgiving Day for Neighbours”: not just for Jubilees.
- Communities are the key missing link in environmental action; social isolation is growing.



The Big Lunch

- Growing movement:
- 2009: 730,000 participants
- 2010: 850,000
- 2011: 2 million
- 2012: 8.5 million (part of the Diamond Jubilee)
- 2013: 3.65 million
- 2014: 4.83 million
- 2015: 6 million



The Big Lunch

- 84% scored the 2012 event 8.8. out of 10 or higher.
- Has catalysed change across a wide variety of communities in the UK, including the most deprived.



Learning from The Big Lunch

- Provide a framework, lots of ideas and a kit of parts but encourage people to run parties their way.
- Reduce barriers e.g. complications of street closure.
- Used every form of motivation: indulgence, curiosity, solidarity, practicality, self-interest, social justice.



Learning from The Big Lunch

- Give localism national scale: millions sitting down with their neighbours on the same day.
- Involve business locally & nationally.
- Draw people in through something fun and rewarding, then graduate a proportion into something more meaningful: Big Lunch Extras.
- Perhaps PB sessions should be accompanied by a local market/ street food event or skills exchange.



Create a national movement for PB

- Create a national movement.
- Encourage PB sessions across the UK in a single day, with media partners such as Trinity Mirror and the BBC.
- Tie this in with the UN Day of Democracy?
- Twin PB communities with others across the UK or across the world?



PB Workshops/ Public Sessions



YSM Community Workshops

- YSM has typically held workshops with 30 local councillors, community groups, charities, teachers, volunteering agencies, police, health and social workers combined with....
- 50 people, aged 16 to 85, from a wide range of social and ethnic backgrounds, who are unengaged in community life, including and especially whose voice is rarely heard.
- It takes time and creative thinking to recruit the disengaged but it pays back....



Recruit the widest possible range of citizens for PB sessions

- In Scunthorpe, the neighbourhood management team recruited normally disengaged men in pubs.
- They also recruited people with addiction problems in pharmacies.
- In Walsall, the council worked with 8 local primary schools in deciding how to spend £15,000 linked to “Every Child Matters” outcomes.
- In Newcastle, 450 5-13 year olds helped to decide how to spend the city’s £2.25m Youth Opportunities Fund.



YSM Community Workshops

- In the YSM Community workshops we:
- Take a poll on perceived social capital.
- Define local strengths, weaknesses and needs.
- Physically map all local assets.
- Educate everyone on their citizen rights and inspire them with case histories.
- Brainstorm and vote on local projects (no more than 5).
- Draw up Action Plans for the 5 projects.



Planning for Real

- Tony Gibson was a pioneer for inclusive urban planning around the world.
- His “Planning for Real” workshops used basic models using cardboard, glue, Lego, model houses etc.
- Everyone would gather round the model and move it/ build it together.
- Overcame the problem of middle class NIMBY’s dominating.
- Equivalent in PB workshops?



YSM's Original 16 Pilot Areas

England

- Birmingham - Northfield
- Great Yarmouth – Gorleston
- Cumbria - Wigton *Rural*
- Liverpool - Toxteth
- Nottinghamshire - Manton
- Yorkshire - Todmorden - *Rural*

London:

- Tower Hamlets - Weavers (Boundary Estate)
- Lewisham – North Brockley / St John's
- Hackney - Hoxton and Shoreditch

Northern Ireland

- North Belfast - Mount Vernon
- Londonderry / Derry - Caw & Galliagh – *Semi Rural*

Scotland

- Greenock
- Glasgow – Pollockshields

Wales

- Newport – Bettws
- Rhondda Valleys – Glyncoch – *Semi Rural*

Tangible Results and Successful Impact

- We almost doubled regular, constructive contact between citizens and the local authorities across these 16 areas.
- Increased from 50% to 63% the number of people who feel they can influence local decisions.
- Increased from 37% to 50% the number of people having weekly contact with their neighbors.
- The percentage saying they like their area a lot has risen from 47% to 55%.

The Role of Digital

The New On-Line Tool for Communities

- YSM spent 2.5 years developing the on-line equivalent of the notice-boards in local post offices.
- We researched the content that communities most wanted and needed to share, through our work in 19 communities.
- We designed something built around the best content, presented via ruggedised tablets, with a touch-screen and simple icon-based navigation....



Community Infopoint

- Displays live local weather and time.
- Allows you to create a local petition or vote on a local issue.
- Enables you to share and borrow tools, resources and time.
- Advertises and enables local deals, supporting independent shops and local facilities.
- Promotes local events.



Community Infopoints

- We have put Community Infopoints on trial in 4 Ideas Stores (libraries) and the East London mosque in Tower Hamlets.
- The 1850 exit polls were very encouraging:
 - 13% had never used the internet before
 - 93% said the user experience was positive
 - 45% would like Infopoints located in retailers and Post Offices
- Trial the use of Community Infopoints in PB? Ask local banks and building societies to promote PB events on their ATM machines?



Community Reporting

Community Reporting

- Encourage PB participants to act as community reporters and spread the word via blogs, hyperlocal websites, interviews for local radio, short videos.
- Media Trust offer excellent training.
- Close and symbiotic relationship with the local press.



Incentives

The Role of Incentives

- Incentivise participation by issuing time bank notes redeemable against local facilities, events or services, to those who attend a PB session?
- Have a street food festival/ market to accompany, promote and reward a PB session, as mentioned above?



The Role of Local Authorities and Community Alliances

Interactive, Progressive Local Authorities

- Stone Parish Council in Kent aim to “make even the boring interesting”.
- They make strong use of infographics to present their budgets.
- They have an excellent web-site with intuitive navigation.
- They have project-specific websites and social media accounts.



Interactive, Progressive Local Authorities

- They are developing an interactive map on their Neighbourhood Plan website including a private forum for the steering group.
- They digitise and tag council minutes.
- They have a digital council newspaper.
- They use Survey Monkey for public consultation on-line.



Community Alliances

- There is tremendous value in a community organisation working alongside the Local Authority, pulling together public, not for profit and business participants.
- Manton Community Alliance believed that the old way of neighbourhood renewal was not sustainable.
- In 2004 it developed its own social capital model and adopted “**residents are part of the solution rather than passive consumers of public services**” as its ethic.



Community Alliances

- After 3 years in a very deprived, former mining community with very low levels of engagement:
- 62% of the population participated in the life of their neighbourhood.
- 41% of residents believed they could influence what is going on in their community, 11% higher than the national level.
- Through a Participatory Budgeting programme 1526 people (25% of the population) voted.
- Many of these people had never voted in an election before and for some of these people it encouraged them to vote in subsequent local elections.



A Small Group of Citizens, A Great Deal of Power

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

*Margaret Mead,
Cultural Anthropologist*

