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*Interviewer:* **Francis Ball**

Interviewee:

**Interview Details**

**Name of interviewee: Babu Bhattacherjee**

**Project: Growing Old Gracefully**

**Date of interview: 13/04/2018**

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**Venue:**

**Name of interviewer: Francis Ball**

**Length of interview:**

**Transcribed by: Megan Christo**

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*OK it’s the 13th of April and I’m interviewing Babu at Spotlight as part of the Subco project. Could you tell me your date of birth please?*

18th of April 1965.

*And where were you born?*

Er, London.

*What part of London?*

OK I was born in Stratford. Well Stratford/Forest Gate. The Forest Gate XXXX (0:00:22.3).

*And what did your parents do?*

So my mum worked, um, kind of various things in the rag trade, er, she worked in the Matchbox factory which was kind of in Hackney, um, and kind of towards the end actually she got, um, a post which was as a trainee social worker, so towards the end she became a social worker. And my dad worked for the Post Office in MBT.

*OK. Did they move to England from-?*

Yeah so my family came over, so my dad came over, er, yeah probably, um, sort of mid 60s, early 60s and then, er, I was born here and then kind of spent a bit of time here and a bit of time in India but then we settled here permanently, um maybe kind of ’69 that sort of thing.

*So from quite a young age then you were-*

Yeah I was born here, um, and kind of spent a bit of time flitting around but yeah kind of mainly in Forest Gate and mainly in London.

*What was Forest Gate like in the 70s growing up?*

Um, it was kind of, it was fine. I mean it was quite a racist time so there was quite a lot of, um, overt racism it was kind of- the national front were very, um, prominent and, er, so yeah it was tough, um, and it was also kind of the time of, um, sort of strikes. There was, there were power cuts there were all sorts of things going on so it was a, it was a good time but it was, yeah, it was quite hard.

*Yeah, um, you mentioned strikes I mean with your mum working in a match factory was she quite connected to kind of industrial…*

Oh yeah so Matchbox made cars so, um, so the Matchbox they were the size of matchboxes.

*Oh!*

They were actually cars they were the toy cars, um, it was actually Lesney was I think, they were the factory. But um, but yeah I mean um yeah I mean the sorts of places my mum worked….so, so yeah Matchbox was unionised and pretty good for that sort of thing. I don’t think she went on strike much and I don’t think my dad did much at the Post Office and BT but it was always around, you know, kind of those sorts of things.

*Yeah do you remember the stuff about the Newham 7 or were you a bit young at that age?*

Um yeah so, yeah I was kind of involved in the Newham 7, Newham 8 um so, yeah I was around at that time.

*What year was that, sorry?*

Oh blimey was, that’s tough. Um, it would have been the, it would have been like late 80s, 90s all that stuff, yeah.

*Could you say maybe a bit more about your involvement?*

Oh um, so I’d been involved in Newham Monitoring Project so I was getting, and some of the young people I kind of new anyway so um, so the Kahns I knew and there kind of various other people so…So through the links- yeah we knew what was going on we knew about the struggle, um, and you know, got involved in a few demonstrations and a few kind of campaigns, that sort of thing.

*So was Newham Monitoring Project like your job?*

No I was a volunteer there so I used to do the emergency service so they used to have an emergency helpline. So if you were arrested and you needed support, um, we would connect people up to solicitors and kind of make sure that they were treated er, kind of properly by the police and that they, um had access to the right support.

(4m20)

*And how did you get into that?*

Um, I think just through er, kind of being local, kind of knowing the organisation, wanting to support the organisation so yeah, just sort of word of mouth I guess.

*Were the monitoring project quite visible then at that time?*

Yeah they had an office on XXXX (0:04:40.5) road, um, they er, yeah they were doing a lot of campaigns um, around policing and specific incidents so there were particular campaigns, obviously kind of later on in was Steven Lawrence but um there were lots of campaigns going on at the time about people who had been um…killed, kind of being arrested um sort of fights for justice all that sort of stuff.

*And what did you do as a job then if that was sort of voluntary?*

Oh at the time? So um I er…so OK at that time I worked for Newham social services when I was back in Newham but before then I’d obviously grown up um around Newham but I went to university in Manchester so I spent about nine years in Manchester but still kept in touch with what was happening in East London but really it was kind of when I came back that I got more involved in that sort of thing.

*What was Manchester like in comparison to London?*

It was a bit harder than London, so you get the kind of double thing in Manchester where um it like, being a southerner it’s kind of um you have to er make your peace with that and other people have to make peace with you um it’s um in terms of er…opportunity it was kind of like, there was less happening in Manchester at the time um compare to London, there was loess diversity I think in a lot of ways um so yeah it was, but it was a great place I mean I lived in a place called Rusholme which was like the Asian bit of er Manchester and er it was also a student bit so that was kind of good.

*What years did you-?*

Um so Manchester, I went there in ’83, I came back to London in ’91.

*So it must have had quite an exciting, vibrant cultural scene at that time.*

Um, yeah it was great in Manchester actually so XXXX (0:06:40.8) was going then so that was kind of obviously a big and there was that whole kind of music scene happening in Manchester. I mean culturally it was good, there were new cultural venues, um, obviously a huge student population so that was kind of great as well. But yeah it was in need of regeneration really, there were lots of things that kind of needed to happen for the area but yeah it was a good time.

*Did you study something related to social work?*

No I’ve got a degree in Physics.

*Oh right* ***[laughs]*** *so how did you find yourself going into that line of work?*

Um, so when I was doing my degree, I think, I was a volunteer for Manchester Mind and I did kind of counselling for people, sort of telephone counselling, for people who were in distress kind of issues so I did that for a while and I guess I had a chance to kind of pursue my academic interests but also my kind of social interests. And as I went on I was kind of just went down a path where I pursued that side of things more than the kind of becoming the scientist.

*Yeah. So what did you do sort of after getting your degree?*

So I worked in Manchester. So I worked for the local authority for a while, worked for a volunteer bureau, worked for Salford CVS so just kind of worked in the voluntary sector and the local authority.

*And when you moved back to London did you notice any changes or was it sort of much the same?*

Um, yeah I mean I think my idea of deprivation was, the deprivation I saw, I worked in Salford, I thought the deprivation I saw in Salford was significantly greater than the deprivation in East London and, although I used to have these arguments with I came back to East London, people were saying East London was the worst- personally I didn’t think it really compared to the kind of work that was going on in Salford and the kind of issues that there were in places like that. And Greater Manchester actually, so not just Salford: Salford, Tameside, Oldham. You know it’s a whole set of places where I think that the level of need kind of seemed to me to be kind of worse in some ways than what was happening in London and London was, at the time I think, as the capital and with the other investment that was going on it kind of had more opportunity than some of the other places. So yeah, so I suppose it made me think, in some ways, that the centre of the world wasn’t East London you know, there’s other stuff going on.

*Was the work quite challenging at times if you were sort of in these difficult-?*

Oh in Manchester or around Manchester? Oh no, yeah, it was tough work, yeah. I mean it was great actually so one thing that I was able to do as a young person is I would be going round estates. I would be going round estates where you’d have to knock on doors, you had to talk to people, you had to build relationships, and it wasn’t the kind of supportive structure to kind of do that in a way that was, you know, really carefully kind of coordinated. It was much more about building relationships and kind of developing a whole set of skills actually so yeah, it was good, really good for me to be able to do that work.

*Yeah. And when you came back to London did you sort of pursue similar-?*

Yeah so I got a job in Newham social services, um, and so I came over basically to do that job.

*Were the council quite good at sort of tackling issues around diversity sort of XXXX (0:10:39.1) behind it?*

Um, yeah my feeling was that, at the time anyway, it was a labour council but it was quite a right-wing labour council. So a lot of the views of counsellors were probably not as progressive as I would have liked but they had some really strong left-wing principles and they were- but I mean in a lot of ways Newham probably was a bit of a, it did feel a bit like it was out of London. It didn’t feel like London so much in those days and so I think the council, because it had been labour for so many years, I think maybe there was sense of continuity and history but maybe in terms of some of the new issues that were emerging that was a challenge that I think maybe took a bit longer because the borough wasn’t necessarily kind of in that mode to tackle that stuff.

*Sort of stuck in a rut in a way.*

I wouldn’t go that far, I kind of enjoyed my time in Newham. I enjoyed the, I mean I still live in Newham so it’s my borough it’s where I grew up. But I think at the time, yeah, the council did feel a bit different to the community that was around here. S-o yeah, politically in terms of the representation members and the kind of issues that were coming up. But having said that I thought the borough was really good in terms of its diversity so even though it had a large kind of BME population, the different elements of that population, in terms of the different communities that were represented, worked really well together and there was a real sense of kind of collective endeavour. And I think that that is kind of, wasn’t the case in other boroughs, you know. So in other boroughs it felt much more polarised around kind of how different ethnic groups were working together, whereas in Newham I always felt there was a really strong sense of connection and a really strong sense of working together.

*Was that coming from organisational structures or sort of grassroots, political community work?*

Yeah so there was something called the black and ethnic minority community care forum which was around a little while at the time, there was Major Women’s project, there was Newham Monitory project, so there was a good set of organisations actually. There was Race Equality Council, so there was a whole set of organisations that were working together at the time and I think it is down that infrastructure and it is down to the quality of hose organisations and what they’re able to do. You know everyone has periods of doing well and kind of not maybe doing so well for some of the time but yeah they were really good organisations, yeah.

*Do you think, I mean, when the organisations do well and they don’t do well is there a sort of particular set of factors that will influence that or is it particular to each organisation and who’s sort of on the team and that sort of thing?*

Um, yeah personally I’d say some of the infrastructure organisations were really good so I think the black and ethnic minority community forums are a really good infrastructure organisation, I think Eurasian Women’s project was a really good infrastructure organisation in terms of its ability to form partnerships so I think that all of those groups really had a good sense of whatever their individual abilities were and there were some really exceptional people around but I think it was their ability to connect up and form partnerships and do things together.

*And was there sort of central support for the work they were doing?*

Yeah so a lot of those agencies got a load of authority funding- I mean I worked in the grants bit of the council so were funding a whole range of organisations to do that work yeah so actually grant funding from the local authority was a real positive yeah they were a good grant funder at the time.

*How did grant funding work I mean do you give money to an organisation or would there be sort of for a certain project that they were doing?*

Um yeah there would also be an agreement, there would also be a grant agreement or a service agreement so there would always be kind of things that they were meant to do but yeah often it would be about supporting those organisations to deliver their core work so there was a good sense of, you know, allowing organisations to grow and supporting their infrastructure and then also supporting specific bits of work.

*Are there any sort of specific projects you can remember from that period that you helped fund?*

Oh at the time? Yeah so obviously kind of Newham Women’s project, Newham XXXX (0:15:35.6) for Youth who are still going. We funded some care organisations that were dotted around the borough so there was X Project which was another Asian elders project so yeah it was a good combination of things.

*Obviously some of those organisations aren’t still going, do you know if there’s a particular reason for that?*

I mean I think sometimes, it’s difficult to say. So a lot of the organisation that we funded- I mean sometimes organisations have a finite life time anyway. They get momentum, they get stuff done over time they’ve kind of achieved a lot and it kind of, and organisations can change as individuals leave or as funding priorities change. So I guess ether’s a natural wastage that happens. But yeah I would say that the infrastructure of support from those agencies has really become critical and obviously the funding environment is really important as well so if money is being squeezed from the local authority all you get is the local authority changes priorities then they’re a big sort of help. And I know that, you know, agencies like Aston Mansfield and the XXXX (0:16:55.4) program- the kind of bigger agencies that are around in the borough, generally have done that because they’ve got an asset base or they’ve got a legacy kind of of funding and so they’re less buffeted by changes in the outside environment. An, you know, you can’t have every organisation working in that way but I think the organisations have got that kind of, you know, where they’ve got that kind of ability to generate income from a number of different sources it can definitely help.

*Definitely. So when did your involvement with SubCo first start?*

So I think it was one of the earlier projects that I did when I came to Newham Social Services. So being like mid-1991, so I think- I don’t think I was, I think I’d just- the idea had been emerging for a while and social services were giving the responsibility of brining it together and I was the officer who was leading on it so I think there had been work before I came but the organisation hadn’t been established at that point. So I was basically working with a series of partners to help develop the service. And the organisation.

*What was your role in developing the service?*

So I was the grants officer so I was going to fund it and so I was helping to develop the constitution, the job descriptions, the kind of the premises. So it was like basically developing a new organisation that didn’t exist at that point and needed all that stuff. So we were basically working through the infrastructure of the organisation in terms of its legal kind of standing as well as the physical base and work that needed to be done and recruiting staff and all the rest of it.

*What were the needs that they were responding to at the time?*

So we were looking at provision. I think the original kind of priority was over fifties so elders from the subcontinent. So including Chinese elders, obviously a whole mix of the kind of Indian subcontinents- so Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India. But then also into South-East Asia and kind of older people there. So the issue was I think that elders from those communities were displaying kind of issues that often occurred in the white community much later on in life. So sorts of issues around physical health and wellbeing, mental health and wellbeing, were coming up in the fifty year olds plus, where I think for other communities they were probably coming up 10,15 years later. So it was really looking at provisions to help address those needs.

*Yeah I mean obviously lots of the work SubCo does now is focused on the Indian subcontinent rather than sort of China, Japan etc.*

Yeah.

*Was there like a time when they sort of shifted away from working with far-eastern communities.*

Yeah not when I was there. So I was there for about five years and I think in that time we had sessions for Chinese elders and that was quite an important part of what we did. I remember being in loads of discussions with Newham Chinese Association kind of working with them. So I think there was always a sense or organisations wanting their own space but SubCo was an important kind of resource for sharing and I don’t really know when that kind of transition happened but that kind of partnership must have lasted for well over five years and probably more like ten it was a decent length of partnership and I’m not sure what the transition was that led to those services changing.

*I mean obviously you’re working from ’91 ‘til what about’96 with SubCo?*

Yeah in my role as a kind of council employee but then I joined the committee- it must have been after- I mean I think I was going to committee anyway because I was kind of a local authority rep. but I think I joined the committee after that and was involved as the treasurer and a committee member for a while so yeah I sort of stayed involved for another, I think maybe 3,4 years after I left the council. So maybe I kind of continued, it’s hard to say at this point but probably ‘til about 2000 something like that.

*Yeah can you tell me a bit about when the centre opened with SubCo in charge? It must have been quite a proud moment.*

Yeah I think so. I don’t know that I really recall it at all. I mean my memory’s not the best so and so yeah definitely. I mean I remember it being a really big moment and thing like I can remember getting these chairs, these really expensive kind of chairs that were really good for posture and really good for older people but they cost, I don’t know, like 250 quid a go and I can’t remember they were called- ‘parkanol’ or something, parkanol chairs. And so, you know, there was a real kind of emphasis on getting quite a lot of the XXXX (0:22:54.3) around food so there would be lunch clubs and we would have food for different communities and particularly for the older community kind of food was a big thing and we wanted to get that right. Then obviously the mixture of services to support those older people we were all working very closely with the X project at the time and, oh what were they called, I think it was XXXX (0:23:18.7) which was like a project in kind of, I think they were based in Manor Park at the time, but then also in Green Street so- I think they were called East Woods Trust I think at the time. So yeah we were working with them and XXXX (0:23:33.4) kind of used to work for East Woods trust and then came over as I think one of the first SubCo workers. So we had those links in common around care and support and providing those kinds of packages of support for those older people so yeah the services were really high quality, the food was great and the premises were yeah, amazing. So yeah it was very good to have that resource and I think we were opposite the One Love centre, which was across the road, and so there was a nice kind of connection between services for the African-Caribbean community and African community and us as well so yeah there was good sense of working together. And there was another organisation actually, I think they’re called the- what were they called? They were kind of based in Plaistow and they were like Newham African-Caribbean Association. So we had good links with them too. So yeah it was a good combination of groups so good partnerships, great premises, great food and then the package support services for elders as well. So yeah good stuff and nice chairs!

*Nice chairs, yeah! Obviously there was need in the community for these sorts of services. Was there like a quick community uptake or did it take more time to sort of get people on board with that?*

Yeah no I remember it being really well used, yeah good kind of services. I mean particularly because the offer was really kind of catering for what we knew would attract older people so the kind of offer around food I think made sure that we got good attendance and then I think we were building up from there around the additional support we offered.

*When did you first come into contact with the others member of Subco, the board?*

So yeah from the off. SO because we were helping to set up that board ‘cos we were, in my role as a kind of council grants officer, so yeah I had really close working with the chair and the staff from the beginning.

*Yeah, did you get on with everyone, was it a nice group to work with?*

Yeah they were great so we had really good people so Ramesh was the chair and he was a really dynamic chair. We had really strong committee members so yeah it was a good bunch of people to work with- very committed, very hard-working, very supportive, and really knew their stuff actually. So they’d all come from a background of working with elders so they were very professional and very knowledgeable.

*What was the transition like between you working from the council to being actually on the board?*

It was fine actually I mean I think that was a role that the council played anyway so really supportive role it wasn’t oppositional. I mean there would be times when we disagreed but I think it was a really collaborative partnership so actually kind of going to the committee didn’t really feel any different. I don’t think there was suddenly a kind of sigh of relief, you know, ‘now I can tell you what I really think’. It wasn’t anything like that I think we were all working in that way from the off.

*What sorts of things did you disagree about if there was that close collaboration?*

Oh on the council side. So when I was kind of representing the council- I mean I think our view was that it was a new organisation, it needed an opportunity to grow and develop. But there would be kind of we would be looking at targets, we would be looking at how well their targets were achieved, and they were achieving the targets so it wasn’t a sense that this was an organisation that was struggling. So from that point of view I think I was seeing a service that was delivering what it was meant to deliver but I think we were genuinely kind of looking at an organisation that was growing up really so new staff, new priorities, new services and that whole thing needed time to bed down so were very happy to give it that time but also they were meeting the targets that we were setting. So we felt that it was, yeah, I don’t think there was that much kind of room for- I mean there would have been things where we were saying about current negotiations between groups. I know that we had lots of discussions with the Chinese elders group to make sure that it was a service that was accessible to the Chinese elders in that community. We were making sure that it was reaching as wide a demographic as possible and that the quality of services delivered were at the right level.

*How did the services that SubCo were delivering change over the period of your involvement?*

So I think as time went on the focus on those in greater need started to evolve really so I think in the beginning it was quite an open service where elders who were quite able were able to access services as were those who might be more frail physically or might have kind of other issues about their health. And I think it moved more towards those in greater need- as kind of you would expect I guess. I would expect that but I think in the beginning that would have been a much broader demographic in terms of physical need and kind of mental health need and I think became more and more specialised as time went on.

*Were there any changes in funding over the same period?*

So the council was funding SubCo pretty well so the core funding was kind of there and that was really helpful kind of over a period of time it pretty good. I mean, you know, from a council point of view. But I think the level of investment from the council was good and I think that. I mean as time changed, you know, we’d be, I’d be helping with fundraising we did from bids so yeah I think fundraising became more and more of an issue but in the beginning there was good core funding to help that transition.

*And then the funding became more based around-*

It would go towards transport funding, we’d be going for, you know, kind of like looking at grants and foundations and that sort of thing. I mean that’s where I recall us kind of going for getting bids in to the City Bridge Trust and, you know, the lottery and those sorts of funders so that was starting to happen over the time that I was there.

*Was that to continue core work for certain extra-?*

Yeah I think it was kind of core and extras so yeah it was building up service and yeah making sure we could do the sorts of things that we wanted to do.

*And when did you leave SubCo did you say around 2000?*

Yeah I can’t remember but it would have been, it could have been yeah, probably late 90s or maybe 2000 yeah. I sort of stayed on as a committee member for a period of time but because I wasn’t working in the borough anymore and kind of just like the pressures sort of took over and I couldn’t really do as much. But I think it was probably three or four years kind of after I left in 19- I left the council in ’95 and I guess it would have been a few years after that.

*What did you do after you left the council?*

So I went to work for the City Bridge Trust. So it was called the bridge House, it was Bridge House something- I can’t remember what it was called now. But, anyway whatever it was called, it’s called the City Bridge Foundation now so I went to work there as a grants Officer so yeah that’s what I did after Newham for a couple of years.

*Cool. Do you have any sort of standout memories of any of the work that SubCo did? Any particularly good stories that you might have?*

Oh I don’t know actually. I mean I think from my point of view yeah it is was just a really good collaboration so I think the first two workers who were Angela XXXX (0:32:18.0) they really did a lot of work to get us into the places we needed to be I mean Andrew was great, really kind of charismatic kind of individual and really drove the organisation on, Ramesh was a great chair- so I think it’s the kind of sense of solidarity, working together, kind of achieving a lot, getting new projects off the ground but no I don’t think I have. Not that spring to mind, I don’t think I have any funny stories or anything that kind of would be noteworthy, just that sense of it being a great project and really having a strong foundation from the beginning.

*How many staff did SubCo take on?*

So I think we had two so two kind of project workers and I think we must have had an administrator as well so I think the core team was probably about three. But I must admit I haven’t got the best memory so probably- I mean I sat on the interview panels for at least two of those posts so I think I can remember recruiting XXXX (0:33:25.1) and I can remember recruiting XXXX (0:33:27.2) so I think those are the, at least in the early days those were the two, and then obviously the committee and other officers. So XXXX (0:33:35.5) was involved so she worked for the council as well at the time and she was involved in the council side from the, I think she was in the race equality team, so she was involved then as well. And obviously later became the kind of chief executive of SubCo so yeah.

*Did she become chief exec when you were still-*

Yes, so I think while I was there, perhaps it was when I was on the board actually rather than when I was with the council. But yeah when I was there she did kind of take on that role, yeah.

*Is that sort of what Ramesh was doing previously?*

So Ramesh was the chair, so you’ve got Ramesh XXXX (0:34:17.2) who worked for XXXX (0:34:18.7) who was the chief executive of X project but the other XXXX (34:25.0) was the chair and so Ramesh was obviously leading it from the board’s perspective but at the time XXXX (0:34:33.6) must have been doing those roles kind of in terms of that officer level leadership.

*Do you have any involvement still in SubCo?*

No so just had a conversation with Taskin, you know I still live locally so I still sort of kind of you know catch up a little bit with Taskin and Celine and her husband you know I’ll keep in touch peripherally but not really, no, not in the same way.

*Ok I guess my final question is how do you think that the Asian community in Newham has changed up to the present day? Where do you see that kind of community work going from now?*

Right, I think the culture, so in terms of people’s faith, in terms of people’s kind of geographic background and sense of identity around that is probably better catered for now. So I think in the past, there less emphasis on that so I think that’s a really important component now. I think that there are, certainly in terms of some of the communities we work with, we do some work with the Chinese community now and I do think there are hidden groups who aren’t networked in the same way that some communities are. So there are definitely isolated people that we need to do work to identify. So in some ways they’re not a burden to anyone so they’re not known to services, they’re not being picked up. But I do think their level of need is high so being able to identify those groups. And there are good people in the community who are working on those issues so it’s not that no one’s working on it, but I think we do need to be able to reach out to people who effectively slipping through there at the moment. I think services are being focused on those in greatest need so I do think that some of the community cohesion work is still really important, particularly for that group of people. So when you’re young and fit and strong you’re more resilient, you can cope with things a lot better. I think when you’re frailer and older it’s really important to have that sense of community to know where to go, also to be well networked within your local area and so I think that kind of work is as important as ever and we really need to find the balance between clinical care and specialist services and they’re the sorts of things that deal with loneliness and isolation, things that deal with a sense of connectivity- making people feel happy where they live because those things are going to be as important to people’s heath as any kind of professional or clinical support we can offer.

*So sort of increasing people’s social wellbeing?*

Yeah so I would say that where you live, your community around, intergenerational work, that’s where care needs to go. That sense of the community picking up some of those issues and so the more we do that the better it is. I don’t think it’s a burden I think people enjoy helping more vulnerable members of their community and we can’t have overload people, we shouldn’t make that service so difficult that nobody can do it, but I think if we can do it at a level that people can cope with there is so much capacity out there that we need to tap into and I actually think it’s beneficial to people that provide that support. I think that they gain hugely from it and obviously the people that would then become connected in that way are healthier and happier and I think that’s kind of the thing we all want to hope.

*You mentioned intergenerational work, I think that’s something that SubCo do quite a lot of now?*

Not so much in the beginning because it was all about getting the service going and really focusing on that kind of core area but it was definitely something that because of the partners we had, because of the range of services that we were all connected to it was definitely where were going to go but I think there was a sense of getting the core service right and then growing it. And we obviously had a community to reach out to anyway so we had this broader community with all these different kind of geographic communities and social communities that we had to bring together so I think that was the initial emphasis and the initial strength but definitely back then there was a sense of interconnectivity around the staff and the board and I think that then perpetrates through to the service more.

*I think finally could you say anything more generally about how Newham as a borough has changed and sort of development and how that’s affected communities?*

Yeah so I mean from my perspective the switch from funding voluntary sector organisations XXXX (0:40:09.9) sector organisations to bringing services in house has been the council priority for a while I think has really kind of affected that infrastructure and I think I’ve seen a lot of organisations- some organisations, you know, their times come it’s fine for organisations to come and go but I think the core organisations that have had to struggle while funding was removed or reduced or taken in house into local authority, I think has meant that we haven’t progressed as quickly as I think we could have done. ‘Cos I think that that idea of having different versions, having people delivering services in different ways really kind of pushes service quality forward for everybody. And I think that kind of mono-agency approach I think has stopped some of that creativity and some of that progression. But I think that we can rebuild that, we can start that again, we can bring more resources into the borough by shifting focus but for me that’s been a shame because it was such a strength that kind of voluntary sector and that engagement with the local authority had with that sector. So the local authority were a big funder of that sector, worked really hard, when I was in the council we had people sort of like me working with that third sector and kind of really developing different services that were improvements on what had come before and kind of levering in funding from elsewhere. So I think that losing that infrastructure after so much investment was a shame and I kind of hope that we get back to doing that again.

*Am I right in thinking that the monitoring project was one of those which was brought in house?*

Yeah well it wasn’t brought in house but funding was reduced and yeah it was one of those those services where I would still think that there’s a huge need. You know those individuals are still active and they’re still doing great work but there’s a need for those sorts of service. And I think it’s the sense of, rather than those services sort of spring up in isolation it’s the networking and so Newham Monitoring Project was great at doing the network. SO it had networks with SubCo, it had networks with Newham Women’s Project, it had networks with a whole bunch of different organisations, you know. And so did we all- the black and ethnic minority community. So we had all of those services kind of really kind of part of the structure with all of the local authority and the health authority and the police and I think it’s kind of important that we bring some of that back. So yeah organisations have closed or scaled down or moved to different areas and I think that it’s that infrastructure that we need to bring back.

*Cool thanks I don’t think I have any further questions, do you have anything else or?*

No.

*Well thank you very much.*

Not at all.

*Very interesting.*

**THE END**