



# Case Study: Reading World Cafe



# Reading World Cafe

In late 2015, Supt Gilmour asked MutualGain to assist with enabling his neighbourhood teams to develop new skills thereby supporting them to have 'different' conversations with groups who are often unheard through traditional engagement channels. After a number of meetings, it was agreed that the engagement method that most suitable was a World Café.

The World Café is a simple, effective, and flexible format for hosting large group dialogue and the methodology can be modified to meet a wide variety of needs. It is for this reason that MutualGain advised Thames Valley Police senior management to utilise the model for their community conversations, enabling them to have the most creative and engaging environment to encourage dialogue. The specifics of context, numbers, purpose, location, and other circumstances are factored into each event's unique invitation, design, subject and question choice.

The delivery of a World Café training programme would be the catalyst for the introduction of a new style of neighbourhood policing and Supt Gilmour was keen to pilot the new model in two areas of his division; Oxford Road and Cemetery Junction.

Superintendent Gilmore articulated a strong desire to engage both communities in a dialogue about issues that are often hidden, but affect demand on policing. As such, Superintendent Gilmore wanted to explore a different method of community engagement to inform thinking for future models of policing and future strategies. The key issue was to encourage discussion surrounding those issues that might not be raised in more traditional settings.

The MutualGain programme of activity included several stages as follows:

- A partnership day was held at Reading Police station on 17th February 2016. The day was hosted by Supt Gilmour, delivered by MutualGain, and was attended by several senior members of the Reading policing team together with partners from a variety of departments at Reading Borough Council including the Community Mental Health Team.
- MutualGain delivered a full day of training on the World Café method of engaging communities and a series of onsite support days to staff from the two identified areas. The support days focused on planning and logistics for the event as well as dealing with issues that arose following the training days.
- Recruitment support was provided over several days in the community with the teams. The Police teams utilised the Police cadets to recruit young people to the event to ensure the voice of the child was represented
- Hosting support was provided at the events. This was required as over 200 people attended the two events with over a 1000 pieces of data was harvested from the questions asked
- Data analysis was undertaken by MutualGain providing Thames Valley Police with ideas, new perspectives, community understanding and opportunities to build relationships with active citizens to progress to problem solving and co-design and co-delivery of services in the future.

Despite reluctance and a belief that the events would be unsuccessful, not just in terms of numbers attending, but in gathering the perceptions of the community, those that attended the events spoke about the strong need for 'seeing is believing'; when you see meaningful community engagement you believe in its power. This is an example of cognitive restructuring; demonstrating a new way of working that is beneficial to the individual, the organisation and the community.

# Reading World Cafe

Since the two initial World Cafe events Thames Valley Police has seen a complete re-structured community engagement approach once there was a realisation that they needed to work in a different way when engaging the community. Additional PCSOs have been appointed and will be involved in community engagement from September 2016.

The World Cafe methodology has been embedded into the Thames Valley Police approach with additional events being held with the:

- Nepalese community
- multi- faith organisations
- communities from the Whitley area of Reading

More are planned over the next six months. In the main all of these events were led by Thames Valley Police: to further embed the new approach partnership days were arranged to feedback the results and to plan the next steps and how the new tried and tested methodology can be integrated with co-design and co-delivery in the future.

If you think World Cafes could be a useful tool for your organisation, why not choose MutualGain as your partner for delivering an event or scheme of work? From a one off report for a specific consultation, or an overhaul of your current engagement activities, MutualGain has the experience and skill to deliver.

For a no obligation discussion about your requirements, contact our Business Development Lead, Owen Miller:

T:07835 304699

E:[owen@mutualgain.org](mailto:owen@mutualgain.org)

# Reading World Cafe

Whatever your engagement needs, MutualGain has the skills and experience to help you achieve your goal, whether you want to upskill your staff, meet your statutory obligations on engaging communities, or involve the public in an important decision or behavioural change -we can help you in the following ways:

## Training

MutualGain provides a range of training for your employees and stakeholders, from one day courses to full capacity building packages which teach a number of different engagement techniques. All of our courses are highly customisable and we work with you to ensure your staff are learning the skills they need from people who have experience of carrying out these methods across the public and charitable sector.

Trainees rate our one day programmes at 5/5.

## Supported Learning and Delivery

Our supported learning and delivery programme goes beyond the one day training to building the capacity of staff or residents to deliver engagement and listen differently to those they serve.

Our extensive experience in event delivery, coaching and partnership working, combined with our training and support packages ensures that your staff feel confident in delivering engagement events and strategies. We work with you at every stage of the planning, delivery and analysis phases to reinforce your learning and pass on best practice.

Our capacity building programme was recently evaluated by Durham University to show that social capital built through strengths based approaches delivered by MutualGain reduces crime and ASB significantly.

Our associates have worked with a variety of NHS organisations, Police, Planners, and Central Government to support engagement and commissioning staff to establish new methods of engagement and integrate them within current working practices.

**Coming soon:** We have just been approved as a **'centre to deliver OCN qualifications and accredited courses'**, and are in the process of securing accreditation for our supported delivery programme of training and capacity building in social capital.

## Delivering your Engagement Activity for you

Don't have the time or the staff to deliver a meaningful engagement process? Our team is here to support you. We use the power of your local population to gain insight into current issues as well as areas of good practice so that you can make better, more informed decisions. From the popular technique of Participatory Budgeting to the broad learning opportunities found using the World Café method, MutualGain can deliver events and processes which will change your organisation and your stakeholders' perspectives on any 'problem'.

We'd love to talk to you about working with your organisation. For more information, please contact our Business Development Lead:

**Owen Miller**

[owen@mutualgain.org](mailto:owen@mutualgain.org) / 07835304699/ **Mutual Gain** [www.mutualgain.org](http://www.mutualgain.org)



**Mutual Gain**

[www.mutualgain.org](http://www.mutualgain.org)