EngEx Partnership Protocol – Community group

The Engineering Exchange provides technical and scientific knowledge and skills to community groups in London. Projects are designed and agreed in partnership between community groups and UCL engineering practitioners, with support from the EngEx team.

Who we work with:
We work with a range of local community based groups such as residents’ associations, environmental groups and youth organisations. We aim to work with organisations who might otherwise find it difficult to access engineering expertise.

What types of projects we take on:
Community groups are welcome to suggest for consideration any problems or ideas they have to improve their community, local area or London more widely.

We work on projects that have a technical or scientific problem at their core. Engineering deals with technologies, the environment, buildings, transport, water, construction, healthcare technologies, security and designing against crime, energy, information and communication technologies and many more issues that might be important to community groups.

Project length can be an afternoon, six months or more.

The impact of the project doesn’t have to be huge, but it does need to serve the community and benefit a group of people by improving knowledge of technical issues and contributing to better quality of life.

What we provide:
The EngEx provides knowledge and expertise about technical and engineering problems faced by communities in London. We will help you scope and focus your project, and match you with an engineering practitioner or practitioners who have knowledge and skills in your project area. We will also oversee progress reviews, and provide outputs including a report, fact sheets, briefings, videos, events, media coverage etc., as agreed in the project planning phase.
What we expect from you:
We don’t expect you to start off with a fully formed project outline, and we will work with you to see if we can help. If we decide to work together on a project we will need at least one member of your team to be available throughout the duration of the project, to provide feedback and guidance on outputs and delivery.

What we don’t do:
Unfortunately, we don’t have the resources or the expertise to cover every project. If we can’t help you, we will do our best to suggest other organisations that might be able to better serve your needs.

We don’t have the expertise for projects that are focussed mostly on social or political issues. Our work is focussed on science, technology and engineering.

We are unable to provide volunteers for physical work such as repairs or renovations. We don’t have resources to physically implement large scale engineering projects.

We don’t work directly with particular individuals or families. We work with community based groups. The following is our usual process for developing and delivering projects, but this may vary depending on the needs of the project:

Project steps:
1. Initial conversation where we discuss the issue your community is facing and consider possible engineering perspectives. Groups and/or engineers may approach us with ideas.
2. If we think we can help and we have interest from our register of engineers, we set an initial scoping meeting with you, the EngEx team and a UCL engineer or engineers who will work with you on your project.
3. During this scoping meeting, we consider objectives and outputs. This could include a report, briefings, a launch or other event, publicity (media, social media), video production etc. We will together set a timeline and agree a date for progress reviews, if necessary.
4. During or following the meeting, either the UCL project lead or the community group leader will complete the ‘Small Project Initiation Form’, which all parties must agree to before work commences.
5. Following the scoping meeting, the project work begins.
6. Throughout project delivery, the project team is available to facilitate evaluation of actions against milestones, as well as other support at needed.
7. A final debriefing meeting is set for participants to give their views on successes and challenges of the project. This helps us improve how we deliver future projects and will make us aware of any outstanding issues that we need to address.