Take Part Learning Framework

A guide to the Take Part approach to active citizenship learning

Acknowledgments

This framework was a collaborative effort, drawing together the expertise of many skilled practitioners in the fields of community development, community engagement and education. It draws on a wide body of work and decades of practice.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed. In particular, the following people played a key role in producing the finished product: Zoraida Mendiwelso-Bendek, Gabi Recknagel, Ted Hartley, Alison Rooke, Marj Mayo, Carol Packham and Karen Milburn.

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Welcome to the Take Part Learning Framework

The Take Part Learning Framework aims to support practitioners, providers and researchers of Take Part, starting from the basis that:

- Active learning for active citizenship for adults is firmly rooted within civil society itself, working towards empowerment, supporting organisations and groups within communities and pursuing agendas for equalities and social justice

- Active learning for active citizenship is an on-going process of learning and reflection, within and between partners within civil society and between civil society and the state

The Learning Framework has been developed by a range of groups, organisations and individual facilitators, working in the English regions, building upon previous experiences of good practice. Their approach to devising and providing citizenship learning, with a diverse range of participants include a variety of ways of delivering what has become known as the Take Part approach. In summary, Take Part is a distinctive approach to learning and action research that enables people to make an active contribution to their communities, influence public policies and services and work for social change, in accordance with principles of social justice.

Since 2006, the Take Part approach has been taken forward through the dedication of the National Take Part Network, local ALAC and Take Part Pathfinder partners, and through the commitment of government funding from the Home Office and the Department for Communities and Local Government. This local commitment, combined with the national policy impetus and supporting funding, has encouraged active citizenship empowerment and increased participation at the local level[1].

1 This refreshed Take Part Learning Framework has been put together by the Take Part Network as a collaborative process, drawing on the experiences of members of the ALAC hubs 'Active Learning for Active Citizenship' (2003-2005), Take Part Local Pathfinders and Regional Take Part Champions (2009-2011). An earlier version of this document, the ALAC Learning Framework, is available at http:/www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/takepart

1. How to use this Framework

This updated version of the Take Part Learning Framework is intended to reflect the broader scope of the Take Part approach, with more recent examples having been developed through the Take Part Pathfinder programme (2008-2011). It is also a response to feedback from practitioners who preferred a shortened, more practical version for easier implementation in their community learning contexts.

Under the National Support Programme the work of the Pathfinders was recorded in the form of a bank of resources which include case studies, learning resources, how-to guides, tools and methods and a guide to accreditation of active citizenship learning. In this context, the revised Learning Framework was set out to provide an overarching guide to the generic principles of the Take Part approach, one that at the same time reflects and applies beyond the Take Part programme partners, in place and time. It aims to place the Take Part Pathfinder practice into a wider, Freirian[2] context of adult education for active citizenship, working towards social transformation and social justice.

For practitioners it is therefore recommended to move between the Learning Framework and the other Take Part resources, gaining from the former an overall understanding of the approach, and from the latter, specific examples from the Take Part Programme.

2 Freire, P. (2006) Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 30th Anniversary ed. New York: Continuum.

2. Introduction to Take Part

This section gives some background on the development of the Take Part approach and the different strands of work, which are delivered under Take Part.

The support of government sponsorship between 2004 and 2011 has provided the opportunity to build upon a range of related approaches and techniques for delivering what has become known as the 'Take Part' approach. These developments, which were first promoted through the Active Learning for Active Citizenship (ALAC) hubs between 2004 and 2006, built upon previous models of good practice.

Active Learning for Active Citizenship (ALAC)

Between 2004 and 2005, the pilot programme Active Learning for Active Citizenship (ALAC) saw seven regional hubs try out a variety of approaches to citizenship learning for adults. The programme was funded by the Home Office. The results included increased confidence and skills in tackling local issues with services providers among groups such as migrant workers, Asian women, people with learning disabilities and their carers, and others in disadvantaged and hard to reach communities. The regional hubs also partnered with a range of local organisations, pooling funding, expertise and resources to facilitate the progression of the approach. The Take Part Network was formed through the collective involvement of the *Active learning for active citizenship* hubs (some of which also went on to be Take Part pathfinders), and is now an open membership organisation for those delivering learning using the Take Part approach.

The Take Part Programme

Building on the success of the ALAC programme, the government decided to continue to support and provide further investment for the approach. The Take Part programme was established by the Department for Communities and Local Government from 2008 to 2011. The programme was managed by the Community Development Foundation, with strategic input provided from the Take Part Advisory Group and its key partners, including the Take Part Network.

Of the total budget, £4.3 million was committed over three years for local Take Part Pathfinders to support community leadership and active citizenship learning in a number of areas across England. The pathfinders aimed to:

- Build the skills and confidence of local people so that they can pursue civic activism, community leadership and lay governance roles (including local councillor)
- Support people and organisations in developing an understanding of barriers to participation, and how to overcome them
- Raise awareness of routes into lay governance roles, especially those involving local strategic partnership partners
- Support people in their progression through those routes to enable improvement against public service agreement national indicators [3].

3 N13/N14 Public Service Agreement 15 – National Indicator 3 (Civic participation in the local area) and Public Service Agreement 21 – National Indicator 4 (% of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality). Please see the DCLG website for more information http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/ finalnationalindicators.

Take Part lead organisations were a mixture of voluntary sector organisations, local authorities and academic institutions, each working in partnership with a variety of other organisations from both the voluntary sector and the public sector. Pathfinders covered a broad range of geographical areas between them, with some pathfinders covering whole counties and others targeted at ward level.

The pathfinders applied the Take Part approach in new ways, developing a range of innovative activities tailored to the needs of local communities, including learning programmes, community leadership programmes, accreditation options and public events. These activities were supplemented by the development and promotion of accessible and multi-media information materials on different forms of active citizenship involvement.

Another aspect of the Take Part programme was the delivery of a National Support Programme to complement the work of the local pathfinder projects and to support the roll-out of the Take Part approach across sectors and in new locations. This has included the production of a series of Take Part resources and case studies for practitioners to use[4], including this update of the Take Part Learning Framework. The NSP programme has also enabled over 800 community members to be trained as Take Part trainers (delivered by WEA/NAVCA), the appointment of nine Regional Take Part Champions to facilitate new Take Part activities and distribute a development fund, and a mentoring support programme for all those involved in delivering the Take Part approach (delivered by the Take Part Network).

The results of the Take Part programme have included increased confidence and skills in tackling local issues with service providers among a wide range of people, including from disadvantaged and hard to reach groups and communities. At the same time, the Take Part programme increased levels of participation in individual and collective forms of active citizenship.

Features of the Take Part approach

Take Part is a distinctive approach to learning that enables people to make an active con tribution to their communities and influence public policies and services. Take Part Approach:

1. Builds upon previous lessons from best practice in the voluntary and community sector
2. Facilitates civil and civic participation, and enables people to come together in collective action over shared interests
3. Applies principles of co-operation, participation, partnership, social justice and social solidarity.
4. Starts from the issues and concerns of individuals, groups, organisation and communities
5. Provides spaces for experiential learning through courses, workshops, conversations, mentoring and other forms of learning and engagement

4 a group that has emerged from ALAC/ Take Part sharing experiences of providing publicly resourced community based learning, aiming to enable citizens and communities to make effective use of the participatory spaces offered by government, and continuing to strengthen civil society's capacity for progressive autonomous action. The Take Part Network developed through partnerships between government and civil society organisations collaborating to promote active learning for active citizenship. The Take Part regional hubs or 'learning partnerships' are based upon networks linking voluntary and community based organisations together with learning providers in universities and colleges. Take Part Network is the key partner of the Taking Part National Research Cluster.

6. Encourages citizens to press for change by influencing and shaping social policy and practices
7. Promotes reflection, awareness and understanding
8. Expands opportunities for participation, in partnership with third sector, public and private bodies

'Active Citizens' in Take Part

The Big Society's aim to disperse power more widely and promote active citizenship in Britain today chimes with Take Part's own commitment to building a stronger and fairer civil society with more effective forms of civic and civil engagement. If power is to be dispersed more widely to local councils, communities, individuals and neighbourhoods, then citizens will need to be supported, if they are to take up these opportunities effectively. This is where Take Part has a unique contribution to make. Through tailoring programmes to the needs and concerns of particular communities, Take Part encourages everyone to embrace citizenship and participate in decision-making. This supports the process of redistributing power and decision-making from the government back into the hands of local communities, and can therefore help to achieve current government policy objectives. Experience of Take Part so far also demonstrates that the community, voluntary and adult education sectors can be valuable partners for public sector organisations wishing to encourage meaningful and sustainable involvement from communities.

How Take Part supports the Big Society

Active Citizenship

Take Part is encouraging people to take ownership of issues that affect them, their communities and their lives. It is a route to enabling people to become effective, active citizens, and put them at the very heart of democracy, to help to create a stronger and fairer society.

Helping Communities to Help Themselves

Take Part is about giving citizens and communities the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to make a contribution – regardless of their background or education. Take Part builds the capacity of individuals and empowers people by tailoring training to be based on their needs and aspirations.

Building a Fairer Society

This is an approach which aims to redistribute power and decision making from the government and return it to local communities. Take Part aims to re-engage communities with democracy, encourage individuals to participate and find their voice. It allows communities to mature and take responsibility for the issues and decisions that are important to them.

Addressing Inequality

Take Part is about encouraging everyone to embrace citizenship and participate in decision making. Tailored support is provided for individuals and groups who might not usually find it easy to get involved, enabling them to recognise the value of their contributions and to have a role within the wider community.

Social Responsibility

Take Part inspires people to take responsibility for the things that affect their lives. It does this by empowering and incentivising individuals to take an interest in the issues that are important to them and encouraging communities to identify and advance their goals together.

Play a Part

Take Part gives individuals a voice and promotes a sense of ownership and responsibility about what happens in their community. It encourages people to influence decisions about the policies or services that affect them and their families, and in turn make a difference to their community. Take Part prompts people to give their time freely to help build a better society for all.

Effective and Active Citizenship

For many people, 'citizenship' is the embodiment of the rights and responsibilities, which they derive from living in a particular nation state. For Take Part though, this is not enough. The term 'active' needs to be added to 'citizen', with the fundamental implication that citizens should be enabled to be actively involved in community action and in decision-making at all levels. This places active citizens at the heart of democracy, and if combined with a social justice agenda, it helps create a stronger and fairer society.

Active citizenship can take many forms: it can be undertaken either individually or in a group, informally or formally, 'within the rules' or by challenging existing structures to do things differently. Many people are already active citizens without realising it, and one of the first steps of Take Part learning consists in asking learners what they already do, and thus to give recognition of the many unacknowledged actions that demonstrate people's commitment to active citizenship (Figure 1, page 10).

Not just understanding, but influencing and changing

Active citizenship is concerned with more than learning 'the rules of the game', and how to participate within existing models and structures. From Take Part's perspective, active citizenship should be defined more broadly to encompass active learning for political literacy and empowerment. Take Part aims to ensure citizens are eager and willing to grasp a shift in power to local communities, and to help people challenge power imbalances, where necessary, in the pursuit of social inclusion and social justice agendas[5].

Equality and diversity are key values underpinning the Take Part approach. The Take Part approach not only involves those who are already confident and involved, but also individuals and groups who are less confident, due to their marginalisation. By working inclusively across communities and by building bridges between the different sections of the community, Take Part helps people to build a healthy democracy embracing cohesive communities[6].

Collective, rather than individual influence

Take Part's community-based approach to the promotion of active citizenship involves tailoring the learning to the needs and priorities of individuals and groups, giving them the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to pursue their own agendas as part of wider agendas for democratic change. Take Part enables people to make a contribution – regardless of their background or education, on their own terms. In this way, Take Part operates as an effective tool for the empowerment and capacity building of individuals, groups and communities.

5 Lister, R. (1997) Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives, New York: New York University Press.

6 Jo Broadwood and Nicola Sugden (2009) Building Cohesive Communities CLG.

It is crucial that people are active in their own communities in all sorts of ways, and equally crucial that statutory bodies are able to open themselves up to becoming more inclusive. Take Part promotes situations where public decision-makers, staff and local people are involved in joint active learning. This helps to 'build a more responsive and effective State that can deliver appropriate public services'[7]. When given political literacy and the necessary skills, evaluations of these types of programmes demonstrate that people can 'actively shape social change, promoting social solidarity and social justice within the context of globalisation' (Mayo and Rooke 2006, p12)[8].

Crucially, active citizenship is not an activity in which only individuals engage. Collective forms of engagement are equally important. This does not solely involve civil society organisations. Businesses may also contribute, through carrying out their social responsibilities. Employer-supported volunteering, for example, helps to build bridges across sectors and to transfer skills, exchange knowledge and promote social justice by enabling people and organisations to learn from each other.

Encouraging people to participate in collective influencing is a key role for Take Part, given that collective influencing is generally more effective than individual action. Another key aspect of Take Part is therefore to stimulate people's thinking about whether their issues are personal or indeed shared by others, and when to take collective action as a more effective way forward. This outcome also relates to Take Part's aim of strengthening civil society.

Take Part as a 'process'

Active learning for active citizenship needs to be conceptualised as a process. Individuals may become active as volunteers, and, through support, be encouraged to engage as members of community groups, actively participating in governance structures (such as carers' forums, school governing bodies or local strategic partnerships, for example), or as active members of organisations campaigning on issues such as human rights, the environment and social justice. By recognising and valuing community expertise Take Part builds on existing practice in communities rather than instigating new action by agencies.

In the Take Part approach people learn through everyday activities and interactions with other people. Active learning allows people to use that learning to learn more, rather than simply passively listening to and absorbing the expertise of someone talking to them. This unleashes everyday understanding to maximise positive contributions to our democracy.

The Take Part approach stresses the importance of not just learning how to do things, encouraging people to question what is done in their name, but also deepening our understanding of the way power works and what empowerment and greater community control might mean.

The Outcomes of Active Citizenship

Figure 2, page 10 shows the different aspects in which active citizenship learning can have an effect – starting with personal change and spreading outwards towards collective levels of involvement. Figure 3, page 11 shows the relationship between these four aspects ,the citizen learning outcomes and the suggested citizenship outcomes; as active citizenship learning programmes have resulted in individuals' outcomes and collective outcomes for the wider society.

7 Gaventa, J. (2004) Towards Participatory Governance: Assessing the Transformative Possibilities, in Hickey, S.
8 Mayo, M. and Rooke, A. (2006) Active Learning for Active Citizenship: Evaluation Report. London: HMSO (Also available at http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/alacevaluationreport).

Figure 1: Different types of active citizenship practices illustrating the connections between individual and collective actions, between formal and informal engagement (NCVO 2005)[9]

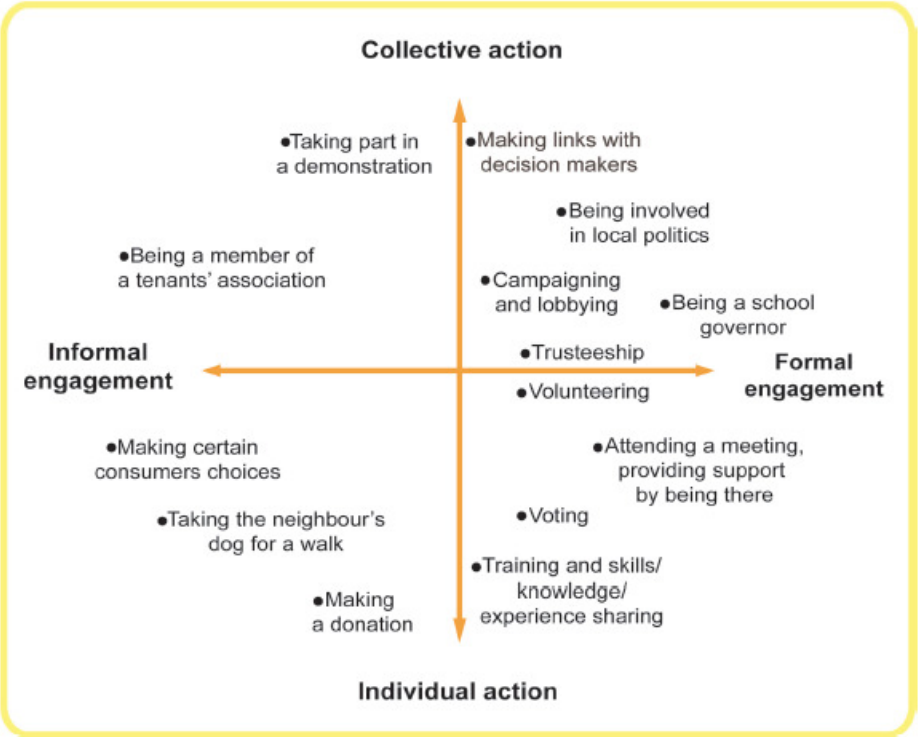

Figure 2: Four aspects of active citizenship

Domains	**Process** (what we do and how we do it)	**Outcome** (the end result of activities)
Personal	The ways people gain knowledge, skills and confidence to take action on the things that matter	People are more confident and have skills, an understanding, and are able to do things
Community relations	Actions that bring people together to recognise and challenge inequality and exclusion	People accept the values of social justice and opportunity for all
Civil Participation	Actions that support and strengthen the range and quality of organisations in society	Thriving community groups and networks in which people are involved
Civic Engagement	People and communities interact with the political world to achieve change	Strong and democratic effective community organisations, responsive services and governance structures

9 Jochum, V., Pratten, B., and Wilding, K. (2005) Civil renewal and active citizenship: a guide to the debate. London: NCVO.

Figure 3: The Outcomes of Active Citizenship

Aspects of Active Citizenship	**Citizen learning processes:** *I feel able to…* *I know more about…* *I know how to...*	**Citizenship outcomes:** Local, national, European and global dimensions
Personal	• Value own skills, knowledge and confidence • Know where to go to get what you need • Communication skills, negotiation skills, lobbying skills • Feel able to have a voice	• People identity and articulate their own issues and problems • People take leadership roles in their community • People have the power and will to make choices in their life • People voice their concerns
Community relations	• Recognise that social exclusion is the responsibility of all • Understand how their behaviour affects others • Know the basis of inequality and how power operates • Understand more about people who are different to themselves • Feel more confident in asking	• Improved relations between diverse groups of people • Community projects are inclusive of people with different backgrounds • Increased points of contact between different communities • Increased networking between communities
Civil participation	• Understand how groups/ networks work • Know how to encourage fair and democratic decision-making • Understand how to encourage support and develop volunteers • Know the importance of networking and delivering change • Chairing, meeting and facilitation skills • Negotiation and campaigning	• More civil society groups active in community-led service provision • Well-run democratic community groups • Increased informal community organising • Increased networking between community and voluntary groups • Effective representation in partnerships and involvement with public bodies • Increased volunteering opportunities
Civic engagement	• Knowing how the external world operates • Understand your current democratic position and the opportunities for change • Understand the rules of engagement • Aware of range of opportunities for civic participation • Understand role of elected representatives and how to lobby them/ work with them • Know how public meetings work • Feel able to contribute and ask questions at a public forum • Recognise how to influence policy and practice at a European, national, regional or local level	• More people want to and feel capable of having a responsible role in formal democratic structures • More people play an active role in a community/ neighbourhood level • Citizens work with public bodies to set and achieve common goals • Improved relations between citizens and statutory agencies • More people take part in dialogue with decision-makers • People lobby for change in the way forums and other structures operate • People campaign and petition

3. Take Part Values

This section sets out the values that underpin the Take Part approach and how they are put into practice. Take Part's core values are:

- Social justice
- Participation
- Diversity and equality, and
- Co-operation.

These values are delivered in accordance with the following principles of learning, which are described in more detail in section 4:

- Learner-centred
- Experiential
- Active and reflective, and
- Community based.

Social Justice

Pursuing social justice aims to change systems and to shape cultures in ways that will guarantee full citizenship, creating 'a just and fair society with freedom and equal opportunities for all in terms of liberty, opportunity, income, wealth and self respect'[10].

It is about enabling people to claim their human rights - legal, political, civil, social, economic and environmental - to meet their needs and have greater control over the decision-making processes which affect their lives[11]. The following barriers also prevent the realisation of full citizenship:

- Inequality
- Restricted access to employment, goods and services
- Under-representation in political, economic and community decision-making
- Marginalisation and segregation in society
- Direct discrimination
- Harassment, intimidation and violence[12].

Social justice in the Take Part practice involves raising awareness of these issues by facilitating dialogue and reflection among participants on their position in social relations and on the impact these exclusionary attitudes and practices have on their lives. Participants in Take Part are encouraged to consider collective concerns and deliberate on doing so, rather than pursuing issues primarily of concern to themselves.

10 SCVO (2003) Social Justice – Unpacking the Equalities Dimension. Extracted and adapted from: Rawls, J. (1971) A Theory of Justice. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
11 The Strategic Framework for Community Development, www.cdx.org.uk.
12 www.scvo.org.uk.

Tendring and Colchester Minority Ethnic Partnership

Tendring and Colchester Minority Ethnic Partnership (involving the Primary Care Trust, Tendring and Colchester Councils, Social Services, the Police, Pupil Support Services and minority ethnic community groups) worked to promote good race relations to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities.

English lessons have helped individuals in the black and minority ethnic communities to complete forms, access jobs, improve their CVs and talk to people outside their social circle, all of which has improved their quality of life.

For more information see the Tendring and Colchester Minority Ethnic Partnership case study at www.takepart.org

Diversity and Equality

The Take Part approach is underpinned by the recognition that our society is not equal in terms of money, capital, education, prospects, environments, employment, and health[13]. As well as these tangible aspects of inequality, the existence of a range of stereotypes and prejudices results in discrimination against individuals, groups and communities. This can limit their share of the country's resources and have a negative effect on people's self-esteem, confidence and general well-being, and their (self-)exclusion of active participation in society. Such discrimination can be about race, colour, gender, disability, appearance, age, religion/beliefs, sexuality, and poverty, for example.

Take Part practitioners have approached these issues in the following ways, by:

- Supporting people to challenge the attitudes and behaviour of individuals, as well as the practices of institutions that discriminate against and marginalise people
- Making sure that barriers to taking part are reduced as much as possible – so that learning opportunities are open and inclusive to those who want to Take Part
- Bringing diverse groups of people together and facilitating authentic dialogue about differences and commonalities to try to reduce the perceived barriers between them.

13 See Dorling, D. 2010, Inequalities and why they persist, Bristol, Policy Press.

Sunlight Development Trust

A local group, Shout Out, explored attitudes among disabled people about service provision and inclusion in wider society, and produced a DVD aimed at service providers to improve their equality practices.

Shout Out hosted their first conference as an independent group in Medway, where they screened their DVD. The audience included local councillors, police officers, social care and health professionals who reported that the DVD had a big impact on them.

For more information see the Sunlight Development Trust case study at www.takepart.org

Women Take Part learning programme

The starting point for the development of community leadership and active citizenship in Wolverhampton was provided by a women's community development and health project. The focus of the workshops moved from topics, such as 'dealing with the menopause' and 'how to be a mother and stay sane', to 'working out how women can influence the decisions that affect their lives'. The work developed into accredited courses and addressed the main Take Part principles.

For more information see the Women Take Part learning programme case study at www.takepart.org

Participation

An important feature of Take Part is that people participate at various stages of the learning by:

- Identifying their own learning needs and citizenship outcomes
- Being involved in decision-making throughout the course
- Sharing their own expertise and experiences with others
- Supporting each other
- Evaluating the success of the programme
- Identifying further learning needs and desired outcomes.

Take Part practitioners have approached these issues by ensuring that learning is appropriate and accessible to all. This has meant developing learner-centred and participative approaches to learning that take (as a starting point) the issues and concerns that learners have and building on their existing skills and experiences.

Co-operation

Co-operation refers to people and organisations working together with commonly agreed goals and methods, instead of working separately and in competition. 'Co-operation' is multi-faceted and involves:

- Organisations working in partnership to deliver Take Part programmes
- Facilitators working in a spirit of co-operation with learners
- Learners working together
- People as citizens sharing experiences and knowledge.

take part

Running a Campaign: We Love Camberwell

The We Love Camberwell project was a partnership between Southwark Volunteer Centre, Southwark Council and the Southwark Take Part Pathfinder.

The programme aimed to promote Take Part courses to a wide and diverse audience by cooperating with local charities, groups and organisations.

Volunteer Centre Southwark strengthened their relationship with groups such as the SE5 Forum and the People's Republic of Southwark.

For more information see the We Love Camberwell case study at www.takepart.org

The following characteristics emerge through putting Take Part's four values into practice:

- **Vision-led active citizenship is visionary:** it's about people wanting and feeling able to change the world they live in
- **Community-based:** People start to identify themselves in terms of community – this might be a local community or a community of identity or interest
- **Problem-posing:** Understanding and analysing problems are the first steps in devising shared solutions
- **Learning together in groups:** Understanding yourself through and with others – creating connections and dialogue
- **Learning through experience, action and reflection Learning:** doing and taking time to reflect helps to embed new ideas, skills and awareness
- **Critical dialogue:** Fostering the techniques and confidence to critically analyse ideas and issues is crucial to deep understanding
- **Voluntary:** When learning is done through choice, the greatest benefits accrue.

Fruitilicious Food Co-op–Residents taking the lead on the Scholemoor Estate, Bradford, Bradford Pathfinder

In late 2009 a small group of residents on the Scholemoor estate of Bradford started up a local food co-op to offer fresh fruit and vegetables to the local community and surrounding areas. Apart from the benefits in terms of affordable and healthy locally produced food, the coop could offer opportunities for volunteering and even part time employment. Support from the Take Part Officer was crucial to the project's implementation, from inception to realisation.

For more information see: www.bcep.org.uk/

4. Take Part Learning

The Take Part is committed to informal adult education[14] for change as a means to empowering people to become active citizens. The Take Part approach considers learning for active citizenship to be essential to a healthy democratic society, and therefore, all should have access to it.

The idea that adult education is for everybody lies at the heart of the Take Part vision. When we think of adult education people tend to think of schools and colleges, exams and qualifications, but most learning takes place outside the classroom. We learn by reflecting upon experiences of doing things, by trying to shape our lives in response to the world around us; we are potentially educated and shaped by our day-to-day experiences. Adult learning is about building on what we know already, and valuing this, providing opportunities to share our knowledge and experiences with each other as well as with our educators. Many people come to think that they 'know nothing' and have nothing to contribute – good adult education reverses this perception and creates the scope for the development of more confident people. This is particularly important for Take Part's aim of strengthening people's ability to take part as active citizens.

Take Part and Freire

Paulo Freire and his view of education as a process of transformation and change are central to the Take Part vision.

> *Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of people into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the 'practice of freedom', the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of the world (Shaull, 1972, p.14).*

In his most famous work, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1972) Freire introduced the following concepts:

- **Dialogue** is a process of conversational encounter and exploration with others that facilitates critical analysis of the world
- **Praxis** is the process of reflection and political action, "naming the world through the word" (Freire, 1998)
- **Conscientization:** the process of 'learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality'.

In practice, these key concepts are realised in a process using **experience** and **problem-posing:** rather than the tutor/ facilitator delivering education to the learners, they all bring their experience together in the process of critically exploring reality and so re-creating knowledge.

This approach requires the learning to be:

- Learner-centred
- Experiential
- Active and reflective
- Community based.

Learner-centred learning

By encouraging people to reflect on their own past and their futures, and to express

14 Adult education here refers to learning for anybody over the age of sixteen outside of compulsory education. Having said that, Take Part has also worked successfully in schools, including in an intergenerational context.

their ambitions and identify the source of the barriers, Take Part creates a space for people to recognise the competencies they have developed and those that they need to acquire in order to participate effectively in society.

In using the Take Part approach participants and tutors learn from each other. Each participant, though she or he may not realise it at first, will have something to teach others. It is as much about sharing knowledge and skills, as receiving them. The tutor acts as a facilitator rather than as a teacher. This helps learners regain their confidence in themselves.

Knowledge is useful, but what is even more useful, is having the skills to continually acquire new knowledge: to know where to look and how to get the knowledge and critical understanding that you need in response to a changing world and changing needs.

After the session on the Local Authority structure I understood that people weren't messing me around I'd just been contacting the wrong people and they didn't know where to send me next. Once I knew who to go to, that helped, but where do you go if you haven't had the chance to Take Part in something like this? Where is this information? Thanks to Take Part, I am confident that I can put my points across clearly and pleasantly to those in power at the highest level.

Sandra - North East Participant.

And learning doesn't just take place in the classroom: we learn by assuming responsibilities, through our social and cultural participation within our families, our communities, our workplaces and our everyday life. This is why Take Part learning is active and experiential, or 'learning through doing'.

Experiential learning

Experiential learning is an approach to learning which values and builds on people's prior experiences and knowledge, and takes this as the starting point of the learning process and programme. This approach to learning is inclusive as it engages people who may not be attracted to formal classroom learning, often because of negative experiences in their formal education. Experiential learning should lead to the development of skills in reflection, enquiry and debate, rather than the acquisition of knowledge alone, and combine these skills with practical action.

Active and reflective learning

Paolo Freire called this process of combining reflection and action '**praxis**'. It is informed action and requires that a person 'makes a wise and prudent practical judgement about how to act in this situation'. The Take Part learning seeks to create multiple opportunities for 'praxis' with the aim that learners will get into the habit of praxis and adopt it collectively as a tool in their group involvements.

The Take Part approach to learning is never one of teaching citizenship, in what Freire called the 'banking' method of 'depositing' knowledge in the learner's mind. Instead the learning process is facilitated using 'experience' and 'problem posing'. The tutor and learners bring their experience together in the process of critically exploring reality and so re-creating knowledge together.

In terms of 'active citizenship', this means that learners are encouraged to explore the different definitions and options available for their participation, to share their own definitions of active citizenship, and tailor the learning programme to give them the skills and information they need to pursue their own active citizenship goals.

Community-based learning

In order to achieve its core aims, the Take Part approach is community-based in several respects by:

- Anchoring the learning in a community context and linking into community networks, for the design, delivery and evaluation of learning (working co-operatively)

- Keeping the focus of learning on wider community issues, rather than limiting the learning to individual concerns

- Working in inclusive ways and bringing together different sections of the community

- Encouraging community participation in the structures and networks that connect communities to public agencies and partnerships, by building on existing connections and strengthening gaps in representation.

Community here has to be understood in its different forms: not only local communities but also communities of identity, of interest or even of practice. However, these are usually approached in a local or regional rather than in a national context.

5. Take Part in Practice

Take Part learning can take many shapes and forms: either informal activities, such as group workshops, field trips, visits, question and answer panel sessions, community audits, or public events, or more formal, 'classroom-style' structured learning, even accredited learning. There is often a mix of methods, e.g. a longer course may include a number of visits and events.

The approach can be used to reach out to individuals who are new to community involvement, or it can be developed for and with experienced individuals in existing groups who want to expand, take stock and re-energise, in order to further develop their skills.

Take Part can also include a mix of learners from different sectors, even involve active citizens, such as service users, in the training of professionals[15]. There is no limit to the variety of learning programmes or situations, and Take Part is not prescriptive, on the contrary, innovation and creativity are strongly encouraged. However, Take Part interventions share some common features and aims.

Planning a Take Part Programme

This section outlines some of the practical considerations and issues involved in planning, organising and delivering active citizenship learning programmes.

Planning your programme with Take Part Resources.

There are extensive learning resources available for facilitators and tutors through the Take Part website www.takepart.org. These include session plans and course outlines, case studies of individual learners and Take Part programmes, examples of tools and methods that can be used in an experiential learning environment, and reflections on delivering Take Part learning from Take Part practitioners.

Deciding your aims together

The overall aim of Take Part is to contribute towards a more effective participative democracy and support individuals and communities in what they aim to achieve. A first step is to be more specific about why you are undertaking the work. Once you are clear about the purpose of your programme, it is possible to identify specific outcomes. The active citizenship outcomes (discussed in section 2) show potential individual and wider societal outcomes resulting from active citizenship learning programmes. Some helpful questions to ask in the first stages are:

- What is going to be gained by the participants, for example skills, knowledge, understanding and confidence?
- What effect will the programme have in the local community?
- Will public services be changed or improved in any way?
- Will other organisations be affected?

It is also useful to consider why people choose to become Take Part participants. At a Take Part conference in Devon, participants were asked to jot down on post-it notes what got them involved with active citizenship learning.

15 See, as an example, the Learning to Involve programme at Exeter CVS, where a tutor facilitated supported carers and service users in the training of professional staff in health and social care services.

Some responses are personal and emotional, others more analytical and goal-orientated; some motives emerge out of the community; other reasons are accidents of circumstance. Below is a selection of the responses (figure.4).

As the Take Part process is open-ended and emerges out of the participation of the learners, not all of the outcomes will be expected or anticipated. Take Part depends on the facilitators being able to be flexible by constantly responding to learners' interests and learning priorities, in dialogue with learners. As Shor and Freire point out 'Students are motivated out of the learning process when the course fully pre-exists in the mind of the teacher, in the syllabus or reading list or state requirements'[16] With this approach, the idea of a core curriculum represents a contradiction in terms, hence the more flexible concept of a Take Part 'Learning Framework'. Learners identify their learning priorities and develop their own portfolios and the programme is developed in a way that is directly relevant to learners' interests, experiences and goals. A course or programme is likely to include one or more of the following:

- An exploration of rights of citizens and human rights, of active citizenship opportunities, and a sharing of knowledge of issues as experienced personally, in the local community, and its connection to wider societal and global issues

- Information on opportunities for citizen participation and influence, and the decision-making processes in place, for example, locally ('How Your Area Works'), voting and the national legislative process (Parliament), information on civic roles, such as Magistrates, School Governors and Councillors, Voluntary and Community Sector structures, local strategic partnerships and community leadership

- Skills development; for example, how to communicate assertively and effectively, how to run a group, chair meetings, presentation and public speaking; decision making and negotiating skills; undertake community research.

Figure 4: Why become a Take Part participant?

Passion, anger, frustration and a sense of injustice

Having the right person to help and support you

The phrase 'shifting the balance of power' pushed my 'yes' button

Because we feel strongly about something, in particular inequalities or injustice

The most predominant issue they identified for me was to listen to the experience of the people that we (as a county council) are working for. Are we doing everything we can to really involve these people?

Having a dream! To make a difference and do something useful with my life

A need to be heard

Joining a voluntary organisation

I believe there should be a residents' group in every community which provides people with the opportunity to express what they see as the solution to the problems in that community and work towards those solutions

16 Freire, P. & Shor, I, (1987). A Pedagogy for liberation. London: MacMillan.

From Core Curriculum to Learning Framework:

Facilitating the Development of a Community Organisation through Flexible Learning

This case study is an insight into how Take Part, in collaboration with Sure Start Exeter, provided various training programmes for the Whipton Children's Centre Parent Forum.

A programme was decided upon, but as the learners' aims gained focus, the content was reviewed and changed.

Outcomes included a new parent forum project and a mechanism for extending the parent voice to a larger parent constituency.

For more information see the Flexible Learning for Sure Start Parent Group case study at www.takepart.org

Deciding on the type of learning programme

The Take Part learning resources offer a wide range of options when deciding on the type of programme you will offer, including:

- Handbooks on active citizenship learning
- Accredited and non-accredited training course outlines
- Ideas for activities
- Short workshop and session plans
- Handouts
- Powerpoint presentations.

Reflective learning in practice

The notion of reflective practice describes a process of learning that can support active citizenship, and which is derived from theories of experiential learning. The key idea is that learning is based in experience, and that to find solutions to problems or to change behaviour this learning cannot take place without a process of reflection. Reflective practice is a method that is based on people's unique experiences and can involve feelings and emotions. The role of the tutor-facilitator is key in creating a safe space and for managing a learning agenda that is less predictable than more traditional methods of teaching.

In order to be most effective as a learning method, individual reflection is best complemented by a shared group analysis of the situation in question. For instance, by asking themselves such questions as, 'When have I felt powerful? When have I felt powerless?', and then moving on to explore how power affects society in general. Learners not only receive group support around personal feelings of powerlessness (if they choose to share their feelings) but they can also begin to relate their own experiences to structural barriers created by power relations in the external world.

As well as prompting a journey from the personal to the societal, group reflection can help generate links between engagement activities at different levels. Through sharing experiences on community leadership and reflecting on similarities and differences between learners from different communities, people can enhance their understanding of their own leadership styles and how they are influenced by the particular needs of their communities or organisations. A learner's analysis of these issues in the light of the broader concept of community leadership, and

how it relates to governance, can help learners to situate their own community activism within a wider political framework. In other words, they come to understand where they fit into the bigger picture; how and where they currently influence public decisions; how and where it could be useful to develop new routes for political influence.

When reflection is into Take Part learning programmes, it can prompt a journey of understanding from the 'I' of individual circumstances, to the 'we' of community and society, and then on to understanding the structural issues relating to political involvement and influence.

Tools and methods

The voluntary and community sector have developed an array of techniques and methods with an emphasis on working in small groups and engaging people through their own issues. Some examples of other useful techniques or methods are:

Participatory Budgeting

Participatory budgeting (PB) directly involves local people in making decisions about how to spend a defined public budget. Local people discuss and vote on spending priorities, and they also have a role in overseeing the process.

Community Audit

A community audit involves training of local people as researcher's in their local area to highlight its strengths and assets, along with challenges and problems. Critically reflective learning and capacity building can be engendered if done well by a community.

Question and Answer panels' sessions

Along the 'question time' model, a Q&A session is another example of a 'constructed conversation' and involves local people asking questions at a public event or in a simulation of a public event. There is much learning to be gained 'on both sides of the equation', as long as the learners and panel members are well prepared and supported. In addition, the questions with a synopsis of the answers can be shared in the wider local community.

Constructed Conversations

Take Part's structured conversations give citizens the competence and capacity to identify issues and injustices in their communities. It is a structured approach which can bring about expected and unexpected outcomes, and strengthen the community at large. Different collective learning experiences (workshops, seminars and conferences) contribute to the gradual evolution of a network of learners.

Freirean principles have been used through 'constructed conversations' with groups such as migrant workers and through 'Schools of Participation': starting from the group's individual and shared experience, group members have been enabled to explore the local, national and global dynamics of power and influence and work together on a group action, with the aim of bringing about change (Mendiwelso-Bendek and Herron 2010)[17].

17 Mendiwelso-Bendek, Z. and Herron, R. (2010) 'Constructing conversation: the Lincolnshire active learning approach' in J. Annette and M. Mayo, eds. (2010) Taking Part? Active Learning for Active Citizenship and Beyond, Leicester: NIACE.

Conversations that are clearly structured and well designed ensure that we can get the best outcomes. Groups have been provided with the space to reflect and act collectively. In this space, these groups have shared their collective knowledge with the support of the facts, as well as via the information gathered from their experiences and stories. Take Part has offered these groups opportunities to learn how to explore issues, to engage in processes, to identify pivotal players in the community, to observe themselves reflectively and to define good practices. In these conditions groups of participants commit themselves to produce visible outcomes for the community as a whole.

Constructed Conversations

The Take Part work in Lincolnshire in the East Midlands has been developed through 3-Tier partnership between the university and Lincolnshire Assembly, a body that brings together eight local councils, third sector organisations and 100s of Parish Councils.

In order to build strong links between the Third sector and parish councils across Lincolnshire, the Pathfinder organised learning events in each district which focused on a series of structured themes that developed a conversation on effective community engagement in the area.

The process included a workshop with the members of the Local Community Forums and was carefully facilitated to ensure that all learners had the opportunity to develop their views and that points raised were mapped back into central themes and concepts related to active citizenship learning.

As well as the active participants the workshop was also observed by a number of the Local Authority officers who were also involved in the final reflection stages.

The contents of the learning programme evolved both in response to the feelings expressed at this initial event but also by feedback from participants and other county-wide events being held at the same time. As a result of the workshops:

- Local community leaders developed their understanding of how they might shape more effective community engagement meetings
- Local Authority Engagement Officers gained more confidence over what they believed local people felt about the engagement activities and a way to initiate/ develop conversations for change
- Participants' voices were heard. It helped them to influence and have an impact on the changing shape of community engagement in the district
- Greater understanding about the distinct characteristics and challenges of Rural Engagement and a loosening up of the thinking about community engagement helped to pave the way for more flexible forms of engagement

For more information see the Take Part in Practice – Community Engagement Across Lincolnshire case at www.takepart.org

Facilitating Take Part Learning

Experiential learning beyond the classroom

Experiential learning draws on learners' experiences beyond the classroom. This means that learners are not just sat in a classroom being taught by being given information. Learning involves going out into the world outside, visiting institutions such as the magistrates' court, attending council meetings, meeting people in civic and civil roles such as community leaders, local councillors, magistrates, health managers, police officers etc. Practitioners should consider bringing these people into the classroom. In these processes it is important that the facilitator builds up co-operative relationships which build bridges between citizens and the organisations and agencies that seek to work with them and/or represent them.

Support and inclusion

It is important to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment in order to'bring' all of the learners 'with you'. People are often coming to learning from a wide range of starting points including their varying levels of formal qualifications, their life experiences and their past experiences of learning. It is important to provide appropriate support, regularly check that everyone is having a positive and enriching learning experience via the learning programme. Practitioners may need to provide additional support if necessary, but in many cases encouraging peer support is invaluable as learners support each other collectively, which contributes to their confidence building.

Learning Beyond the Classroom: The Mobile Learning Bus, Thurrock Pathfinder

The Geton2geton mobile learning bus is a learning vehicle fitted with ten computers linked to a satellite for wireless Internet access.

People who were new to learning or who were unable to attend college could get on board to attend short courses on subjects such as basic IT, English as a Second Language (ESOL), literacy, numeracy, desktop publishing, and other application packages including spreadsheets and databases.

Over 400 learners used the bus. For communities, the learning had a knock-on effect. As the learners developed new skills and confidence, they improved their relationships with others.

For more information see The Mobile Learning Bus case study in the Take Part resources at www.takepart.org

Take Part learning environments have included:

- A mobile learning bus (Geton2geton mobile learning bus)
- Council chamber (Youth Engagement Programme: Places matter, e.g. carrying out meetings in the council chamber means that as soon as the young people walk in they know they are there for council work.)
- The streets (Street Leader Scheme) and open spaces, such as parks
- A court (How to become a magistrate)
- Schools (The Big Project Salisbury)
- Sure Start Children Centres
- Village Halls
- Police Authority headquarters (Take Part Exeter)
- Churches and mosques (We Love Camberwell).

Learner support

Supporting people through the learning process is central to the Take Part approach. The Take Part facilitator's role is one of supporting learners, recognising that whilst citizens have the potential competence and capacity to identify issues and concerns in their communities, they may need support in developing these conversations and to take forward the issues through appropriate action. As a consequence of taking part, people often make changes in their lives, which can be challenging and have implications for people around them. They may:

- Extend their horizons
- Become more confident
- Be more critical about what they see going on in their family or community
- Spend more time doing things outside the home
- Meet new people
- Think differently about things.

Support can be provided through:

- One-to-one tutorials and reflection
- Email or phone contact with tutors and group members
- Peer support or learning sets within the group.

The Take Part Trainer - Facilitator

Some of the characteristics of the Take Part process emerge when looking at the role of the worker involved in the learning process. The Take Part trainer or facilitator is not taking a role as a formal teacher, responsible for planning and delivering a set curriculum; rather he or she is a facilitator of a process of adult learning in which the curriculum emerges from the needs and concerns of the learners themselves. The Take Part facilitator has responsibility for creating a space for individual reflection and space to bring people together to share their experiences and to debate their views of the world, with a focus on action. Facilitators have a key role in facilitating change. This means recognising difference and individual learners' particular requirements and learning styles, and engaging them in a dialogical process.

There is no single type of Take Part trainer/ facilitator. Facilitators, tutors and trainers can come from a variety of backgrounds, providing they understand and practise informal, participative and experiential methods. They could be:

- Independent workers
- Trainees who co-work with more experienced people
- University lecturers
- Development workers in the voluntary and community sector
- Project managers
- Basic Skills tutors
- Adult education tutors.

The Take Part tutor-facilitator can be:

- Visionary: It can be the facilitator, particularly in the early stages of any programme, who provides the vision of what can be achieved;

- Motivator: Sharing this vision and inspiring learners to get involved and to stay involved are important functions;

- Catalyst: To enable learners to discover what it is they want to explore and to help them decide which areas of knowledge and which tools they might need for that exploration.

In practice, this means that:

- Participants are encouraged to reflect on their actions
- The skills and knowledge of the participants are valued and built upon
- Individuals work and learn within groups
- Participants have a voice and are listened to
- Discussion, inclusion and reflection are encouraged
- All participants' contributions are valued
- Ethical principles are discussed and applied
- Dynamics of power and exclusion are explored and ways forward are identified
- Reflection is encouraged at individual, group, community and wider levels.

There are two key practical steps that educators can take to facilitate this approach to active learning:

Making safe spaces

Creating a safe space for critical dialogue enables political voice and agency to be exercised.

- The practicalities are crucial in order for learners to feel comfortable and feel present in body, mind and spirit. This may involve ensuring that caring responsibilities do not hinder participation so that participants can get the most out of events without being distracted; it involves recognising potential barriers to both attending and taking part, establishing and discussing ground rules, encourage group members to support each other, being welcoming to all, having clarity about roles and responsibilities.

- Sharing responsibility for learning. People are responsible for their own learning – and for sharing knowledge, experience and expertise with others. The Take Part tutor-facilitator has a responsibility to provide a positive learning environment by facilitating and encouraging interaction. The latter is most important as it provides the mechanism by which people engage and share with others on an adult to adult basis. This means sharing what we know and listening to and learning from others. In this way participants are encouraged to give as well as to receive in a collaborative process.

Other practical considerations

Venue

There are many issues to take account of when selecting venues for learning: any learning venue should be accessible in terms of physical access, cost, location and size. Locations and venues should be neutral and acceptable to the people you want to include; for example, schools may hold negative associations for some people and places of worship can be seen as 'owned' by particular groups. Meeting times and locations should be appropriate to the community members taking part. Informal meeting places work best, in particular with people returning to learning after a long time and lacking confidence.

Duration, frequency and timing

How long is the course? How often does it happen? When does it take place? These are crucial concerns for potential participants as life has to happen around the learning – life including work, children, caring commitments, other courses and learning, holidays, shopping, cleaning, family commitments and days out.

Recognising and celebrating participation and achievement

It is important to take time to celebrate. Participants should be involved from the outset, not just in being made aware of any certificates that they are working towards but also in the planning of celebratory events. Celebration can be a simple matter of setting aside a session in the learning programme for participants to share their achievements. Alternatively, you might want to make it a more memorable occasion.

- Provide food and drink. This doesn't have to involve a lot of expense. If you're short of funds, ask each participant to bring in a dish. If you've got the money to spend, consider booking a restaurant or bringing in caterers. Be wary of including alcohol unless you first agree this with the group as being culturally and otherwise appropriate.

- Invite a VIP to say a few words and to hand out certificates. A member of the local council, someone from the local college or university or a representative from the local radio station might well be delighted to be asked.

- Take photos. Make sure everybody knows what you are doing and what will happen to the photographs, and stress that you won't photograph anyone who doesn't want their picture taken. If you're no good with a camera, contact your local college and see if you can borrow a photography student. If you feel like going one step further, invite the local press. Or put together your own press release and send it to a local newspaper. For more information, see the How-to guide 'How to be in the News' under the Take Part resources at www.takepart. org.

- Organise a day out as a celebration of achievement.

Accreditation and Progression

Depending on the overall context, the amount of time available and other criteria, accreditation can be valuable for some learners, in particular as a way of developing people over the medium-to long term. However, its pros and cons have to be carefully assessed and sufficient expertise, resources and support have to be made available to make an accredited course a success.

For more information on accreditation and progression applicable to active citizenship learning congruent with Take Part, see the Take Part Accreditation Guide available at www.takepart.org.

6. Measuring the Impact of Take Part

This Learning Framework identifies some of the Take Part learning outcomes (see section 2). Citizenship learning can have a powerful impact on individuals, groups, communities and civil society more broadly. These wider effects are due, in part, to the multiplier effect of the learning as the individual spreads their new knowledge and skills within their family, among their circles of friends and associates, and with their organisations, groups and networks more broadly. In summary, then, citizen learning outcomes can lead to wider citizenship outcomes at local, national through to European and global levels, as civil society's independent role is strengthened overall.

In accordance with its core values, measuring the impact of a Take Part programme should be a participative process whereby participants contribute to the evaluation of the impact of the programme and their participation in it.

Participants may participate in measuring impact through:

- Identifying their own learning needs and the citizenship outcomes to be achieved
- Reflecting on their own learning
- Evaluating the success of the programme, together with any areas for strengthening
- Identifying further learning needs for themselves and for the group as a whole, and desired outcomes.

It is also worth considering the impact upon the individual, upon their families, friends and community networks, and the wider impacts in terms of citizen influence and voice, including any unexpected outcomes.

Learners may also be involved in:

- Identifying who should be involved, and how
- Gathering and analysing information
- Co-writing reports
- Offering feedback and disseminating findings.

Participative evaluation is a continuing process of reflection and feedback, as the basis for further action – in parallel with the process of learning itself, building upon the Freirean model.

For more information on the evaluation of previous Take Part work, see www.takepart.org.

7. Take Part Moving Forward

The aim of the Take Part Learning Framework is to provide inspiration and practical guidelines for practitioners from different sectors and backgrounds, in their work with communities. The purpose is to share an approach for spreading active citizen learning practices to as many places and communities as possible in this country, and beyond. Take Part builds upon tried and tested approaches, promoting, first and foremost, the development of active citizenship, enabling people to reflect on the needs of their communities and to take action for the benefit of the wider society.

Research has shown that, far from being apathetic, people are increasingly concerned about the issues and the decisions made by the powers-that-be that affect their lives[18]. They want to make their voices heard and to make a difference, (however small but nevertheless in significant ways). Citizen participation is unequally distributed, however, and those who are already marginalised or excluded feel less invited and less prepared to take part and make their voices heard. With the right support and encouragement, however, everybody can join the growing number of citizens who are already demonstrating their commitment to thriving and sustainable communities, and to social justice everywhere.

The Take Part Learning Framework offers policy and decision-makers at the local, regional and national levels a methodology that can strengthen democracy in tangible ways by building bridges between citizens and people in authority through joint learning and action.

The Take Part Learning Framework also offers researchers in active citizenship, adult education and community studies a best practice model on the contemporary application of theories for change in these disciplines. The aim is to build upon the potential for working together to strengthen the evidence for the Take Part approach.

Last, but not least, the Take Part Learning Framework aims to inspire citizens from all backgrounds to claim their active citizenship rights, to 'speak up', take part and join forces to effect positive change in their communities and beyond.

18 Helena Kennedy Power to the People Inquiry Joseph Rowntree Foundation: York 2006. http://makeitanissue.org. uk/devlog/2007/01/ the_power_commission_was_estab.php.

8. Further Reading and Resources

In this section you will find the bibliographical references and links referred to in the framework, listed alphabetically.

The Take Part Website

On the Take Part website you will find resources gathered from the Take Part pathfinders that help you develop your Take Part learning programme, including

Learning Materials – course outlines, session plans and other useful resources.

Case Studies – demonstrating approaches and techniques that have brought about change for people, communities and/or agencies.

"How to" Guides – cclear and concise guides for citizens, which practitioners can adapt and use (see figure 5).

Tools and Methods – clear descriptions of the tools and methods which are central to the Take Part approach (see figure 6).

Accreditation Guide – guidance for exploring options for accredited courses and how to go about it.

You will also find additional materials, such as evaluation reports from previous programmes, a section answering 'frequently asked questions' and the contact details of the Take Part Network and other partners at www.takepart.org.

Figure.5: A Take Part How to Guide

take part

how to guides

How to…

be in the news

Which media should I use?

What is the single most important message that you want to say, and who do you want to hear it? Decide how you will get press attention. Will it be through holding an event, making a big announcement or doing an eye-catching stunt that will draw attention to your cause? Decide whether newspapers, radio, TV, magazines, the Internet or a combination of these will be the best way of reaching your audience.

How do I get in contact with the media?

Making sure you get your message to the right place at the right time can take a bit of preparation and planning. You might want to:

Create a media profile: Draw together information on the media organisations in your area. You want to know the type of audience they reach, the topics they cover, the relevant contact, their deadlines for receiving press releases and when their publications are released. You can find a lot of this information on the internet. A list of your local newspapers can be found at:

www.newsquest.co.uk

Do you have a burning issue that you want to get to a wider audience? Do you need to build support for your campaign or organisation? If so, read on.

Radio

- Discussion and debate programmes will let you explain much more about the issue you are trying to promote
- Phone in programmes can also give an opportunity to raise important points

Internet

- Create a campaign blog, use a social media profile to build a network or upload videos and photos
- Be unique, controversial and interesting
- Join mailing lists and participate in newsgroups and discussion lists related to your campaign

Newspapers

- Published press releases and positive media relationships are essential to successful Personal Relations (PR)
- Use the letters page to carry out a debate with readers
- See page two for a guide to writing an effective press release

Build relationships with media contacts: If you are part of an organisation, choose someone to be your media representative. Get a named contact for the editor or journalist who deals with the issues that are relevant to you and get direct lines and e-mail addresses for them. Keep them up to date on your activities and invite them to any events you hold.

Time it right: Think about when you need your message to be covered and work with the deadlines identified in your media profile. Keep track of current affairs to identify a time when your message might be likely to get through. If you would like your stunt or event on the evening news hold it in the morning. Ensure press releases have gone out in advance, and ring news editors on the morning of your stunt or event.

Figure.6: A Take Part Tool and Method

take part

tools and methods

Schools of Participation

Sharing experiences, learning skills, being more effective and working with others to bring about change

Why use this method

Target Groups:
It can be used with a wide range of groups, and has been used successfully with refugees and people seeking asylum, homeless men, people with sensory disabilities, Asian women and people with learning disabilities.

Individual Outcomes:
Participants gain confidence and re-establish existing skills. They improve their listening and negotiating skills and are likely to become involved in campaigns on issues that affect them and their communities. They leave the School eager to create a better community.

Outcomes for community relations:
As the group on the School are individual representatives of their organisations, they take their learning and newfound confidence back to their respective groups. They also take their collaborative skills to an organisational level to work with other groups in their area. They are determined to have dialogues with all those who wish to make changes in their communities.

Civil Participation:
Groups from the School have gone on to work with large service providers such as the police and social housing organisations to address the concerns uncovered by the group.

Valuing achievement:
Giving the School accreditation through a university provides the group with facilities available to other students, and results in certificates being awarded to value the achievement of the participants.

Schools of Participation provide a place for people to share experiences and learn and plan actions to have more control over what is happening in their lives and in their area.

The Schools aim to strengthen the capacity of individuals and local groups to have a greater say, be mobilised and take action to improve their communities.

How to use this method

- The Schools are based on a participatory action-learning process where formal sessions are combined with practical activities
- The curriculum is designed with the participants to make sure it responds to their needs
- Time, venue and number of sessions are agreed with participants
- Numbers can range from 8 to 15 participants
- Trainers work as facilitators supporting learners through their learning process
- The learning process is fun and full of action

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Glossary

This glossary contains adapted definitions from a range of sources to match the words, terms and concepts associated with the Take Part Project. It is designed to be used as a guide only and by no means claims to be comprehensive, nor does it attempt to override any alternative definitions.

Active Citizens People acting for the benefit of the community or contributing to local decisions that affect their lives. The key motivation is usually to 'make a difference' to the quality of life of the community. There are many different ways of being an active citizen, formal and informal, short term or long term. You don't need to be a UK citizen to be an 'active citizen'.

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Active Learning for Active Citizenship (ALAC) was a national action research programme funded by the Home Office Civil Renewal Unit as part of 'Together We Can'.

Activism The use of vigorous campaigning to bring about political or social change.

Barriers An obstacle that prevents movement or access. An obstacle to communication or progress.

Big Society Forms part of the legislative programme of the 2010 coalition government. The stated aim is 'to create a climate that empowers local people and communities, building a big society that will take power away from politicians and give it to people'.

Campaign An organized course of actions to achieve a goal.

Capacity building Refers to support for Individuals, groups and organisations in contributing to the regeneration of communities or other areas of social policy using their knowledge, skills and competencies.

Citizen An individual living in a political community, with rights and responsibilities. Unless specified, e.g. UK citizens, the term is not linked to nationality.

Citizen Governor A citizen who advises or makes a decision about a public service, for example as a school governor, a charity trustee or lay magistrate.

Citizenship has come centre stage as a public policy concern in the UK and beyond. An aim has been to transform citizens from passive recipients of public services into inter-dependent individuals and members of families, actively engaged in their communities and in public life, as voters, volunteers and empowered activists, participating in governance structures, working in partnership with public bodies to shape policies and services.

Civic Relating to the governance of a city or town and connected to the duties and responsibilities required, ex: town mayor or committee member.

Civil relating to voluntary civic and social organisations and institutions that form the basis of a society, ex: school governor or PSCO.

Civic engagement People making a difference in the life of communities both politically or non-politically, using the combination of knowledge, skills and values, for example: school governors, lay magistrates, non-executive board members.

Civil engagement Associated with ordinary local citizens living in a locality, with councillors rights and responsibilities. Civil refers to 'community' and informal roles, compared with 'civic' which is linked to formal roles related to democratic and governance structures.

Civil society A term used to describe a range of voluntary civic or social organisations that contribute to society. They are distinct from government and public administrations, the family or the market. These organisations can include registered charities, development non-governmental organisations, community groups, women's organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups.

Community A group of people of any size who reside in the same locality, share government, social and economic conditions, and often have a similar/common cultural and historical heritage. A community can be based on a neighbourhood, an identity, faith or other characteristic, and you can belong to more than one community at any one time.

Community action (sometimes referred to as social action) Campaigning actions of community groups that are in disagreement with an official agency. Actions include demonstrations, public meetings and using the media.

Community activists For those who are active on a voluntary basis in the development of their own communities, often bringing about social or political change.

Community engagement Informing, consulting, involving, listening and responding to communities through ongoing relationships. Local stakeholders or services encouraging local people to access provision or participate in decision-making about services that affect them.

Community empowerment A process whereby communities are encouraged to be self-reliant and achieve the goals they want to see through the process of engagement and other community-related activities. Power, influence and responsibility is shifted away from existing centres of power and into the hands of communities and individual citizens.

Community leadership Community leadership is associated with local councillors and officers empowering local communities to steer their own future and vision. Equally it can apply to an individual within the community leading a community project or initiative and involving others.

Consulted citizen Local people communicating with organisations such as local councils, health service providers or other public bodies– to share their views and contribute to decision making processes.

Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, faith, belief or age.

Democracy A political system where people have a voice and can exercise their power, typically through electing representatives.

Diversity Enabling and valuing the differences within, between and among people.

Empowerment Individuals accessing their own power and capacity to influence issues and events they consider to be important.

Engagement The development of relationships between communities and organisations, where decisions are based on contact, dialogue and leading to shared understanding.

Equality Where people in a society or a group have the same status and rights, and where discrimination and marginalisation of people can be challenged.

Department for Communities and Local Government (CLGD) replaced the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). It sets policy on local government, housing, urban regeneration, planning and fire and rescue. It also has responsibility for all race equality and community cohesion issues in England.

Globalisation is the process whereby regional economies, societies, and cultures have become integrated through a global network of political ideas, through communication, transportation, (the idea of the shrinking planet) and trade. It is driven by a combination of economic, technological, sociocultural and political factors.

Governor The head of a public institution, or a member of a governing body.

Governance The action or manner of governing a formal group, authority or political party.

Involvement Taking part in community activities and groups in a variety of ways.

Magistrate A civil officer who administers the law, especially one who conducts a court concerned with minor offences and holds preliminary hearings for more serious ones.

Neighbourhood Is a localised community within a larger town or city.

Outcomes refers to the ultimate results of actions. It is a term used in policy evaluation to refer to or service delivery by councils or other bodies. These could include better health, reduced crime or happier citizens.

Participation Individuals joining in, contributing and sharing in decisions that affect their lives. Participation should enable people to have a degree of power and control in the processes they are involved in.

Participative democracy Allowing citizens to participate in decision-making directly, for example, through a referendum or through Local Partnership Meetings.

Partnership Partnerships and partnership working are widely used terms describing arrangements for public service delivery. Partnership bodies at local level play an increasing role in developing strategies and plans, and co-ordinating activity to achieve national and local priorities. Their responsibilities can range from health and social care to community safety, climate change or children's services.

Pathfinder The term given to the first council or group of councils to implement a new procedure or develop an initiative with the government's backing.

Regions There are nine administrative regions in England. They are administrated by the Government Offices (GO) for the English Regions. Their work includes acting for government in the regions and localities acting for the regions and localities in government building partnerships and delivering in partnership. The GO regions are: North East, North West, Yorkshire and Humber, East Midlands, West Midlands, East of England, South West, South East and London.

Representative democracy Refers to the political system in which citizens elect representatives who are holding the power over public policy and budgets. MPs and local Councillors are all 'elected members' and represent all the people in the area (electoral ward), regardless of whether or not they voted for them. Representative and participative democracy can go hand in hand.

Service user Someone in receipt of a statutory service, usually a public service (as opposed to a consumer).

Service user involvement The government policy 'Your Health, Your Care, Your Say' encourages public service providers to involve Service Users (and their carers) in decision-making.

Social capital Formal and informal networks that shape the way we relate to each other and participate in social activities.

Social cohesion Actions and policies which encourage people from different backgrounds to get on together in their community, with equal access to services, social, political and economical life.

Social exclusion refers to barriers that prevent people from participating fully in society. These include low income, racism, racial profiling; barriers to employment and access to affordable housing; and barriers that prevent people from participating in the civic and political life of society.

Social inclusion Ensuring the marginalised and those living in poverty have greater participation in decision making which affects their lives, allowing them to improve their living standards and their overall well-being.

Social justice Pursuing social justice aims to change systems and to shape cultures in ways that will guarantee full citizenship, creating 'a just and fair society with freedom and equal opportunities for all in terms of liberty, opportunity, income, wealth and self-respect.

Social justice Allowing people to claim their human rights for fair treatment and an impartial share of the benefits of society.

Statutory service This refers to services enshrined 'by statute' which public authorities, such as the NHS or local authorities have to provide, and to which citizens are entitled, regardless of where they live. For example, education, social services, health services, roads and transport, fire services, etc. Public authorities have an obligation to provide statutory services but may also provide non-statutory services as well.

Take Part Pathfinder The Take Part Pathfinder approach supports improvement against National Indicators 3 (civic participation in the local area – narrowing gaps between groups in order to raise involvement of disadvantaged sections of society) and 4 (people feeling that they can influence decisions in their locality).

Take Part Champion Organisations that work to promote, advocate and progress the Take Part Programme within the nine English regions geographical area.

Take Part National Network (TPN) Take Part Network is a group that has emerged from ALAC/ Take Part. The Take Part Network developed through partnerships between government and civil society organisations collaborating to promote active learning for active citizenship. The Take Part regional hubs or 'learning partnerships' are based upon networks linking voluntary and community based organisations together with learning providers in universities and colleges. Take Part Network is the key partner of the Taking Part National Research Cluster.

Trustees The person(s) or institutions responsible for the administration of a trust, for example, the trustees of a charity.

Voluntary worker/Volunteer An organised form of volunteering whereby people give their time for free for the benefit of charities or other community organisations or public services. Voluntary roles cover a wide range of activities, from desk administration, website design to running arts and craft classes for children, and can be short term or longer-term. By definition, volunteers cannot be paid, but it is good practice to reimburse out of pocket expenses.