

USING DEMOCRATIC SPACES TO PROMOTE SOCIAL JUSTICE IN NORTHERN TOWNS



Tom Wakeford, Bano Murtuja, Peter Bryant

UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE



Institute of Policy and Practice,
University of Newcastle
www.ncl.ac.uk/ipp

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Tom Wakeford¹, Bano Murtuja², Peter Bryant³

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¹ Research Associate, Institute of Policy and Practice, University of Newcastle.

² Visiting Research Associate, Institute of Policy and Practice, University of Newcastle.

³ Director, Community Involvement consultancy, Kendal, Cumbria. www.communityinvolvement.org.uk

1. SUMMARY

A group of researchers and a “jury” picked at random from the local population of Blackburn and Darwen, Lancashire, undertook a series of deliberative workshops during April and May 2004. The subject of this “do-it-yourself citizens’ jury” was the role of the police and drink and drug use among young people, a topic which was chosen by the jury itself at the first of these workshops.

Having heard a wide range of perspectives from a diverse set of “witnesses” the jury sought to recommend a number of solutions to the problems highlighted during the process. Among their specific recommendations, the jury called for:

- * Changing social services rules to shorten the time - from the current four months to zero - between which drug users have to stop using all forms of drugs and their being allowed into social services-funded rehabilitation schemes.
- * The introduction of a tougher enforcement regime, including increased use of test shoppers, to target shops where residents have reported illegal sales of alcohol to under-18s;
- * More community policing, and in particular an urgent effort to recruit ethnic minority police officers in the Blackburn and Darwen area;
- * New Local Education Authority-driven alcohol and drugs education programme.

The jury at no point divided along ethnic lines. The whole jury were unanimous in their rejection of the tactics of far right groups in the North West, who they did not believe represented the public's interests.

We have observed that white residents living in areas of diverse ethno-heritage often feel patronised by conventional anti-racism campaigns as they are promoted by the same authorities who seem to have failed to address some of the most urgent problems facing their communities. We also suggest that some Asian and other minority communities might welcome a re-direction of resources towards initiatives that allow them to join together with white community members and bring pressure for change, especially since many of the most pressing social and economic problems affect all the local population regardless of their background.

We suggest that the re-building of democratic engagement in Northern England, as in many other parts of the UK, will be greatly enhanced by an increase of face-to-face meetings such as those that form the essence of a grassroots citizens' jury. However, such exercises are only likely to be successful when they involve a broad range of local community groups and are not controlled by any one stakeholder or funder. In areas targeted either by race hate groups or religious fundamentalists there is an urgent need for sensitively planned initiatives that move beyond condemnation of the divisive ideologies of such extremists. Instead, policy-makers should take practical steps to develop innovative new mechanisms of accountability, the lack of which has partly led to the current crisis of popular disengagement from democracy.

2. BACKGROUND

Here we report on an action inquiry project undertaken in the North of England during January-May 2004. The project has been funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, co-ordinated from the Institute of Policy and Practice, University of Newcastle, and included a community of co-researchers from a diverse range of organisations and backgrounds.

2.1 Aims

The resurgence of race hate groups in Northern towns and cities during the last five years has been accompanied by a rise in tension between people of different ethno-cultural heritage. A combination of factors - such as continuing economic decline in these former industrial areas, the aftermath of 9/11, and the tendency by elements of the media and some politicians to incite racial hatred against anyone who could be suspected of being an asylum-seeker - have all created an atmosphere of suspicion and fear among many members of these communities.

The research presented here is the first part of a two year programme initiated by a Newcastle University team that aims to use "action inquiry"

techniques to create opportunities for positive change in communities such as these and a greater accountability of the decisions made on their behalf. We experimented with the creation of spaces in which people of different ethno-cultural heritage could examine common challenges facing their communities as one, rather than as separate “white” and “minority ethnic” constituencies.

As facilitators in a participatory research process, our aim has been to allow participants to inform themselves, analyse the causes of the problems faced by people living in their neighbourhoods, and then propose solutions. The researchers adapted a well known action inquiry tool, the citizens’ jury. The resulting “do-it-yourself” (DIY) version of the citizens’ jury, previously piloted in Tyneside, allowed the jurors - rather than the commissioning body - to set the topic for jury discussions and witness presentations.

Our report describes the initial scoping process undertaken in the North East, North West and West Yorkshire, followed by a step-by-step description of the procedures involved in a DIY citizens’ jury⁴. Having summarised the deliberative process undertaken by jurors, and the conclusions that arose from them, we will examine their implications for policy-makers in different stakeholder organisations at a local and national level.

2.2 Methodology

Primarily concerned with creating a fairer society, action inquiry avoids the conventional division between those who are studied and those who do the studying⁵. While accepting that there may be different levels of specialist knowledge between different groups involved in a research project, action inquiry commits those who seek valid knowledge to researching *with* their fellow citizens, rather than researching *on* them. The approach is based on the observation that if people become co-inquirers - rather than remaining the inquirer and the subject who is inquired of - they are more likely to build mutual understanding with professional researchers. Used in conjunction with more traditional research practices, action inquiry is widely acknowledged to have an important part to play in assisting positive long-term social and environmental changes.

⁴ Also documented in PEALS 2003, Teach Yourself Citizens Juries, PEALS, University of Newcastle, www.peals.ncl.ac.uk

⁵ Other similar techniques that also avoid this distinction are participatory action research, appreciative inquiry and reflect-action. For a review see Greenwood, D. J. and Levin, M. 1998 *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change* Sage, USA.

We include a critique of opinion polls, focus groups and other techniques that are borrowed from market research in the appendix⁶. In summary, the key disadvantages of such methods are that they usually fail to:

- Allow the participants a voice on the issue, except via the interpretation of their views by researcher.
- Provide information in the form of a witness that participants can cross-question.
- Provide the mechanisms of transparency or multi-stakeholder oversight that would be required for the research to be trusted beyond those who commissioned the exercise.

The Citizens' Jury

The jury has been a prominent feature of British life since at least the Middle Ages. The jury process we have developed at Newcastle is a version of what is often called a 'citizens' jury' - an attempt to combine the justice that is frequently achieved in a legal jury, with the opportunity for positive social change that comes from action inquiry.

Hundreds of so-called 'citizens' juries' have taken place in the UK and elsewhere⁷. Many have been little more than show-trials and expensive public relations exercises, but others have made a genuine contribution to enriching political debate by being exercises in what has been called 'participatory democracy'.

Participatory democracy is distinct from representative democratic systems, such as elected members of parliaments or senates, in that it puts the power to draft policies directly in the hands of everyday people. Political philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau suggested that participatory approaches to democracy had the advantage of demonstrating that 'no citizen is a master of another'. and improved relations within communities⁸.

Historians such as E.P. Thompson have described how the spontaneous use of citizen-led 'people's courts' to discuss issues of concern to the

⁶ Also see Pimbert M P and Wakeford T (eds) 2001. Deliberative democracy and citizen empowerment. Special issue of *PLA Notes* 40, IIED. Co-published by The Commonwealth Foundation, ActionAid, DFID, Sida and IIED. (www.iied.org/docs/pla/pla_fs_whole.pdf)

⁷ For a review see Wakeford T 2002 Citizens Juries: a radical alternative for social research, *Social Research Update* 37:1-4 (www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sru/SRU37.html)

⁸ Pateman, C 1970 *Participation and democratic theory*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

community goes back at least as far as eighteenth century England. During the English Civil War groups such as the Levellers and the Diggers campaigned to allow ordinary people - not just noblemen - to be allowed to serve on legal juries. The principle of justice being administered not by government, but by one's peers, was passed down in common law to the present day.

Since being introduced to the UK in 1996, citizens' juries have been held on issues ranging from healthcare rationing to education policy and taste and decency on television. The model of a citizens' jury first adopted in the UK is based on both German 'planning cells' and American citizens' juries, and it has many similarities to approaches in other parts of Europe. There has been a high level of diversity in the way the approach has been put into practice. Citizens' juries have now been adapted in countries as diverse as Brazil, UK, Spain, Germany, India, New Zealand, Canada and Australia. They are organised by a variety of different groups - governments and local authorities trying to acquire legitimacy for their actions, campaigners trying to demonstrate widespread and informed public support for their cause, and qualitative social researchers trying to gain greater insights into participatory governance and direct methods of democracy.

At the heart of a citizens' jury are meetings of a representative panel of citizens, lasting a total of thirty to fifty hours, which carefully examine an issue of public significance. The jury, of between twelve and twenty members, serves as a microcosm of the public. They hear from a variety of specialist witnesses and are able to deliberate together on an issue. On the final day of their moderated hearings, the members of the jury present their recommendations to decision-makers and the public.

Roy: When this came through, this citizens jury, I thought to myself this is not just going to be me – people from my community – but asians, africans... We are all going to come together. It's going to wake people up!

Citizens' juries have a number of features that distinguish them from many other methods of participation:

- Participants are systematically recruited, rather than just being asked to turn up via an open invitation.
- Participants are given the opportunity to scrutinise the information that they receive from witnesses.
- Participants are given time to reflect and deliberate on the questions at hand, usually assisted by a facilitator.
- Acting as jurors, participants are expected to develop a set of conclusions, or visions, for the future.

The supposedly ‘scientific’ opinion poll research and citizens’ juries are thus based on different concepts of democratic representativeness. The representativeness of an opinion poll arises purely from the mathematics of random sampling. The concept of a citizens’ jury relies, instead, on the representativeness of taking at least twelve citizens, more or less at random, and allowing them to deliberate on evidence to reach their final conclusions. Because it is an informed decision, reached after extensive opportunity for deliberation, the verdict they reach is arguably of greater validity than if a question was asked of one thousand un-informed citizens. Rather than relying on their interpretation by a researcher, the jury method is designed to allow participants to represent their views themselves.

The DIY Jury

One of the criticisms of conventional juries is that they are largely ‘top-down’ projects initiated by powerful funding organisations, without ordinary people being involved in setting the subject matter for their deliberations.

Piloted in Tyneside, and outlined in the cartoon book and video *Teach Yourself Citizens Juries*, the do-it-yourself approach allows a group of people from either a spatially located community or a community of interest to decide which topic would make the most effective citizens jury, both in terms of addressing an important issue, but also leading to change at a local level⁹.

Whilst it is clearly possible to conduct citizens’ juries on topics that have been set by groups other than the jurors who discuss them, it reduces the extent to which the jurors are likely to feel ownership of the process¹⁰. In contrast, where the jurors select the issue for discussion they are more likely to be motivated to become agents for change during and after the jury process.

⁹ PEALS 2003, *Teach Yourself Citizens Juries*, PEALS, University of Newcastle, www.peals.ncl.ac.uk

¹⁰ This lack of a feeling of ownership of consultation processes is highlighted by the Home Office’s *Community Cohesion Advice* (see footnote 15).

2.3 The Unspoken Agenda of Managed Decline

All the towns and cities scoped for this project have suffered major losses of manufacturing jobs over the last thirty years. It is no co-incidence that race-hate groups also find it easier to establish themselves in these areas, since the low pay of these factory jobs in the 1960s and 70s have

led to them being filled by a high proportion of workers of foreign origin¹¹, and a disproportionately high rate of economic decline. With the reduction in employment opportunities, white racists have repeatedly attempted to blame the lack of job opportunities for white local residents on ethnic minorities, immigrants and, more recently, refugees - who are collectively labelled as “asylum seekers”.

2.4 Local Authority Responses

With central Government claiming it is powerless to stop either the forces of globalisation, or the drift of employment opportunities towards the South East of England, local authorities are extremely limited in their ability to turn around the local employment situation have thus reached an economic and social impasse.

In the face of such economic challenges, and, given the failure of successive central Governments to promote sufficient regeneration, it is incumbent on local authorities to create alliances with and between its residents in order to build regeneration from below. In areas of mixed ethno-cultural heritage this is particularly important as race hate groups can work at stirring up mutual mistrust between different communities, the often violent consequences of which, makes attracting investment into the area even more difficult. It is also alleged that the three main political parties often run political campaigns among white residents separately from those among minority ethnic residents which may also affect tensions between communities.

¹¹ The specific details of this complex series of processes will be different for each region and city or town depending on the particular industry and its decline during the 1970s and 80s. We acknowledge that the generalisation we make here will not necessarily apply to all areas equally.

3. THE PROJECT

3.1 Scoping the project

We met with a range of different groups during January and February 2004 in an attempt to survey the potential for a DIY citizens' jury. What surprised us was how few initiatives were being undertaken to encourage joint analysis of local problems between people of contrasting ethno-cultural heritage.

Among community groups, there was a tendency for them to serve either Asian or white residents, rarely both. In some cases this seemed to be linked to the dramatic geographical segregation between the two communities within a single town. In one area the residents of one ward had established a separate community space following the facility provided by the local authority having been supposedly "taken over" by a group with a different ethno-cultural heritage. Because of the way they see their support base as being segregated into different ethnicities, councillors often appear to avoid the more challenging task of bringing different communities together, or challenging the misconceptions each has of the others. We have encountered a widespread perception that councillors give each group a different message, and that this exacerbates divisions.

A Democratic Space in Blackburn and Darwen

Our scoping study, together with discussions with the Rowntree Trust, led us to narrow our focus onto eight areas within West Yorkshire and East Lancashire – Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Calder Valley, Clitheroe, Dewsbury, Halifax, Oldham and South Leeds. Our final choice of Blackburn and Darwen for the establishment of the initial DIY citizens' jury was largely based on the logistics of assembling a team to undertake a jury during the pre-election period, not because of any particular social or economic features of the borough.

With approximately one third of its population being from minority ethno-heritage communities, Blackburn and Darwen contains one of the

highest proportions of Muslim residents in the UK¹². Our first task was to contact a wide range of organisations active in the diverse communities of the two towns. This included the local police (Lancashire Constabulary), the local Premiership football club (Blackburn Rovers), a community enterprise initiative (Bootstrap), unions and a range of community groups (such as *In Partnership*, *Parents Action for Community and Town* and the *Black and Minority Ethnic Health and Social Care Forum*) and other concerned citizens. We also took advice from the local Council for Voluntary Services (CVS). Following previous practice, we invited a selection of these people to form an Oversight Panel for the jury process¹³. The Panel all supported the twin principles of a DIY jury; that it should bring people from diverse backgrounds together, and that the subject of the jury's discussions should be set by the jury themselves.

The jury was chosen via a randomised process, mainly based on replies from an invitation sent to residents of Blackburn and Darwen who were registered to vote in six electoral wards in Blackburn and Darwen (Audley, Mill Hill, Queens Park, Shadsworth, Sudell and Wensley Fold). In addition to this a tenth of the places on the jury were reserved for participants who were recruited from sources other than the electoral roll, such as through leaflets distributed at Blackburn Rovers home game, community groups and health centres. This was to reflect the fact that one in ten people in the UK are not registered to vote.

Out of a total of five thousand invitations sent out, one hundred and eighty people volunteered to serve on the citizens' jury and were available on the dates we had specified

At a meeting of the jury's Oversight Panel on 29th March 2004, members of the Panel drew twenty jurors names, and two reserves from the list of one hundred and eighty volunteers. Although this was a random process, we filled quotas of groups that might otherwise be under represented:

- Approximately equal numbers of men and women
- Eight people from minority ethnic communities
- Four or five people from each of the five age categories
- At least one disabled person
- Two people not necessarily registered to vote

Although a group of twenty jurors could never achieve statistical representativeness, the Oversight Panel members present at this meeting

¹² UK Census, 2001 (http://council.blackburnworld.com/council/members_services/statistics/census_2001/frame.htm)

¹³ A summary of the DIY citizens jury process is provided in Teach Yourself Citizens Juries book and video (see footnote 9).

were satisfied that the jurors were likely to represent diverse backgrounds without being merely tokenistic.

Choosing a Subject

As part of their deliberation time, the jurors attended an all-day session on Sunday 4th April 2004 at which they learnt about the key concepts of a citizens' jury and used a series of exercises to reach a decision on the subject they wished the jury to address. The timetable for the day is given in the Appendix.

Three areas of public policy emerged as being of most concern to members of the jury. The first related to the issue of migration and asylum from abroad, the second to policing methods and effectiveness, and the third was drug use among young people. There were people from a variety of ethno-cultural heritages in each of the three groups supporting the three themes. We then asked people to choose, by standing in one of three corners of the room, which of these three areas they thought would make the best subject for a jury. Nobody stood in the corner reserved for people who thought that migration or asylum would make the best jury topic. One of the facilitators proposed that the two remaining groups should be combined such that the role of the police would be considered alongside drug use among young people. One juror proposed that drink should be added as it was closely related to the drugs issue. Both revisions were unanimously agreed by the jurors.

<p>Peter - We started off with quite a number of issues like rubbish and the need for better communication from the town hall. In the end we decided that drink and drugs were the biggest issues and one of the biggest failings of Blackburn council.</p>
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3.2 A DIY citizens' jury on drink and drug use among young people

Witnesses

Following the 4th April workshop, we consulted with the Oversight Panel on who would be the most appropriate witnesses to give a range of perspectives on the issue. We invited four initial witnesses and planned that several more could be invited based on further information and perspectives that the jurors decided they required. A list of all the witnesses who appeared before the jury is given in the Appendix.

Each witness was asked to speak for a maximum of twenty minutes, after which they took any immediate questions of clarification. They then

left the room and jurors discussed questions they wanted to ask in groups of four or five people. After fifteen minutes, to allow these questions to be generated, the witness was invited back in for a further period of questions and discussion. During the whole session, jurors could propose individual recommendations that they wished to see form part of their final report. These were then discussed in the final two sessions of the jury. All sessions were videoed and made available to anybody who wished to question the process used.

Deliberations

After six sessions during which the jury had heard from a total of nine witnesses, the final two sessions of the jury allowed the jurors to work through a structured process that aimed to maximise the extent to which each individual juror actively contributed to their final report (see Appendix). Each recommendation generated was voted on by the jurors. Unless there was a clear two thirds majority a discussion took place on each of the recommendations, with the option of a secret ballot which was used on four occasions.

As well as coming up with recommendations, jurors contributed to the planning of the advocacy and media strategy associated with the launch of their report. Though they wanted their elected representatives (such as councillors, MPs and MEPs) to be present, there was an almost unanimous vote that representatives of the BNP should not be invited. The report was then circulated to the three main political parties 3 days prior to the launch, to allow them to make a considered response to the juror's recommendations.

Launch

The aim of the launch event was to introduce the jury and their Agenda for Change to as wide a range of decision-makers as possible, including members of the Oversight Panel, local authority officers, and elected representatives.

The proximity of the launch of this particular jury to the June 2004 local elections in Blackburn and Darwen gave a very clear focus to the jury's desire to make the council accountable for its policies.

The launch began with a short film, produced by nine volunteer jurors together with the jury facilitators and Swingbridge Video. This allowed the essence of the jurors message to be communicated clearly in fifteen minutes.

Councillors from two of the three major parties on the local council (Labour and Conservative) and one MEP (Liberal Democrat) were given five minutes each to reflect on what they had read in report, given that they had been given time to read it in advance, and what they had heard from the jurors in the film¹⁴. They were also asked to pose questions to the jurors. Comments and questions were then invited from others.

The jury then met for an hour and a half as a group to consider the answers to the points and questions raised. At the end of the period they presented their responses and engaged in discussions with a variety of stakeholders about the next steps towards achieving positive change with their Agenda.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Other Initiatives

The DIY Citizens' Jury is by no means the first new channel of communication that has been opened up between decision-makers and those on whose behalf they make their decisions. However, the norm is for the local authority to fund, and be in complete control of, such deliberative spaces¹⁵. During our scoping exercise we found a widespread perception among grassroots groups throughout the region that supposedly participatory initiatives had conveniently provided justification for pre-formulated policy programmes.

4.2 The Promise Of Democratic Spaces

The DIY Citizens' jury in Blackburn and Darwen has demonstrated how constructive it can be to create spaces where people from different ethno-cultural heritage groups, who do not normally interact with each other, are allowed to come together to address a common grievance.

Several jurors remarked on how surprised they were that people from such contrasting backgrounds could not only agree on solutions to

¹⁴ Sir Bill Taylor (Labour), Colin Rigby (Conservative), Chris Davies MEP (LibDem).

¹⁵ This was certainly the case with Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's *Citizen Panel* initiative, which is still ongoing. The consultation agenda and questions asked are all controlled by the Council.

common problems, but also get on with each other extremely well. By the end of the eight evening meetings, many had made new friends that they said were “for life”.

Peter - I was quite surprised - genuinely surprised - at the number of different types of people there were and how we all gelled. We all wanted to make Blackburn with Darwen a better place.

Race hate groups, whatever ethno-cultural heritage they ally themselves to, gain momentum by perpetuating misunderstandings and ignorance between communities. We believe that the DIY Jury approach could be an important tool in creating greater cohesion between communities of widely different origins. Key to its appeal to members of these communities, particularly white residents who have little time for anti-racism initiatives yet are keen to make local decision-makers more accountable, is that the DIY Jury addresses the issues *they* prioritise. Rather than turning up and ticking the consultation box of a local decision-maker, the DIY Jury allows individuals to set the agenda themselves. The support for their independent recommendations to decision-makers from the Jury’s Oversight Panel ensures that their report will not just tick a box, but make a meaningful change in how different ethno-cultural heritage communities relate to each other and to those who take decisions on their behalf.

The DIY Jury is just one way of providing a democratic space for this purpose. There are many other types of democratic space that can be opened up, though we did find that participants in a jury process have a clearer idea of their rights and responsibilities in such a process than in some others.

We believe that four ingredients are vital to producing a democratic space of the sort we discuss here:

1. The subject on which the democratic space is opened up is largely driven by the public participants.
2. The process is overseen by a wide range of stakeholder and community groups so it cannot be captured by any one group or be widely perceived to have been.
3. There must be a commitment to following up the process and involving participants in the following years by facilitators, funders and decision-makers.
4. The citizens jury process must be transparent at all stages.

If these three ingredients are present, we suggest that the process will then be credible to those taking part.

4.3 Challenges To Institutions And Elected Representatives

The annual value of grants made by UK charitable trusts on participatory initiatives must amount to a tiny fraction of that spent by local and central Government on consultation processes every month. Yet, despite the huge budgets often spent on official initiatives, public confidence in the willingness of decision-makers to take on board insights generated by consultations is very low. In our experience at both a national and local level in the UK, this lack of confidence usually has a sound basis. We explore these issues with reference to the Home Office's community cohesion initiatives in Box 1, below. By contrast, we have found that the backing of the DIY Citizens Jury by what is perceived to be an independent source of funding has heightened confidence in the process among jurors and many other stakeholders.

Box 1: Implications for Community Cohesion

The UK Home Office held an inquiry after the Bradford, Burnley and Oldham disturbances of 2001. Drawing on the lessons learned, a new Area Based Initiative (ABI) scheme was launched. In its *Community Cohesion Advice for those designing, developing and delivering ABIs*, the Home Office recognises that local residents sometimes “do not feel they can play a part in the process of improving the quality of their lives or the way they are governed”¹⁶. They also “feel that central and local government are out of touch with how local people wish funding to be allocated and that regeneration is ‘done to’ them rather than by and with them”. Yet despite recognising that “consultation... is often based on trust” and emphasising the importance of “local ownership” of consultation processes, the paper fails to suggest mechanisms of building that ownership and trust. The authors merely state that consultation should be undertaken “early on” in a regeneration process. We suggest that the four elements brought together in the DIY Jury process (see above) are important ingredients in community cohesion initiatives. However, we recognise that each of the four can entail risks for those individuals attempting such initiatives within large organisations.

Both local authorities and central government have a tendency to want to either suppress or control any public debates that arise out of consultation processes, which leads to a suspicion that they were not committed to giving space to any voices other than those that agree with them. A vital lesson from the DIY Jury process was that it was the very fact the process was not being run by their local authority that enabled jurors to trust it as being somewhat independent and therefore likely to give them a voice.

¹⁶ *Community Cohesion Advice for those designing, developing and delivering ABIs*. Home Office, London, 2003. (Download from www.communitycohesion.gov.uk)

The Home Office recommends exactly the kind of “cross-cultural network” that the DIY Jury model exemplifies. However, while it may sometimes be appropriate to adopt “diverse culturally appropriate methods for different communities”, as recommended by the Home Office guidelines, we found that the citizens’ jury approach, whilst clearly drawing more on the legal systems of secular European rather than non-European or faith based traditions, was equally acceptable to people of all backgrounds on the jury.

Whilst agreeing with the Home Office report’s recommendation of a “holistic approach is needed by those involved in developing, designing and implementing ABIs”, we suggest that such holism must also allow the political dynamics of the relationship between a Council and its residents to be acknowledged in the design process. Unless decision-makers are willing to cede some control of an initiative to members of a local community they are not likely to gain their trust and confidence.

Though we have explored the problems in Government bodies alone attempting initiatives such as this, we do not want to suggest either that independent charities such as Rowntree should suddenly be asked to take on sole funding responsibility. Instead, we suggest that future processes be a partnership between different stakeholders, *including* Government.

Issues of the power hierarchies that will inevitably arise between and within the different partner organisations must be addressed openly. We concur with Nick Hildyard’s observation, made in the context of the UK’s Department for International Development:

Perhaps the first step that agencies serious about participation and pluralism might take is not to reach for the latest handbook on participatory techniques, but put their own house in order: to consider how their internal hierarchies, training techniques and office cultures discourage the receptivity, flexibility, patience, open-mindedness, non-defensiveness, humour, curiosity and respect for the opinions of others that active solidarity demands¹⁷.

Elected politicians are often extremely suspicious of participatory democratic initiatives such as DIY Juries. Yet, we are not suggesting that the kind of initiative described here would replace elected representatives, but rather they could act as tools to strengthen the democratic process¹⁸.

Neither ourselves, or the jurors, are suggesting that jurors will be able to become overnight experts on a subject just because they have heard a

¹⁷ Hildyard N et al. 2001 p70 in Cooke B and Kothari U (eds) *Participation: the New Tyranny?* Zed Books, London.

¹⁸ Other processes such as Participatory Learning and Action (PLA), see also footnote 7, can also help strengthen this process

variety of perspectives on it. However experience of such processes all over the world have demonstrated that participants informed insights based on their unique knowledge as local residents can only enrich and deepen debates about important national and local issues.

Roy: This jury is going to have a powerful voice and I think it's going to do something.

Taking part in a citizens' jury process such as that described here could come to be seen as part of a citizens occasional duty, involving a deeper and more informed interaction with decision-makers than putting a cross next to a candidates name in a ballot. Approaches such as DIY juries should not only be adopted more widely if those who fund and conduct them do so with a genuine commitment to opening up democratic spaces to those who do not usually have a strong voice. With the appropriate safeguards in place, we suggest that more rapid progress could be made in uniting communities of differing ethno-cultural heritage via these participatory methods than mere exaltations to oppose racism.

Janet: I've been sharing a taxi with two Asians - an old man and a young woman. We've made friends for life, not just the period of the jury.

5. APPENDIX

5.1 BLACKBURN AND DARWEN CITIZENS' JURY AGENDA FOR CHANGE ON YOUTH, DRINK AND DRUGS

(The report presented by jury members summarising their recommendations)

Unity and Open Debate

From our experience of working as a mixed group, we see the need for different ethnic communities to unite on the drink/drugs issue, rather than it being seen as an issue where different amounts of blame can be attributed to people depending on their skin colour.

Roy: It's been remarkable at our meetings how we've all got on. There have been no tensions. Asian people worried are worried about their kids too....If the Council open their eyes I can tell them what's going on - the Asian community can tell them.

Legalisation

Take drug dealing out of the hands of criminals. Let the Government take over the buying and selling of drugs so that it is regulated¹⁹.

As currently happens with illegal tobacco and alcohol sales, those caught dealing in drugs outside such a regulated system should then receive stiffer penalties. A deterrent formula along similar principles to the US's "three strikes" system for repeat offenders should be instituted.

Helping people to come off drugs

A scheme should be instituted where local employers would have to take a quota of those former drug users who were willing to disclose their previous drug use history.

¹⁹ This conclusion was recommended by a minority of the jurors.

Atiya: This recommendation is a “must”. At the moment no-one wants to employ former addicts because they will have had to be involved in some form of criminal activity in the past.

We heard of good local practice such as Thomas, Lifeline and Nightsafe, which should all be given far more resources.

If drug users show enthusiasm for coming off drugs, magistrates should be allowed to send them to local rehabilitation centres as an alternative to prison.

The social services rules should be changed to shorten the time (from current four months to zero) between drug users having to stop using and being allowed into social services funded rehabilitation schemes²⁰.

A heroin prescribing trial for Blackburn and Darwen should be started for heroin users who have failed on other treatment programmes²¹.

Janet: The way to do it is that you have a contract with the heroin user. They have to decrease their use, going down and down until they stop.

We should have a local rehabilitation centre for drugs and alcohol for women and their young children.

Bianca: We heard from witnesses that a third of drug users in Blackburn and Darwen were women, yet the nearest rehabilitation centre was in Sheffield. That’s too far.

Off licences

The relevant authority should send a letter to all shopkeepers in Blackburn and Darwen warning of a new enforcement regime, including the increased use of test shoppers who are under 18, particularly targeting shops where such illegal sales have been reported by residents. Any shopkeeper who is caught twice should have their licence permanently removed.

Policing

²⁰ We note that BwD Council has also recommended reform in this area (Annual Report 2002-2003, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council p.12).

²¹ This conclusion was recommended by a minority of the jurors.

There needs to be an increase in community policing, particularly in areas known to be prone to have problems with drug and alcohol use. Currently, it is generally felt that only community activists and those who are in repeated trouble with the police know officers by name.

Particular officers should be assigned to designated areas where they interact with everyday members of the community at least twice a week. Police performance targets should include the extent to which they have established rapport and communication with local people. If large numbers of the members of each community are on a first name basis with their local police officers we believe there will be more trust.

Nazir: The Chief Inspector came and spoke to us and told us about community policing. This would help enormously. If a different policeman comes from one week to the next I'm not going to tell them anything. But if the same person comes back on a regular basis, people are going to tell them the problems.

Independent third parties (under a similar system to the current "prison visitor" system) should be present when the police carry out searches of property in order to ensure against abuse of police powers.

Police training colleges should look to employ recovering drug addicts to discuss the drug culture to new police officers. These sessions would explain how a drug dealer/addict is going to react to different personal approaches from police officers.

Urgent and sustained efforts should be made to recruit ethnic minority police officers in Blackburn with Darwen. This would make policing in the area more effective.

If the police are taking action against drug and alcohol related crimes, assumptions should not be made based on people's race, colour, religion or creed.

The police should use their powers to search people and property if they have reliable information that someone is dealing in drugs, no matter what community they are from - even women wearing the hijab²².

Blackburn with Darwen (BwD) Council

The Council should nominate a cabinet member to oversee the implementation of jury recommendations.

Patrick: We on the jury want to be involved in it six and twelve months down the line. We don't just want letters through the post but we want meetings with councillors. We want to make sure we know what's going on.

²² This conclusion was proposed by a sub-group of the jury that was wholly comprised of Muslim men and women jurors. It was endorsed by a majority of all the jurors.

The council Drugs Action Team (DAT) should place a greater emphasis on reducing harmful alcohol use by young people in BwD.

A formal link between BwD Council and the Children and Young persons unit within the Home Office should be established, in order to increase access to funding and knowledge of best practice.

The council cabinet member, referred to above, should take responsibility for a new initiative to help community groups secure funding for projects relating to this jury's verdict from a wide range of sources.

BwD Council could seek special national status (such as the Pathfinder schemes) so that it can re-direct, or acquire additional, resources to do more in this field.

A senior officer of Blackburn with Darwen (BwD) Borough Council warned us that our verdict may be misinterpreted in such a way that it would help far-right parties in the local elections. We have come into contact with, and oppose, such racist groups.

We suggest that BwD Council itself should be more open. It should provide information to the public about the local problems associated with alcohol and drug use as well as allow more opportunities for informed debate with local residents. Given the gravity of the problem we believe that the Council has, so far, done little to encourage debate among residents of Blackburn and Darwen on these issues.

Local Education Authority (LEA)

Local schools should not feel hesitant about highlighting drink and drugs issues to their pupils. LEAs should require schools to educate pupils on drink and drugs to the same degree that they undertake sex education. The LEA should organise the specialist teaching that would be required and see that all schools take part. (E.g. Target Standards Fund).

Graphic films and testimony of ex drug users should be used to show the effects of drink and drugs to young people. The LEA and school should actively encourage parental participation in these exercises, and advertise advice available to parents who think their child might be at risk from drink or drugs. However, parents should also have the right to withdraw children from showings of particular films.

<p>Janet: Shock tactics will work. But you have to carry the education on from that otherwise the kids won't understand all the issues involved.</p>

All local agencies should increase the availability (without charge) of communal spaces and buildings, such as . schools, and youth clubs, by all ethnic groups – especially at evenings, weekends and in school holidays.

Patrick: Youth clubs have got to be modernised. Pool and ping-pong is no good. And they need to be open in the evenings and weekends. Otherwise young people have got nowhere to so just hang around on street corners.

LEAs should appoint a youth worker and a welfare officer to each secondary school to coordinate services for young people on drug and alcohol issues.

The LEAs should explore the ways in which primary and secondary schools could become integrated into other community initiatives (e.g. the extended schools model).

Evaluation and Learning

An impartial and independent research process, involving members of the jury or a similar body of citizens, should investigate:

1. The current policing methods in relation to drugs
2. The extent of present training programme for police recruits.

This could inform how police recruits are trained in the future.

National and International Dimensions

Abdul: I have been in Afghanistan. They are very poor people. They can grow nothing except poppies. If the money spent on war and weapons were spent on farmers, then they could grow food instead of poppies.

Some money which is currently being spent on the arms trade by 1st world countries should be diverted to NGOs in 3rd world countries to subsidise farmers to grow food crops rather than heroin and coca²³.

Pharmaceutical companies should be allowed access to, and purchase, drugs grown in Afghanistan (they already buy from India). These can then be used in the production of regulated drug supplies²⁴.

Members of the jury, BwD Council officers and staff from other local agencies should go on exchange visits to view examples of different practices for example inStrathclyde.

²³This conclusion was recommended by a minority of the jurors.

²⁴ This conclusion was recommended by a minority of the jurors.

BACKGROUND ANALYSIS

The following analysis was made by the jurors working in small groups and was summarised by the facilitation team.

In discussing the issue, we recognise the great number of inter related problems that have led to the current situation.

We recognise that one of the main driving forces behind the popularity of drug dealing and drug taking in Blackburn and Darwen is that it provides a high profit margin that enables young people to make large amounts of money easily, especially given that local wages are below the UK average.

Patrick: Young people start drinking because its available and because of peer pressure. They see famous people advertising it, so they start. I don't think these companies care how young the people they target are.

Media coverage and advertising campaigns for expensive designer label clothes and other fashion items, including drugs themselves, drives demand among young people. They see that other young people in the UK can afford these expensive things, so they want to find a way for making money to afford them themselves. This leads some of them into drug dealing and other crimes. Thus, the crime associated with drug dealing is partly a symptom of a wider problem of the divide between those with high incomes and young people in Blackburn and Darwen, most of whom earn far less.

The huge influx of cheap drugs to the UK is partly driven by the poverty among people in nations such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Columbia. The illegality of drugs in the UK, and the US, means that there is a huge profit margin to be made by the drugs trafficking mafia. Unable to access the resources that would allow them to grow other crops, farmers in poorer nations feed their families by growing opium poppies or coca, despite the damage it does to their own communities.

The decline of community pubs, the rise of off-licences, and the sale of alcohol in cans, have been major contributors to the amount of excess alcohol consumption in BwD. Bar staff frequently used to exercise informal control over drunks in their pubs. Off-licences and supermarkets cannot exert such controls. By making drink so easily available and unregulated, the profit motive and aggressive marketing has replaced many community values.

Peter: These alco-pops are a real problem because the manufacturers make them taste like fruit juice to get young people to drink them. Blackburn town centre has become a no-go area on Friday and Saturday nights – even for the police!

The ready available supply of drink and drugs in BwD has led to their widespread and regular use. One of our witnesses put the figure at 70% of under 18s in BwD²⁵. As BwD has the youngest population of anywhere in the UK, such high rates of drug use amongst the young make its impacts proportionally greater than elsewhere.

Some of us see evidence of the use of crack cocaine and heroin on a regular basis. To get money to buy the drugs, users are driven to burglary, shoplifting, prostitution and organised crime.

On both drink and drugs issues the breakdown of traditional family restraints on children has had a significant effect. Parents are often failing to spend time with their children and not encouraging them in following their ambitions. Linked to this, parents lose the ability to regulate their children's behaviour, putting an increased strain on school teachers who can only have a limited impact on their pupils' behaviour. The strength of, and respect for, community institutions such as local schools, police and neighbourhood initiatives has weakened over the past generation.

'Broken families' are now more common, making the control of young people even harder. Jury members also examined the role of discipline and respect amongst young people and concluded that many young people are not frightened of getting into trouble and that many older people are scared to take action themselves.

Excess drinking among young people caused by the factors listed above contributes to widespread vandalism, violent disorder and teenage pregnancies in BwD. The Council's own publications show that it is not able to meet its own targets on violent crime²⁶.

The police are not appropriately trained and seem unable to contain problem drink and drug use. In certain areas of their work, the jury's trust in the effectiveness of policing has therefore broken down.

We recognise that addiction to harmful substances was not a new phenomenon, with amphetamines and barbiturates being a problem in the 1960s, and glue/petrol type sniffing in the 1980s. Some of us on the jury have taken illegal drugs for a limited period, which was linked to traumatic events in our lives.

The crime associated with current levels of drink and drug use has brought about a crisis situation in BwD. According to the Home Office, up to £17 billion per year (that's over £300 for every UK resident) is being spent annually on

²⁵ Simon Donnelly. Chief Inspector Andy Pratt also seemed to accept this figure when we quoted it to him.

²⁶ Annual Report 2002-2003, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, p.3

criminality associated with drugs in the UK²⁷. There must be better ways to spend this money.

Atiya: The jury chose drink and drugs, but the drugs were my particular interest. Drugs are certainly on the increase in my community.

Witnesses

Witnesses are the individuals who are charged with informing the jury based on their particular knowledge or perspective. They are chosen by the Jury's organisers with input from the Oversight Panel and the jurors.

Jury organisers and the Oversight panel members have aimed to ensure that witnesses are selected such that a range of views are provided to the jury, with no single perspective or policy option being over-represented. The jury is able to request further witnesses, subject to constraints of time and practicality.

The witnesses from the citizens jury that took place in Blackburn and Darwen during April and May, 2004 are listed below. Andrew Lightfoot (Director of Policy, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council) also made a presentation and answered questions from the jury.

- Hanif Ali, drugs worker, Those on the Margins of a Society (THOMAS), Blackburn.
- John Challoner, Principal, St Bedes Roman Catholic High School, Blackburn
- Paul Cullen, drugs worker, Those on the Margins of a Society (THOMAS), Blackburn.
- Chris Dabbs, Coordinator of the Salford Social Entrepreneurs' Programme, Greater Manchester.
- Simon Donnelly, youth worker, Blackburn and Darwen
- Javeid, client, Those on the Margins of a Society (THOMAS), Blackburn.
- Danny Kushlik, Director, Transform (drugs legalisation pressure group)
- Andy Pratt, Chief Inspector and Drugs Action Team co-ordinator, Lancashire Police

²⁷ Evidence from Danny Kushlik, Director of Transform, (Jury witness, April 2004).

- Maureen Stowe, Independent Councillor (elected as British National Party), Burnley Borough Council.

Oversight Panel

The Oversight Panel advises on the recruitment of the Jury and the selection of witnesses. Its members help to ensure a fair and competent jury process.

The panel is composed of a diverse range of people, drawn from a wide range of organisations and backgrounds.

In this jury they included:

- Noel Camm, Bootstrap Community Enterprises.
- Lynne Farr, In Partnership.
- Naeem ul Hassan, GMB Union, Lancashire Region.
- Paula Kaniuk, Nightsafe, Blackburn.
- Anne Kershaw, local resident and retired teacher.
- Gill Kinloch, Community Liaison Officer, Blackburn Rovers.
- Chief Inspector Andy Pratt, Lancashire Police
- Shakil Salam, BME Health & Social Care Forum
- Anne-Marie Smith, Parents Action for Community and Town.

The project also received advice and assistance from John Verity (East Lancs Lifeline), Rowena Young (School of Social Entrepreneurs) and Elham Kashefi, (University of Lancaster), Stephen Pittam and Maureen Grant, (Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust), Shami Chakrabarti (Liberty), Tariq Mahmood, (Hyndburn and Ribble Valley Council). In addition, some people gave advice on the process but asked for their names to remain confidential.

Film and video production was by Swingbridge Video and we are particularly grateful for Dave and Hugh Kelly's help²⁸.

Facilitators

Peter Bryant, Community Involvement consultancy.
Chris Keene, community-based researcher, Burnley.

²⁸ Email: swingvid@aol.com

Bano Murtuja, Department of Sociology, University of Leeds.
Tom Wakeford, Institute of Policy and Practice, University of Newcastle.

5.1 Background notes on market research versus participatory techniques.

Though pioneered early in the twentieth century it is only since the end of the Cold War that action inquiry techniques have begun to be accepted as valid ways of producing socially-robust and useful knowledge. However the methods of social research that are still widely used by academics, corporations and Government are based on the traditional separation between a research subject, who exists only as a source of data, and a researcher who interprets what these subjects think, or what their actions actually mean. The opinion poll and the focus group are the two traditional methods that are used most widely, though both have been subject to recent criticisms. Whatever their merits, both methods constitute a mechanism of gathering social data, rather than giving ordinary people a space to voice their own opinions .

The decline of this direct contact between voters, with the exception of those living in marginal parliamentary constituencies, and those in power, was accompanied by a shift of resources by both Governments and competing political parties towards the skilful use of the mass media. Large scale opinion surveys replaced the more deliberative methods of communication between citizens and those who governed them. Increasingly political parties see voters as consumers, to whom policies can be marketed in exactly the same way as manufacturers market their products. Market research, rather than grassroots political debate, is in danger of becoming the primary mode of understanding a voter's potential behaviour. This is a particularly perilous option in areas, such as the towns scoped by this project, in which political movements can lie undetected by such methods.

Though apparently a radical departure from the opinion poll, the second market research tool that transformed political debate during the 1990s – the focus group – shares many of the characteristics with polls. Having been used extensively by large corporations for market research from the 1950s onwards, focus groups allow researchers to get 'inside' the mind of those participating in them. With their client's particular interests in mind, the researcher attempts to explain how what participants say relates to what they really think, and how they may act. The potentially unethical aspect of such research from a democratic perspective is that it takes information, experiences and knowledge without allowing citizens their own space in which to articulate their views. Focus groups also usually fail to provide a balance of information, if any at all, on the basis of which citizens could make informed choices.

Focus groups, along with other widely used consultation methods, are sometimes justified by the assertion that public opinion is best understood as a psychological, rather than a political, phenomenon. We believe that this is too simplistic and that the response to a participant saying that they 'don't know

enough' or 'don't care' about an issue should be to allow the participant a genuine opportunity to expand on their answer. Their lack of response might, for example, arise from an alienation from those who they perceive as having the power to take decisions on the issue. Such apparent apathy might also be triggered by a frustration at the lack of opportunities to influence the policy process. A market research method such as an opinion poll, however, would merely accept the 'don't know' answer as something the researcher could record as valid data on their standardised questionnaire. A good focus group researcher would ask further questions of their subject, but all too often commercial or less conscientious researchers will accept a expression of ignorance or apathy at face value, which reinforces an often false impression among policy-makers that citizens can't be bothered to discuss issues vital to society when, in fact, they merely feel powerless .

5.3 Workshop 1 Time table

April 4 2004. Swallow Hotel, Salmesbury, Lancashire.

<i>n</i>	Session	<i>Length</i>
5	As participants arrive, we give them badges, chat with them and encourage them to watch the CJ video.	
0	Introduction What is CJ ? Aim for the day etc. / Urdu translation	10
0	Ice breaker 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go into groups of 4 or 5, whoever you feel comfortable with. • Tell the others in your group: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who you are 2. Where you live 3. Why you are here 4. What are your hopes and fears for the Citizens' jury? • After 6 minutes or so (when people look like they have finished) choose 2 from each group to move onto the next group (clockwise) and do the same thing, repeat. 	25
5	House rules	
0	Ice breaker 2 What is true / false? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each person makes a list of 3 things about themselves 2 are false 1 is true. • Divide everyone up into 4 teams. One facilitator works with 2 teams. • The individuals say their 3 things to the other team. Each person must write down the one they think is true. • The team comes together and the group tries to agree which one is true. • Team spokesperson tells the other team their decisions. • Everybody comes together ask people what were their favourite truths and lies. 	5 5 x2 10 5 5
5	Identifying an issue. <i>Explain that we need to identify an issue for the Citizens' jury to look at. Might not all get your choice, but will identify one that hopefully all of you will think is important.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at the satisfaction scale (smiley/ sad faces on a line) and ask yourself the question: 'How satisfied are you with living in Blackburn and Darwen?' Put a sticker on the line. • Think about two things i. 'What specific things make you put your sticker there?' (Try to be very specific, if you are thinking about car crime write car crime not crime). ii. 'What could be done to make things better?' For each of these <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write your answers on the cards (big writing, one thing per card). • Try to be quite specific. • Compare what you have on your card with your neighbour • Ask everybody to stick their cards up on the wall. 	5 15

5	BREAK	15
0	Identifying a issue (continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask if anybody needs clarification on any of the cards. Ask them to put them in groups of similar issues (ideally we want about 5 themes) Ask them to label the issues. (if we run out of time ask for volunteers over lunch)	15 10 5
0	Former jurors – Phil and Rana – talk about being on a jury.	15
5	LUNCH. Tom and Pete give training on how to do video interviews	60
	Grouping issues if run out of time. Getting to know you game. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everybody is given an envelope. Write on the outside 3 things they think everybody will know about them. On post its write down 3 things they think people will not know about them. Put these inside the envelope. Everybody stands in 2 lines facing each other Each person reads out their envelop to the person facing them. Ask them to move (e.g. forward 3 people) repeat etc Repeat, this time ask the person to take 1 note from the inside of the envelope and read it out as well. Stick this to the outside of the envelope and move. Keep repeating according to how much time is left. 	5 5 10
	Investigating the issues/problems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the importance of thinking about what things <u>cause</u> the problems we have identified. Set up small groups of chairs according to the number of themes/issues identified in the morning. Ask everybody to decide which issue/problem they feel most strongly about and to sit in that group. We need to have fairly equal groups so ask people to move around if they are not equal. Try out using a spider diagram and show how they can use it to think about what are the causes of the problem or issue they have identified. Might one of these “causes” of the problem/issue be a good subject for a jury? 	30
	What are the barriers to change? Explain that for a jury to work we need to make sure that we choose something where we feel there is a chance of making a difference, so we need to look at what are some of the barriers to change. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In your group turn the issue into an aim, for example crime becomes reduce crime. Write this at the top of a flip chart. Think of the things that are stopping the aim being reached and draw arrows away from the aim to represent these barriers. The bigger the arrow you draw the bigger the barrier. Stick up on walls and ask people to walk around and add any other barriers on post its to the charts. Feedback discussion as one large group. Can we choose 4 issues based upon the barriers we have identified in the last exercise? If not ask groups to consider three questions designed to eliminate one. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What’s the potential for it to make a difference / have an impact Would the oversight panel support it. How relevant is this to the community beyond. 	5 15 10 15
	BREAK	20
	Choosing 1 issue: The decision cross. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show participants two imaginary lines across the room. Ask those that feel strongly that we should have a jury about 1 issue to stand at one end and vice versa. Anyone that isn’t sure to stand anywhere between the 2 ends. Each person is asked to explain why they are standing where they are. (Facilitator takes notes on flip chart) When everybody has had their say ask them to move if they have changed their opinion. In making this decision think about what issue would be most helped by having a CJ. Agree on one issue. 	30
	Optional activity: This session can be used if the issue identified is too broad. Explain need for issue to be very specific. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look back at all the information you have gathered on your chosen theme (issue cards, spider diagram, barriers to change). Can you make your issue more specific based on this information. Is there specific parts of the main issue that you are really concerned about. What are the priority issues/ symptoms/causes? 	3.50
	Close	

Further details from www.citizensjury.org

**Do-it-yourself citizens' juries are promoted and supported by the Society
for Participation, Engagement, Action and Knowledge Sharing
www.speaksoc.org**