active learning for active citizenship

best practice for Lincolnshire

final report
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### List of Abbreviations

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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ALAC</td>
<td>Active Learning for Active Citizenship</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDF</td>
<td>Community Development Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLG</td>
<td>[Department for]Communities and Local Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIUS</td>
<td>Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESOL</td>
<td>English for Speakers of Other Languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCN</td>
<td>Lincolnshire Citizenship Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIACE</td>
<td>National Institute of Adult Continuing Education</td>
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<td>WEA</td>
<td>Workers’ Educational Association</td>
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The ‘Active Learning for Active Citizenship Best Practice for Lincolnshire’ Project has been designed to explore good practice in informal active citizenship education in Lincolnshire in order to develop active citizenship in the region and be able to meet the specific needs of key ‘hard-to-reach’ groups.

The ‘Active Learning for Active Citizenship Best Practice for Lincolnshire’ Project has created the opportunity to develop a wide variety of informal learning experiences for participants from across Lincolnshire. It has provided valuable learning experiences for several groups of individuals and has considerably exceeded all its targets for learning participation. In total over 119 individuals took part in more than 1,300 hours of registered learning activity, spread over more than 45 separate learning sessions.

The project has supported the development of active learning for active citizenship through a process that also develops other relevant life-skills and intermediate and employment-related skills. These include confidence and self-awareness activities as well as English Language and Radio Production skills, CV and other career development, formalised planning and decision-making, business planning and organisational learning. Students have had access to formal qualifications e.g. entry and advanced ESOL and several participants have been offered support to improve the quality of their employment and to create opportunities for working and volunteering. The project has supported 2 community groups to develop themselves as social enterprises.

An important principle of the Take Part approach is that learning activities are designed with the participants, identifying, and wherever possible meeting, the learners’ needs in the process. As a consequence the entirely voluntary/take-up of these informal community learning activities was considerable with many individuals returning on many different occasions.

The project has identified good practice in active learning for active citizenship and has developed a network of individuals and organisations interested in its further development. A guide for practice (LCN, 2006) was produced in co-authorship with voluntary sector managers with significant experiences of developing practice around active citizenship and informal learning. It was distributed along with the launch of the Take Part national learning framework (ALAC, 2006) at a conference organised by the project, bringing Government, NACE, WEA, Higher Education and Take Part National Network speakers to Lincoln. 60 organisations were interviewed following this conference and their activities in relation to active citizenship explored.

The project has been part of the activities of the East Midlands Take Part Hub – a part of a national network for Active Learning for Active Citizenship. The learning activities provided by the Hub emphasise the importance of starting from the experiences and interests of the participants, “each type of learning needs to start from people’s own issues and concerns, and each needs to be participatory and reflective, constructed through critical dialogues between learners and learning providers.

Each requires long-term, sustainable support structures, based upon relationships of trust.” (Mays & Rooke, 2006, p.8). The programme values life-experiences rather than just prior accredited training and has sought to develop a deepening of observation and reflection and learning amongst all those engaging in its processes (including the tutors and facilitators).

The Project has developed practical experience of providing skills development and other activities with 4 target communities: and (1) project managers aiming for active citizenship learning in their organisations and communities, (2) mental health service users and carers, (3) migrant workers (“new arrivals”), (4) young people and civic leaders working together to include young people in real community decision-making. The ‘Active Learning for Active Citizenship Best Practice for Lincolnshire’ Project has enabled us to learn lessons about what works with learners from these four community groups and to provide space for reflection with those concerned about what is valued as well as identifying issues future provision will need to consider.
The ‘Active Learning for Active Citizenship Best Practice for Lincolnshire’ Project has supported a range of personal and organisational skills development with 27 Project Managers’ from both the public and the voluntary sector. A core group of Project Managers with experience of supporting active citizenship met in more than 10 sessions and co-authored a guide for practice (LCN, 2006). This group valued the opportunity to meet in semi-formal workshops to review each others’ ideas, share experiences and develop a stronger collective understanding of community empowerment policy and practice. Along with the more general partnership work developed through the project and the development of participatory approaches to evaluation, this group of learners have been helping to create capacity for active learning for active citizenship in the County and creating a resource for training the trainers. In total 218 hours of workshop-based activity was developed with this group.

The work with Mental Health service users and carers highlighted another aspect of active citizenship work – that is the need to provide learning experiences that support the capacity of citizens to engage with public services. The Project has worked closely with 9 members of the Mental Health User and Carer group, Linking Voices, and the Involvement and Development Project Manager. This work has included one-to-one exploration of organisational and empowerment issues, participation in a 6-part workshop series developing a Participatory Evaluation Approach and employment support activity specifically tailored to contributing to social enterprise and evaluation / research activity. Linking Voices members participated on average in more than 20 hours of registered learning (181 hours in total) with considerable extra input in further sessions within their organisation.

Provision of active learning for active citizenship for migrant workers (hereafter referred to as ‘new arrival’ communities) highlighted the importance of another concept of active citizenship – that of providing learners with opportunities to create a stronger voice. Working with EU residents from Eastern Europe (mostly Polish residents in Lincoln) provided the project an opportunity to explore issues of citizenship, identity and life in the UK. The needs of this group called for a flexible response to provision that took into account changing shift patterns and other changes in personal circumstances. The project offered English as a Second Language (ESOL) activities coupled to citizenship learning, CV development and support in improving the quality of employment undertaken as well as providing specific technical skills training – e.g. skills for radio production. The project worked in partnership with Siren FM, a community radio station based at the University and a core group of learners have developed a regular programme in Polish and set up a social enterprise ‘Voice.Pl – Lincolnshire Polish Association’ to help sustain and support their activities. The take-up of learning activities by this group was considerable with 39 participants averaging more than 20 hours each with the project (4 individuals with more than 50 learner hours).
The lessons learnt from the ‘Active Learning for Active Citizenship Best Practice for Lincolnshire’ Project are contributing to ongoing sustainable activity – both in the individual community groups and at a regional and national level. In the process it has helped to develop an understanding of active citizenship more generally and to develop strategic partnerships that will help support future activity in the region. The project has helped to raise the national profile of Lincolnshire and the East Midlands for Community Empowerment activity and Informal Community Learning. Our experiences are helping to shape National Policy and have helped to cement lasting partnerships with Government, Third Sector Organisations and the other Higher Education Institutions involved in developing the Take Part national learning framework.

Finally, the ‘R U Listening? Project’ at Saxby Primary School enabled us to explore another important facet of active citizenship learning and development – the ability to take part in community decision-making and civic life. Young people are normally excluded from real, local decision-making. It challenged adults in authority and a group of 10 year olds to actively engage in planning and decision making about how to improve village life – e.g. by taking agreed action on community concerns (e.g. litter and dog fouling) and by contributing to parish decision making processes in order to organise a youth club for 8-13 year olds. The project was valued by the young people, the school and by local parish, district and county councillors who worked with the young people to find ways to explore their ideas and develop workable plans. The project has culminated in the inclusion of an 8-13 Youth Club in the village plan and the development of new relationships between young people, parish officers, councillors, youth managers and community police officers. The process also showed the relevance of democratic protocols – the young people putting their classroom citizenship education into action through semi-formalised decision-making processes that enabled them to contribute to determining agendas and having a vote regardless, and because of the presence of adult authority figures.
events and activities in active learning for active citizenship

1.1 General description of project

The ‘Active Learning for Active Citizenship Best Practice for Lincolnshire’ Project has been designed to explore good practice in active learning for active citizenship (ALAC) across Lincolnshire in order to develop active citizenship in the region and be able to meet the learning and other needs of key community groups – enabling them in the process to become more active citizens.

The Project facilitated the participation of members of the public in informal learning processes aimed at supporting public engagement in Lincolnshire and the wider East Midlands region. This process has involved the production and dissemination of written materials (e.g. practice guides and the Take Part learning framework) and the creation of individually tailored learning packages with individuals and groups of learners (including ‘classroom’ activities, meetings, interviews, learning groups, workshops, email correspondence, video production, peer exchange etc).

It builds on the national Active Learning for Active Citizenship Programme of which the Lincolnshire Citizenship Network forms one of 7 National hubs. The work in Lincolnshire has helped to shape the National Learning Framework – a framework that has been launched in this region through this project.

The focus of the project has been active learning for active citizenship. The main focus of the outputs related to creating learning opportunities supporting active citizenship. Clearly, associated with this is the need to build a body of understanding in Lincolnshire about what is encompassed by the term active citizenship, how it has been encouraged so far and what more can be done to develop our collective skills and competencies.

The project has also been about finding ways to make community learning relevant and accessible. We have been developing an agenda to support and reinvigorate the debate around informal learning and participatory approaches to improving decision-making in society. The focus then has been on reflecting on and overcoming barriers to learning and engagement and in finding activities that people want to participate in and are meaningful to support their activities whilst building a stronger civil and civil society.

Governance forms a critical element of this discussion, and the project has sought to find ways to strengthen learning opportunities that can improve governance and people’s ability to Take Part in society. As such we have used the national Take Part: Active Learning for Active Citizenship framework as a basis for our developments and have tried to promote and disseminate concepts from this document throughout the course of the project.

This dissemination process has engaged a wide range of stakeholders: individuals and community groups with experience of governance, participation in community decision making / democratic processes, or strengthening the voices of marginalized groups as well as public sector managers and regional players. Engagement with the project has included Council executives, Councillors and the NHS as well as agencies such as City & Guilds, LSC, Community Development Foundation and many others.

The project has been part of a national network, building momentum around active learning for active citizenship and community empowerment and has continued to establish the East Midlands Hub as having a voice in the National debate. This project providing an opportunity to develop appropriate grassroots provision, with a variety of identified communities. 'Take Part - Active Learning for Active Citizenship' (the national learning framework) is an important delivery vehicle for the government’s White Paper ‘Strong and Prosperous Communities’ (CLG, 2006).
events and activities
in active learning for active citizenship continued

The questionnaire responses have been analysed and addresses of interested individuals and organisations added to the Lincoln Citizenship Network database. Follow-up activities were organised with 60 respondents. Respondents have been individually interviewed to explore their interest and experience in active learning for active citizenship; to identify their further development needs and to gather together existing materials and methodologies.

Working closely with the Steering Group and members of the Project Managers’ group appropriate strategies were identified to engage with each of the 3 other target learner-groups and to develop relevant learning opportunities with these communities. The 3 further groups were new arrival / migrant workers, young people and adult decision-makers and mental health service users and carers. The ALAC Project has delivered a range of learning programmes with all these learners (and others engaging in the general programme of activities).

These informal learning opportunities have included: workshops, inter-generational discussions, leadership/strategic development think tanks around social justice and training to develop participatory approaches to evaluation, training in radio production, mentoring and English language provision.

1.2 Identifying & Engaging ‘hard-to-reach’ learners

Work with voluntary sector organisations has included participatory workshops and the joint authoring of the guide to practice which was distributed in November 2006. This process of reflection on experience focussed on participants experiences of supporting community empowerment and the lessons learnt for delivery of such community-based learning programmes. This guide was distributed at a launch event in November 2006 where the Take Part National Learning Framework was presented by National speakers.

165 people participated in the conference and the group learning sessions organised as part of the event. These learning events followed the themes developed throughout the ALAC Programme and explored existing provision and opportunities for development with the following groups:

1. Migrant workers and learners from BEM
2. Closing the gap between generations
3. Organisational learning in the voluntary and community sectors
4. Promoting rights and advocacy
5. Improving skills in the statutory sector to engage communities
6. Active learning for active citizenship in the mental health sector
7. Learning opportunities for ex-offenders

During and after the conference over 600 printed ‘guides to practice’ were distributed. These were accompanied by a questionnaire which sought to identify current practice and enable individuals to signal interest in further information about ALAC and the Lincoln Citizenship Network.
08 March 2007 onwards

New Arrival Communities
A group of learners from the new arrival communities (mostly Polish residents from Lincoln) began meeting on a weekly basis in the evenings to develop their understanding of citizenship issues in parallel with developing English language skills and capabilities to produce and maintain regular Polish language radio programmes on Siren.FM (the community radio station broadcasting from the University of Lincoln).

March 2007 onwards

Developing the Participatory Evaluation Approach
A series of 6 workshops at the Riseholme campus developed training in participatory evaluation and helped with the development of a Participatory Evaluation Toolkit. Participants included both Voluntary Sector Managers from a wide variety of organisations across the East Midlands and members of the Linking Voices group (Mental Health Service Users and Carers). The workshops were led by a range of national facilitators from The Community Development Foundation, Goldsmith’s College London and Manchester Metropolitan University) and engaged participants in the development of the Toolkit.

July, August and December 2007

Employment Skills
Activity was organised with the new arrival group and with members of Linking Voices to support employability and the development of curriculum vitae and individual/group skills profiles. The aim was to support the recognition of work and intermediate, workplace-related skills and to support the organisation generate opportunities.
Intergenerational Dialogue

Workshops at Saxilby School built on the work started at the November conference to bring children and adults together in planning and development activities. These workshops seek to redress the exclusion of young people from planning at a local level. The workshops involved young people and adults in parish planning processes and culminated in inclusion of plans for an 8-13 Youth Club in the village as well as taking general community action on litter and dog-fouling.

March 2008

Social Enterprises

Voice.pl – Lincolnshire Polish Association formed as a social enterprise. The ALAC Best Practice project supported the development of business planning activities and organisational planning for this development. Members of Linking Voices also explore different organisational forms and how their activities might be sustained in the future.

1.4 Take-up of learning activity by community members

Take-up of the voluntary, informal learning opportunities provided by the project far exceeded the original learning targets, and support and enthusiasm for this form of provision was shown by all 4 of the community groups involved. In all, the project provided in excess of 1,300 hours of individual learning and development.

<table>
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<th>Participants (no. enrolled)</th>
<th>Total hours for group</th>
<th>Av. hours per participant</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project managers (27)</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service users/carers (9)</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New arrivals (29)</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people/adults (23)</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>5.7</td>
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Appendices 1, 2 & 3 give more detail about these activities outputs and lessons learnt.
4 different examples of alac in practice

The evaluation framework devised by the ALAC National Network (ALAC Evaluation Report, Mayo & Rooke, 2006, p.57) was chosen as an underlying framework for evaluating the active learning for active citizenship best practice activity. Using this model it is possible to describe the activity of the project in relation to the following groups of community learners:

**Identifying stakeholders, Target groups and methods of participation:**

**Target groups**
Focus of the community empowerment activity with each of these groups:

**Community activists**
Community activists encouraged to take part in the project through the Project Managers group, at the conference and follow-up stages and through the series of Participatory Evaluation Approach workshops. Activists encouraged to reflect on their experiences in light of the Take Part National Learning Framework (distributed to 600 individuals/organisations).

**Migrant Workers**
Black and ethnic minorities
See 2.3 New Arrival Communities
Work with individuals from Eastern Europe to develop as a group with a distinct and stronger voice. Creating opportunities to explore active citizenship issues as part of developing skills & knowledge needed to take part more in UK life (e.g. English Language, exploring UK society and support for better quality employment). Use of community radio and social enterprise to create mechanisms to enable the group to control and sustain activity.

**People with disabilities**
Carers
See 2.2 Mental Health Users’ & Carers
Users’ and Carers engaged in learning to increase their capacity to engage with Service Providers. In particular to develop skills in Participatory Evaluation and continue to develop capacity for independent organisational activity / sustainability.

**Volunteers**
Young People
See 2.4 Intergenerational Dialogue.
The ‘R U Listening?’ project encourages the construction of dialogue between young people and local decision-makers including volunteers and local officers (e.g. councillors, school governors). Aim is to empower all involved to enable young people to take a real part in decision-making at a local level.

**Voluntary sector managers**
Project Managers created reflective learning groups to develop active citizenship Policy and Practice and to build capacity for further activity in this area.

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“I came as an observer [3 sessions ago] and I’m still here!..... and [the young people’s proposal is] on the Parish Plan as well”

ALAC Participant
This workshop series included sessions led by Goldsmiths University, Manchester Metropolitan University and the Community Development Foundation. In total 27 Project Managers took part in learning activities within the Project (contributing more than 8 hours each on average to the process).

Reflective Practice
These individuals engaged in reflective learning sessions and workshops as well as contributing / co-authoring the Guide For Practice. The use of Project Manager’s network provided reflective learning opportunities – developing capacity in active citizenship and an opportunity for peer review and support.

A participatory approach to learning was used – developing the project’s activities and materials through an approach that involves the skills, experiences and knowledge base of all participants (e.g. the development of the guide to practice and participatory evaluation training). Learning started from practice and introduced policy and theory as part of the reflection process.

Specific Learning Needs & Barriers to Participation
Participants wanted learning activities that supported their professional activities and the values that underpinned them. Different forms of (professional/theoretical) language can prove a barrier to learning and connecting theory to practice. This group spent considerable effort reviewing the language used in relation to active citizenship and empowerment in order to help create a shared understanding and some common language and concepts that would support future activity in Lincolnshire.

Take Part aims and objectives
In the case of the Project Managers the role of the ALAC Project was to create a space for reflection and learning between experienced managers in the community domain. This activity enabled participants to challenge and support each other, to reflect on barriers to active citizenship and to celebrate achievements. Crucially, it also enabled all involved (including the project team) to continue to refine and make distinctions and to be able to act on new possibilities and to use a new ‘language’ to underpin and develop their work; developing a collective voice around community empowerment at a conceptual and strategic level.
Headline reflections

Social change / justice
- Enable project managers working for social change to critically reflect and develop their ideas, practice and conceptual language together
- Enable people to identify common issues/problems and find solutions
- Promote social solidarity to strengthen communities

Inclusion / participation
- Facilitate learning processes between different organisations
- Provide access for the voluntary sector to this area of policy and practice
- Enable voluntary sector managers to develop their own activities
- Strengthen active citizenship in the voluntary and community sector and in the public sector

Challenging inequalities
- Project has been creating appropriate learning environments for professional development in the voluntary sector underpinned by Take Part values engaging with public sector bodies and government agendas for developing community empowerment
- Enhance and/or develop skills that enable learning to engage in local decision making

Promoting diversity
- Co-authorship of the Guide for Practice.
- Enable people to know their rights and find their voice

Outcomes & lessons for the future
The Project Managers’ group valued the opportunity to meet and share experiences and goals with a peer group they recognised as sharing similar values and to be able to reflect on these aspects in a ‘safe’ environment. The Take Part national learning framework provided a useful framework for these discussions and the ability reflect on both practice and policy allowed the group the space to construct a more highly developed language to describe and develop their activities. The networking element of this activity was highly valued as was the challenge of being reflexive and developing trust to explore other organisations’ situations and experiences. Along with the more general partnership work developed through the project this group of learners have been helping to shape future capacity for active learning for active citizenship in the County – particularly in relation to the voluntary and community sector. Project Managers from the group are continuing to develop their own interests in active citizenship beyond the end of the project and several are working with the Take Part Hub to develop further partnership working. The project has demonstrated a latent demand within the voluntary sector for this kind of reflective, developmental activity and has highlighted the need to support informal learning for the voluntary sector within Higher Education. Project Managers continue to support the work of the East Midlands Take Part Hub in a variety of ways and these sustained relationships and the learning already undertaken form an invaluable for building further work in the sector.

“Having a place away from work that’s one step removed gives me professional development, 360O view – people don’t get to do that very often – allows me to look at my own activity” (ALAC Participant)

“What I love about the process is that it identifies you as an individual...the style used [has] allowed different people to tap into the material in very different ways” (ALAC Participant)

“Important element is that informal learning is very subtle and often [we’re] not very aware that we’re doing it...very good way to enlighten people that learning needn’t be a huge amount of effort, time consuming – with exams......[need] the self-belief that the answer is in you” (ALAC Participant)
Participants for the Participatory Evaluation Approach workshops were drawn from across the East Midlands Hub’s network (not just related to mental health) and the members of Linking Voices committed significant extra time in additional learning sessions organised by themselves to support the development of their evaluation team.

Linking Voices are creating their own support and advice networks with various social enterprises as well as support from the ALAC Project. The following needs have been identified by this learning group:

- Need to provide learning through a support infrastructure, building on existing local strengths and connections and respecting personal confidentiality and other needs.
- Need to embed informal learning in existing activity at venues and on occasions that suit the learners and are recognised by participants as safe and comfortable places to learn.
- Need to ensure learning is directed and controlled by the learners.
- Need to remain sensitive to health and social needs especially when providing general events that include other groups and individuals (e.g. additional planning sessions for the participatory evaluation have been designed to explore with learners what the sessions might involve, to enrol interested individuals and to address learners concerns, e.g. on confidentiality, emotional security and potential stigmatisation).

The aim was to develop skills and confidence to work in new ways and to actively involve members in shaping the development of tools for use beyond their immediate field. This support has been offered through the series of Participatory Evaluation Approach workshops that members took part in (and helped to shape) as well as by supporting the work of the Project Manager and employment support activities provided through the organisation.

Reflective Practice: The project provided support for individuals to develop confidence in undertaking Participatory Evaluations and to support the learning needs of the organisation to operate in new ways. This support included providing resources for activities within the organisation that supported skills profiling and the confidence-building of individuals to take part in employment-related activities, such as contributing to the sustainable activities of a social enterprise for example. The group has been assisted by the ID Project, which has consciously sought to ‘build time’ within the group. Members from the User-Focussed Monitoring group, for example, have recently contributed to the ongoing development of a participatory toolkit using the Take Part learning framework, and have been designing and undertaking a user-led evaluation of the professional support systems available for people in mental health crisis.

Specific Learning Needs & Barriers to Participation

This activity was controlled and directed throughout by the participating organisation, Linking Voices.

Participants for the Participatory Evaluation Approach workshops were drawn from across the East Midlands Hub’s network (not just related to mental health) and the members of Linking Voices committed significant extra time in additional learning sessions organised by themselves to support the development of their evaluation team.

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4 different examples of alac in practice continued

Take Part aims and objectives
The group (of mental health service users and carers) was already part of a community group 'Linking Voices' - i.e. connecting those with experiences of the services for mental health, either as carers, users or providers. Linking Voices (as the name suggests) is explicitly concerned with creating and maintaining dialogue between service providers and service users and carers. Our role in this project has been to work with the organisation to find ways to help strengthen their existing voice. We have done this both by direct support for the Project Manager and by providing opportunities for exploring participatory evaluation approaches with group members.

Two important lessons were learnt with this group - firstly the need to ensure the feeling of security experienced by all the participants - particularly, when interacting with people unaware of their particular needs - and secondly the need for the organisation to keep its information about its members confidential. The importance of the organisation being in control of its engagement with the project was stressed from the outset and remained an important dynamic throughout.

Outcomes & lessons for the future
The work with Mental Health service users and carers highlighted another aspect of active citizenship work - that is the need to provide learning experiences that support the capacity of citizens to engage with public services (i.e. vice-versa). In this case the organisation involved already had a distinct identity and the role of the project was to work alongside participants to provide learning experiences and one-to-one support that helped individuals and the organisation to develop its activity. Two important lessons were learnt with this group - firstly the need to ensure the feeling of security experienced by all the participants - particularly, when interacting with people unaware of their particular needs - and secondly the need for the organisation to keep its information about its members confidential. The importance of the organisation being in control of its engagement with the project was stressed from the outset and remained an important dynamic throughout.

Headline reflections

Social change / justice
• Involving service users and carers in developing mental health provision in Lincolnshire
• Enable service users to shape and influence service provision

Inclusion / participation
• Support for skills development, confidence, participation and overcoming barriers to learning
• Encourage excluded groups to engage in public life
• Strengthen active citizenship in the voluntary and community sector

Challenging inequalities
• Organisational learning re active citizenship and empowerment
• Employment support – including working as an evaluator, working in a social enterprise and general skills auditing

Promoting diversity
• Identifying / remembering the significant skills base within this group of learners
• Support to develop new organisational forms and activities - promoting new employment opportunities or active engagements
• Promotion of wider sense of well-being
• Promoting a more diverse concept of ‘researcher’ and ‘evaluator’

“ Been very successful - adults learnt as much as the children
ALAC Participant ”
Becoming an active citizen - New Arrival Communities

Participants
New arrival communities were identified as a key target group from the outset. Originally referred to in the bid as ‘migrant workers’, the participants preferred to adopt the phrase ‘new arrival communities’ to better reflect their situation.

Promoting and Outreach / Engagement Process
Unlike the voluntary sector organisations that were already active participants in the Lincolnshire Citizenship Network, the individuals we were hoping to enrol from new arrival communities were not engaged with the University at the start of the project. Through a process of meeting and talking to individuals about their situations and learning interests, the Project Manager developed a ‘curriculum’ of provision. New Arrivals, were not a particular group at the start of the project. This group grew by word of mouth, through networks of friends and work colleagues of the individuals we first contacted. However, by the end of the project it has proved to be the largest group in terms of participants and numbers of learning hours undertaken. It has also created some very tangible new opportunities for those involved.

Course content or forms of experiential learning
This project has supported more than 30 learners from the Polish community to reflect and develop their experiences of being citizens in Lincolnshire and to develop their capacity to be active citizens and engage in the community. This ‘curriculum’ of provision has been developed around the theme of active citizenship and meets the distinct needs of these learners. It includes ESOL training, production of a weekly community radio programme from SIREN FM and employment/skills support. Members of the New Arrivals group have created a social enterprise as part of this project and advice and support has been co-ordinated to develop this.

Reflective Practice
Maintaining activity in Polish by the group as well as developing understanding of English language and life in the UK, has enabled participants to reach a Polish audience about engaging in UK civil and civic society. The Christmas markets, January Sales and Polish elections have all provided reason to reflect on a wide variety of citizenship issues whilst English for Speakers of Other Languages was assessed by tests taken at both entry and advanced levels.

Specific Learning Needs & Barriers to Participation
This group of learners presented distinct learning needs. Providing learning spaces required a flexible response to provision that took in changing shift patterns and other changes in personal circumstances. It also needed to take into account the related skills development needs and the employment barriers caused by being a new arrival.

Mental illness is a very individual thing – that could be too narrow. More sharing of experiences enables more powerful story-telling … Mental health is such a hidden thing in society and people don’t talk about it…… wider space for sharing feelings – but an organised experience, not random

ALAC Participant
In particular, the project offered ESOL activities coupled to civic engagement learning, CV development, support for improving the quality of employment and specific technical skills – e.g. radio production.

**Active Citizenship Focus**

This activity has taken the concept of “VOICE” very literally and has developed the idea of active citizenship learning through ESOL and other activities (most notably through training and support to produce radio programmes with Siren FM). The combination of improving English skills, providing a voice (in Polish) to/from the community and the content of the programming (to include issues of governance, life in the UK and cohesion issues) has been very fruitful and has led to the establishment of a social enterprise to continue this activity in a community-owned manner. It is highly relevant that “Voice.Pl – Lincolnshire Polish Association” has been the name chosen by the group for their new enterprise.

**Outputs and Outcomes**

- This part of the project has created an opportunity to explore people’s experiences and to see how new arrivals could become more active citizens – i.e. understanding and engaging in UK civil and civic society. Whilst some learners enrolled for ESOL and Citizenship sessions only, most went on to be engaged in the creation of the radio programme and this core group see the activity as much more than simply language or radio development alone.
- The project worked in partnership with Siren.FM, a community radio station based at the University and a core group of learners have developed a regular programme in Polish and set up a social enterprise ‘Voice.Pl – Lincolnshire Polish Association’ to help sustain and support their activities supporting the Eastern European community.

### Headline reflections

| Social change / justice       | • Promote social solidarity to strengthen communities  
|                              | • Enable people to know their rights and find their voice |
| Inclusion / participation     | • Informal Learning for new arrivals  
|                              | • University links – meeting/production space, identity as students / informal learning  
|                              | • Encourage excluded groups to engage in public life  
|                              | • ESOL tests – entry level and 3 Advanced English tests |
| Challenging inequalities      | • Active Citizenship & cohesion through ESOL+  
|                              | • Employment support / support to create/maintain a social enterprise |
| Promoting diversity           | • Active voices – Creation of Voice.Pl Lincolnshire Polish Association  
|                              | • Regular Polish broadcast – linked to issues of citizenship and identity |

### Lessons for the future

Provision of active learning for active citizenship for migrant workers (hereafter referred to as new arrival communities) highlighted the importance of another concept of active citizenship— that of providing learners with opportunities to have a stronger voice. Working with EU residents from Eastern Europe (mostly Polish residents in Lincoln) provided the project an opportunity to explore issues of citizenship, identity and life in the UK. Creating provision to meet the groups situated learning needs through civic learning was found to be a powerful and popular combination (e.g. providing support for career development or advice on social enterprises as well as ESOL with civic engagement). Delivering active learning for active citizenship with this learner group also requires the provider to be flexible and provide activities in the evenings and weekends to fit around learners work commitments.

### How do we hear the voices of those that don’t shout loudest?

ALAC Participant

"How do we hear the voices of those that don’t shout loudest?"

ALAC Participant
Specifc Learning Needs & Barriers to Participation

This group is already engaged in formal education but ironically young people also have very few opportunities to engage in informal learning with adults and local decision-makers, outside the school curriculum. There is a need for spaces where children can talk to a range of adults in the community about issues of concern to them. This form of public engagement needs to be taken seriously and for adults to respect children as active citizens able to engage in discussions about building civil society and issues of social justice. Suitable mechanisms to do this need to be identified, such that active learners are able to find ways to ‘bridge the gap between generations’.

The needs of young people may require different approaches e.g. alternative music activities provided as a parallel yet (linked) stream to plenary conference sessions. Perhaps most importantly there is still a need to find ways to respect the rights of young people to make a serious contribution to dialogue and not patronise them in the process. Critical to this project has been the commitment of the adult participants (notably councillors from parish, district and county, youth service workers, school governors, teachers and police) to do this need to be identified, such that active learners are able to find ways to ‘bridge the gap between generations’.

4 different examples of alac in practice continued

2.4 Intergenerational dialogue for Planning and Decision-making

Participants
Young People, i.e. those normally excluded from community decision-making processes.

Promoting and Outreach / Engagement Process:
This builds on the work of the first phase of the ‘R U Listening?’ Project undertaken in previous years. 4 schools were identified through this project and 40+ children participated in learning activities at the ALAC conference in 2006. Due to staffing changes at the LEA, one school (Saxilby Primary) has been chosen as the main focus for ALAC work in 2007/08. The group consisted of a group of children from Year 10 and a similar number of adult learners at each session. There are also additional links to the school (i.e. an existing ALAC learner from the Project Managers group with children at the school).

Course content or forms of experiential learning
The aim of the group of 10 year olds and councillors at Saxilby has been to create planning and reflection workshops that can involve both parties in meaningful learning activities; supporting the empowerment of young people and the enrichment of local planning discussions. This has taken the form of developing active learning about local issues, e.g. steps to improve the physical environment of the village and to create a youth club for under 13s, as well as learning about planning and decision-making processes and developing the skills and experience of engaging in intergenerational dialogue.

The project has initiated and supported this process by resourcing supply teachers to release the class teacher in school time, resourcing a facilitator help develop the process of dialogue, and inviting initial participants and organising a space to meet (with catering) to enable non-teaching adults to work with school children outside the school premises in an atmosphere conducive to learning. Workshops exploring potential actions and associated considerations were organised and an Action Plan for the under 13s Youth Centre was developed by those involved (as part of the Saxilby Parish Plan).

Reflective Practice
The project was valued by the school and by local parish, district and county councillors who worked with the young people to find ways to explore their ideas and develop workable plans. The learning was 2-way with adults learning from the experience the ways that young people of this age may engage with issues that concern all ages and offer their own distinct contributions – through formal planning and through agreed direct actions as young citizens. The project has also begun to challenge the accepted practice that young people should be excluded from involvement in local democracy and decision-making because of their age and offers an alternative possibility that both age-groups can learn to be more active citizens.

Specific Learning Needs & Barriers to Participation
This group is already engaged in formal education but ironically young people also have very few opportunities to engage in informal learning with adults and local decision-makers, outside the school curriculum. There is a need for spaces where children can talk to a range of adults in the community about issues of concern to them. This form of public engagement needs to be taken seriously and for adults to respect children as active citizens able to engage in discussions about building civil society and issues of social justice. Suitable mechanisms to do this need to be identified, such that active learners are able to find ways to ‘bridge the gap between generations’.

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4 different examples of alac in practice continued

Taking responsibility ourselves - not just coming to moan
ALAC Participant
The process also showed the relevance of democratic protocols – the young people putting their classroom citizenship education into action through formalised decision-making processes that enabled them to have their vote regardless of, and because of the presence of other adult authority figures. Local councillors are also learning how to engage in serious planning conversations with its younger citizens and are developing with the young people processes that can contribute to the writing of the Parish Plan and the presentation of issues at council meetings.

Outcomes & lessons for the future
Working with young people at Saxilby School enabled us to explore another important facet of active citizenship - the ability to take part in community decision-making and civic life. The ‘R U Listing?’ Project challenged local councillors and others in authority to talk to a group of 10 year olds who wanted to contribute to discussion about how to improve village life - by actively addressing issues such as litter and dog-fouling and by contributing to parish decision-making about whether the village could organise a youth club for 8-13 year olds. The project has culminated in the inclusion of an 8-13 Youth Club in the village plan and the development of new relationships between young people, councillors, youth managers and community police officers.

Headline reflections
Social change / justice
• Ensuring young people also have a say in village planning processes
• Promote social solidarity to strengthen communities
• Enable people to identify common issues/problems and finding solutions

Inclusion / participation
• Real participation of young people in village politics and decision-making
• Workshop activities to identify issues and to generate civic actions

Challenging inequalities
• Using formal decision-making protocols to help challenge the inequalities in discussions created by the ‘authority’ of older generations
• Enhance and/or develop skills that enable learning to engage in local decision making (including planning, facilitation, negotiation and reporting skills)

Promoting diversity
• Learning of young people and adults – how to communicate / what others offer / who else should be involved and why
• Enable excluded groups to become more active citizens and to have their voices heard

4 different examples of alac in practice continued

[Young people in the project] are very important to us [councillors]. To be honest we’ve not been able to get young people involved [before this project]. Older people are very good at coming forward and saying what they’d like.

ALAC Participant
19

outcomes

3.1 Active Citizens
The Take Part Learning Framework highlights the need for active, informal citizenship education that promotes the values of social change & justice, inclusion and participation, challenging inequalities and promoting diversity and empowerment.

In their evaluation report Mayo & Rooke (2006 p.57) indicate the different roles active learning for active citizenship may play in strengthening civil and civic society and addressing social exclusion and improving social justice. Such learning may, for example:

- Encourage excluded groups to engage in public life
- Enable excluded groups to become more active citizens
- Strengthen active citizenship in the voluntary and community sector
- Enable people to know their rights and find their voice
- Enable service users to shape and influence service provision
- Enhance and/or develop skills that enable learning to engage in local decision making
- Enable people to identify common issues/problems and finding solutions
- Enable communities to negotiate conflict, for example between community members and service providers
- Promote social solidarity to strengthen communities


The Take Part: Active Learning for Active Citizenship approach encourages a flexible approach to learning provision – starting from communities experiences and developing learning engagements that meet their needs. Clearly in order to do this there must also be an ongoing conversation between participants and providers to create valuable learning experiences and to be able to identify learning outcomes.

Three themes have particular resonance to the experiences of the East Midlands Take Part Hub in the course of this project. These are the themes of supporting the self-development of (and audience for) community ‘voices’ (particularly from ‘hard-to-reach’ learners) strengthening dialogue within society and facilitating learning that supports active community decision-making and democratic involvement.

3.1.1 Strengthening Voices
The issue of creating or strengthening existing voices has been an essential ingredient in the project. The underpinning methodology, ‘constructed conversations’ explicitly acknowledges the role of reflexive learning processes (and feedback) to amplify communications and to strengthen actors: in terms of the participant’s own identity, in terms of the recognition of them by others and in terms of the interaction with others. The theme of voice is something that resonates through the 4 learning groups that have developed within the project. These have looked at different forms of informal learning in very different contexts, as shown in Part 1.

We have, for example, seen a group of new arrivals from Eastern Europe create a very tangible voice within the community using radio broadcasting, junior school children making their voice in heard in village politics and decision-making, Mental Health Service Users and Carers working to strengthen an existing voice and voluntary sector Project Managers finding new forms of language to voice their activities and aspirations for improving social justice.

3.1.2 Capacity-building for creating dialogue
Another recurring theme is that of learning that actively supports improved dialogue between citizens. In the case of voluntary and public sector Project Managers this dialogue has taken the form of both strategic, policy-informing debate and supporting, reflection amongst peers about existing and potential practice for active citizenship. Both discourses were constructed throughout the project leading to the emergence of a distinct flavour of active citizenship education in Lincolnshire. It is seen as a process building from both sides - encouraging the development of active and engaged citizens and an effective, responsive state (Mayo & Rooke, 2006, p.6).

Linking Voices’ members provided another example of the processes of dialogue in active citizenship. Their motivation for taking part included the desire to build their capacity to engage Service Providers in conversations about service provision in order to use their collective experiences to help improve provision as a trusted partner in the process.
The process of contributing to this dialogue involved strengthening individual and organisational skills for designing &/ or taking part in participatory evaluation processes and social enterprise activities - including discussions about interviewing and other survey methods, relevant skills possessed by the group and possibilities for creating new dynamics.

The ‘R U Listning?’ Project also had the theme of dialogue at its heart - in this case inter-generational dialogue on issues impacting on village life. In this project young people used a variety of business planning workshop approaches to help lay out and discuss key issues with adults. For example, one councillor expressed the view that through the project he had learnt that you could hold ‘sensible’ conversations with Primary School children and that many issues were of common concern to both parties. It was also evident through the process that each generation had different resources they could contribute but that these needed to be co-ordinated through a facilitated process that requires patience (on both sides) to develop.

The content being produced by the Polish radio programming also contributes to the theme of dialogue. As expressed in their business planning conversations Voice.P1 - Lincolnshire Polish Association intends to create a voice that helps develop community cohesion. It sees a role engaging new arrivals in conversations about living in the UK and participating in community life.

The project has also sought to contribute to improved future dialogue within communities in very practical ways - through developing active citizenship learning provision that is also linked to improving capacity for speaking and writing English and through providing support and guidance for improving the quality of employment and other opportunities to take part in society. Internal discussions have included ways that they might contribute in future in a variety of media - e.g. writing pieces for the local paper and providing face-to-face support / opportunities for people to meet and socialise.

3.1.3 Decision making and democratic involvement

Again this theme resonated in different ways with the 4 groups of community learners participating in the project.

In the ‘R U Listning?’ Project the theme is overtly stated. Young People rarely have the opportunity to be involved in decision-making beyond their school or peer community - they are excluded by argument of age from most if not all civic and civil decision-making. The aim of the project was to involve young people in local decision-making processes and engage them with local policy-makers in such a way that they (and the adults involved) learnt to find appropriate means for meaningful engagement. The learning aims included enabling young people to gain an appreciation of what is involved in democratic processes and how one can become involved as an active citizenship and make a change.

In this case the changes under discussion included the proposal from the young people for a youth club for 8-13 year olds and smaller scale on-going decision-making within the group that brought adults and young people together in action as citizens (e.g. organising Saturday litter pick-ups and creating mechanisms for dealing with dog-fouling - creating new reporting mechanisms, liaising with the Parish officers, planning information campaigns and identifying problem areas). The project has run alongside existing citizenship education within the schools and extended it by providing resources to create spaces for developing active citizenship in the wider community (e.g. by providing a group facilitator, venue, catering, workshop materials and paying for supply cover for the class teacher involved). Young people demonstrated familiarity and confidence with formal meeting and voting procedures - putting these to good use in expressing their views (e.g. contributing to making decisions within a group consisting in a fairly even split between young people and others - Councillors, Chair of Governors, Police, Youth Worker, Parish Clerk etc). Very valuable lessons are being learnt (e.g. how decisions are made, how to influence and structure debates, who to invite to meetings and their roles in the decision-taking, how to introduce new topics and raise concerns relevant to young people, how to write plans, hold meetings, and generally create fairer processes for all involved). There is still much ground to cover in developing this process with young people - for instance how can we empower young people to drive some of these processes? Or create new forms of interaction? We see this as an essential area for further study and engagement.
The group also reflected on their own processes of decision-making as they planned and constituted themselves as a Social Enterprise. Governance and decision-making / potential conflict resolution being reviewed in small group sessions as their ideas developed. Voice. pl - Lincolnshire Polish Association produces a regular community radio programme that airs weekly exploring (in Polish) many issues about life in the UK and how to take part in it.

3.1.4 Skills for volunteering and employment

The Active Learning for Active Citizenship – Best Practice Project has acknowledged the importance of a wide range of life skills in order to support active citizenship. These skills include those that enable citizens to interact, to have the confidence to take part, and to be an active part of society both as employees and as volunteers. These skills have been developed in different ways with the four key groups.

Project Managers have been encouraged to develop a range of skills related to building future capacity for community empowerment activity. They have been encouraged to reflect on the ways they and their organisations impact upon active citizenship in the region. Several managers have also been given support in developing their organisations and creating the capacity to continue this beyond the formal project duration.

Young People at Saxilby have also been developing employment and volunteering related skills. In particular, they have been learning to develop Business Plans and to engage in group decision-making processes. They have also had a (hands-on, informal) introduction to chairing meetings, taking notes and the processes of minuting and reporting.

‘Linking Voices’ participants have been involved in several pieces of employment-related support. This has included skills-profiling, peer interviewing and small group work to identify existing and potential skills sets and an audit of skills available to the organisation - either in potential employee or volunteering positions.

The new arrivals group undertook the most formalised of skills training. They engaged in citizenship and ESOL classes that combined English language tuition with active citizenship learning. Half of those taking part undertook entry level ESOL test and 3 participants took the Advanced English tests. As well as this English language provision, participants also received training in producing radio programmes, advice on presenting their CVs, support in reviewing their employment options and support in setting up a Social Enterprise and writing a Business Plan. A social enterprise “Voice. pl, Lincolnshire Polish Association”, has been formed and is operating beyond the duration of the project.

The learners from new arrival communities also addressed the issue of decision-making and democratic involvement throughout their activities. Combining ESOL with civic engagement learning is one such example.

The work with Service Users and Carers also explicitly addresses this theme. How can users of services help create improved interactions with the providers of these services that may lead to improvement in services (or greater understanding of existing priorities and the mechanisms for deciding them)? This is a more subtle interpretation of decision-making, linked to building a long term relationship of mutual respect and engagement between providers and users of services. The project approached this issue in 2 ways - firstly it sought to provide activities that strengthen individuals and organisations through reflective practice and the space to review what they were doing and why, secondly and more obviously the development of knowledge and expertise around participatory evaluation is expected by those participating to strengthen their abilities to interact with service providers and to be able to contribute to higher quality reviews of service provision combining provider and user perspectives.

The Project Managers group were similarly engaged in a process of reflection about how their individual and organisational behaviours enable or restrict the communities they are working with from taking an active part in civil and civic society. This concern underpinned the learning throughout and is an essential element of the Take Part approach.

The learners from new arrival communities also addressed the issue of decision-making and democratic involvement throughout their activities. Combining ESOL with civic engagement learning is one such example.
3.1.5 Reviewing community empowerment practice in the county

The work of the Active Learning for Active Citizenship – Best Practice Project has involved identifying existing and potential community empowerment practice in the County. This has used the National Take Part Learning Framework approach to informal learning and a participatory approach.

60 individuals (predominantly from voluntary sector organisations) responded to our invitation for interview following the distribution of the guide for practice. The concepts surrounding Active Learning for Active Citizenship were found to be relatively unfamiliar to many participants and part of the process has been to explore and reinforce knowledge about it that can be put to use within organisations – particularly within the voluntary and public sectors. Community Empowerment activity in Lincolnshire has been found in different degrees in different places. Community Development organisations have been working to engage communities in data collection and dialogue with authorities about changes affecting their communities. Smaller organisations report their role developing a voice for their membership, lobbying on key issues and inviting speakers to expand on issues of community interest. Organisations varied in the extent to which they explicitly talked about their role in influencing decision-making and shaping civil and civic society.

3.2 Active Citizenship and ESOL / civic education

The ‘Active Learning for Active Citizenship – Best Practice for Lincolnshire’ Project set out to identify and establish good practice in Lincolnshire in informal community education for active citizenship. One of the many good practices identified has been the value of combining active citizenship learning with ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages). It has reinforced the importance of ESOL in community engagement activities and especially for developing civic engagement for speakers of other languages.

Work with the new arrival community in Lincolnshire has demonstrated the value of producing this combination. The take-up and time commitments demonstrated by this group of learners clearly indicate the need for this kind of provision and the value that it has provided. The value was more than just basic skills development – though that in itself was highly valued – it was also the opportunity to relate this to a wide range of natural issues identified by the group as being important in the process of community integration and community cohesion. The new social enterprise Voice.pl - Lincolnshire Polish Association explicitly states in its business plan that one of its objectives is community cohesion and its use of the image of the radio mike and the two national flags in its stationery and promotional material help emphasise the importance that this group of new UK residents place on language and dialogue to actively create a more active and engaged society, talking to each other.

3.3 Skills/Economic Impact (Radio, Social Enterprise and Employability)

Whilst the focus of the project has always been about learning for active citizenship the project has also highlighted the need for meeting a range of skills development and employment needs that impact upon the ability of citizens to become active citizens. It has also highlighted the value of active learning for active citizenship for developing a range of skills and identifying and relating these to employment and volunteering activities.

For example the work with the new arrivals group developed skills in English Language (culminating in grammar tests and in some cases Advanced ESOL tests), skills development for radio production (e.g. using technology and making programs), business planning and organisational development for the new social enterprise. Other activities were also relevant to improving residents’ opportunities for engaging in active citizenship. These included support to find better employment (e.g. advice on preparing CVs, support for employment related issues and discussions about practical, legal and cultural issues about life in the UK).

Young people engaged in the planning exercises at Saxby similarly learnt a range of skills that will be valuable to future employment. These include experience of writing action plans, chairing meetings and taking notes, structuring issues and being involved in workshop activities exploring decision-making. However, just as important have been a range of other social skills such as personal confidence, listening and taking part in debate – the class teacher noting the participants’ developments in this respect.
Participants' from the Participatory Evaluation Workshop series (including the mental health service users and carers group) developed a range of skills and expertise in participatory evaluation - skills which the group intends to put to use in future paid and unpaid activities.

Linking Voices were also provided with resources to undertake activities that encouraged respondents to identify the skills and interests they have and how they might want to contribute these to the future activities of the organisation. This audit provided a good response and along with other activities helped some individuals to identify that they did possess a wealth of skills and experiences (as an example several participants had education or training backgrounds). As the majority of the respondents are not currently in employment, this offered a confidential, non-threatening way of identifying future opportunities and the building confidence of participants to engage in society through employment or volunteering/employment-related activities.

Project Managers were mostly if not exclusively in employment. However, the project helped individuals to reflect on general skills, knowledge and expertise in relation to active learning for active citizenship that are transferable across different jobs and in various community contexts. Since at least 6 of the 27 learners in this group are already in new posts at different organisations the importance of this kind of transferable learning across the sector cannot be underestimated.

All groups demonstrated the need for further ‘training for trainers’, i.e. the development of a network of trainers familiar with the Take Part approach who can further develop activities and expand future activities across Lincolnshire and the East Midlands. The skills base required for this does not necessarily demand prior accredited learning and represents a further potential economic benefit from the project.

In total the project assisted 119 people in their skills development, created / safeguarded 3 posts, provided assistance to 31 people in relation to getting a job and similarly provided assistance to 22 individuals already in employment in order to support them gaining better quality employment. The project assisted the management of more than 9 organisations, helping 2 organisations to improve their performance (in social as well as other terms) and helped 2 organisations to set themselves up as social enterprises.

3.4 Informal Learning

This project has demonstrated that informal community learning is able to offer spaces where people can improve their knowledge, skills competencies and confidence through learning and reflective practice. This increased capacity is about the ability to improve engagement in the community.

The project developed learning opportunities for many different ages, including those of working years and those younger or retired. It highlights the need throughout life to be supported in our mutual learning as active citizens.

The project builds on a heritage of adult and informal community learning and has illustrated the importance of these learning activities being:

- facilitated by trainers with a knowledge and understanding of active learning for active citizenship and the Take Part approach
- driven by the learners and addressing their natural concerns
- monitored and evaluated in a participatory manner and in spaces that are:
  - Safe and non-threatening
  - accessible / comfortable
  - conducive to learning and reflection

This is not the same as traditional lecturing. It is facilitated learning related to observation of practice that reinforces learning lessons whilst highlighting learning opportunities.

The Active Learning for Active Citizenship – Best Practice Project has helped to build the capacity of managers and other individuals both to engage in these forms of informal learning and to actively develop the community empowerment agenda in their organisations/communities. Several participants continue to work with us beyond the end of the project, forming stronger bonds between the community and voluntary sector and higher education.
4. Conclusions
The ‘Active Learning for Active Citizenship Best Practice for Lincolnshire’ Project has shown the importance of creating community learning provision that connects action and observation, through a process of conversation, with the aim of finding ways to developing active citizens. It has provided space for constructive dialogue and opportunities for self-observation at the same time as honest and constructive peer review.

The approach embraces the principles of social justice and community empowerment, engaging people and building knowledge about the structures and processes of power. Learners are at the centre of this process, driving the learning and the focus of action and reflection. This is a process of lifelong learning which encourages active citizenship through learning from one’s own experiences and identifying issues and matters of relevance to the group of learners.

The project has highlighted the importance of supporting informal community learning opportunities and to see this as a valuable way of working with communities to identify and address needs related to taking part.

The value of combining ESOL with civic engagement activities for new arrival communities should be noted along with the importance of providing learning provision that supports the inclusion of groups currently excluded from decision-making, such as young people, or those sometimes marginalised or stigmatised, e.g. mental health service users and carers.

Such informal, community-based, learning processes require experienced facilitation. The Take Part approach (ALAC, 2006 and Mayo & Rooke, 2006) provides a framework for active learning for active citizenship in practice and identifies specific characteristics for training for trainers in this approach and for participatory evaluation. The experiences of this project have demonstrated how valuable this kind of provision can be and how it meets a range of needs across different, (sometimes hard-to-reach), groups in society.

The value of supporting the development of learning amongst project managers in both the statutory and voluntary sectors has been highlighted as has the need to develop high quality training for trainers to be able to extend and develop this provision.

The ‘Active Learning for Active Citizenship Best Practice for Lincolnshire’ Project has contributed to furthering our collective regional and national understanding of the learning needs and barriers to participation of the 4 groups taking part in this project, and has generated lessons for future providers and policy makers. It has created considerable additional capacity for further work in this field and has helped to link local, regional and national activity in active learning for active citizenship. It has identified a network of enthusiastic learners in this field and the East Midlands Take Part Hub continues to work with these individuals and organisations to maintain and build the continued capacity for this type of activity in the region.
references

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DIUS, 2008a ‘Focussing English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) on Community Cohesion’ Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills

DIUS, 2008b ‘Informal Adult Learning – Shaping the Way Ahead’ Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills

LCN, 2006 ‘Take Part East Midlands: Active Citizenship in Practice’ Lincolnshire Citizenship Network


Websites

www.lincolnshirecitizenshipnetwork.org
www.takepart.org
Appendix 1: Report on Project Outputs

Levels of participation in learning activities (Summary of outputs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of participation</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conference Registration</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in survey interviews</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered ALAC learners</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (organisational interactions etc.)</td>
<td>More than 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Numbers of Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project element</th>
<th>No. of participants</th>
<th>No. of registered learning hours</th>
<th>Av. No. learning hours/participant</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Arrivals</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory Evaluation - Linking Voices Members</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory Evaluation - other participants</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Managers</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R U Listening?</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Informal learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of participation</th>
<th>Number of learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6+ hours of learning activities</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 6 hours</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of outputs (total for project as at 14 March 2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output measures</th>
<th>Nos. for project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For measures in the original application</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs created or safeguarded</td>
<td>2 FTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People assisted to get a job</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People assisted in their skills development</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Support for unemployed, over 45s</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Enterprises – operating for more than 12 months</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People assisted for better quality employment</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVOs in receipt of learning materials - best practice guides</td>
<td>630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVOs Assisted - through engagement in consultation</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outputs additional to original application</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of new community facilities supported by LE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of businesses assisted to improve their performance</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of businesses assisted with management/leadership skills</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. new businesses in disadvantaged areas</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 2: Extracts from the Calendar of learning events provided, 2006-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Participants / Learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 April 2006</td>
<td>CVS Managers ALAC Workshops Community Research Associates / project managers group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 May 2006</td>
<td>CVS Managers ALAC Workshops Community Research Associates / project managers group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 May 2006</td>
<td>CVS Managers Informal learning Members of the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 June 2006</td>
<td>CVS Managers ALAC Workshops Community Research Associates / project managers group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 July 2006</td>
<td>CVS Managers ALAC Workshops Community Research Associates / project managers group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Sept 2006</td>
<td>CVS Managers Informal learning Members of the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2006</td>
<td>ALL “POWER To The People”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2006</td>
<td>CVS Managers Drafting workshops - Best Practice Guide Community Research Associates / project managers group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Nov 2006</td>
<td>ALL ALAC Conference 165 attendees. Predominantly Public Sector and CVS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Feb 07</td>
<td>Mental Health Small group planning session / informal learning Health Service and CVS Managers with interest in mental health group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 March 07</td>
<td>New Arrivals ESOL and Active Citizenship classes New arrival communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 March 07</td>
<td>Mental Health Initial engagement with Linking Voices (at Sleaford) Experiential learning and participatory development Linking Voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 March 07</td>
<td>New Arrivals ESOL and Active Citizenship classes New arrival communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 March 07</td>
<td>New Arrivals ESOL and Active Citizenship classes New arrival communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 March 07</td>
<td>New Arrivals ESOL and Active Citizenship classes New arrival communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 April 07</td>
<td>Mental Health + wider E.Mids Participatory Evaluation - Introductory Session (VCs Annex) Public Sector, CVS and Linking Voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 April 07</td>
<td>Mental Health + wider E.Mids Participatory Evaluation - Session 2 (VCs Annex) with Goldsmiths College Public Sector, CVS and Linking Voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 April 07</td>
<td>New Arrivals ESOL and Active Citizenship classes New arrival communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 May 07</td>
<td>New Arrivals ESOL and Active Citizenship classes New arrival communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 May 07</td>
<td>New Arrivals ESOL and Active Citizenship classes New arrival communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 May 07</td>
<td>New Arrivals ESOL and Active Citizenship classes New arrival communities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 2: Extracts from the Calendar of learning events provided, 2006-2008 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Participants / Learners</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24 May 07</td>
<td>Mental Health + wider E.Mds</td>
<td>Participatory Evaluation - Session 3 (VCs Annex) with Goldsmiths College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 May 07</td>
<td>New Arrivals</td>
<td>ESOL and Active Citizenship classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 May 07</td>
<td>New Arrivals</td>
<td>ESOL and Active Citizenship classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 June 07</td>
<td>New Arrivals</td>
<td>ESOL and Active Citizenship classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 June 07</td>
<td>New Arrivals</td>
<td>Community Radio and Active Citizenship learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 June 07</td>
<td>New Arrivals</td>
<td>ESOL and Active Citizenship classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 June 07</td>
<td>New Arrivals</td>
<td>Community Radio and Active Citizenship learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 June 07</td>
<td>New Arrivals</td>
<td>ESOL and Active Citizenship classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 June 07</td>
<td>New Arrivals</td>
<td>ESOL and Active Citizenship classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 July 07</td>
<td>Young People / volunteers</td>
<td>Saxby ’R U Listening’ - 1st workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 July 07</td>
<td>Mental Health + wider E.Mds</td>
<td>Participatory Evaluation - Session 4 (VCs Annex) with Goldsmiths College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 July 07</td>
<td>New Arrivals</td>
<td>ESOL and Active Citizenship classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 July 07</td>
<td>New Arrivals</td>
<td>Community Radio and Active Citizenship learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 July 07</td>
<td>New Arrivals</td>
<td>CV preparation and searching for employment workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 August 07</td>
<td>Mental Health + wider E.Mds</td>
<td>Participatory Evaluation - Session 5 with Goldsmiths College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Aug 07</td>
<td>New Arrivals</td>
<td>Employment interviews session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Sept 07</td>
<td>Mental Health + wider E.Mds</td>
<td>Participatory Evaluation - Session (Riseholme) with Goldsmiths College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Extracts from the Calendar of learning events provided, 2006-2008 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Participants / Learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17 Oct 07 Mental Health + wider E.Mids</td>
<td>Participatory Evaluation – Session (Riseholme) with Goldsmiths College, Public Sector, CVS and Linking Voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Nov 07 Young People / volunteers</td>
<td>Saxby ‘R U Listening’ – 2nd workshop Parish Councillors and young people (from Years 5 &amp; 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Dec 07 Mental Health Skills profiling workshop in Sleaford</td>
<td>Linking Voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Feb 07 New Arrivals Business Planning / new Social Enterprise</td>
<td>Voice:PI Lincolnshire Polish Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Feb 07 Agency workers Employability Skills</td>
<td>Voice:PI Lincolnshire Polish Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Feb 07 Young People / volunteers</td>
<td>Saxby ‘R U Listening’ – 3rd workshop Parish Councillors and young people (from Years 5 &amp; 6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 3: Statistics for learner participation

Take-up of the voluntary, informal learning opportunities provided by the project far exceeded the original learning targets, and support and enthusiasm for this form of provision was shown by all 4 of the community groups worked with. In all, the project provided in excess of 1,300 hours of individual learning and development.

**[A] Voluntary Sector Project Managers**

There was strong demand for informal learning activities with Project Managers, particularly from the voluntary and community sector, with more than 218 learner hours being recorded by Project Managers.

Statistics for Learner Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>27</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Learners Enrolled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of ‘events’ with the group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Learning Hours</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Av. No. learning hours per person</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**[B] Mental Health Service Users and Carers**

Participants from Linking Voices averaged more than 20 registered learning hours each with the project. This was matched by a similar time commitment outside the project.

Statistics for Learner Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Learners Enrolled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of ‘events’ with the group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Learning Hours</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Av. No. learning hours per person</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4: Methodology, Dissemination & Partnership working

1. Methodology
Best practice in cultivating active citizenship has emerged through an approach that increases the capacity to identify, engage, and provide targeted hard-to-reach groups with support to meet their particular learning needs. To do this involved:

- Undertaking outreach activities to reach the identified excluded groups through attending community meetings, workshops for volunteers, visits to support groups etc.
- Establishing needs, provision and learning content in an on-going, two-way process with the target groups; through reflective learning groups, workshops, conferences.
- One-to-one, informal activities and meetings.
- At the same time, working with identified groups of local decision makers to establish a platform for influence, implementing active citizenship rather than passive information teaching.

The approach has sought to enable learners to understand their environment in the UK and how to change circumstances and influence local decision-makers. It involves exploring these issues in a mobile and flexible manner creating the learning opportunities through one-to-one or very small group work as well as more formalised classroom/workshop or conference activity.

The methodological approach includes the use of a ‘constructed conversation’ approach. The Project team are engaged in sustained conversations with participants and providers through a range of different learning mediums in order to identify and respond to need. The Project has delivered a range of learning experiences, ranging from highly informal one-to-one sessions to learning workshops, training programmes and conferences. The Project has implemented a range of innovative learning approaches including:

- Training that brings new arrival communities together with University tutors for the production of community radio programmes exploring life as a UK citizen (in partnership with Siren FM).
- This includes creating the capacity for community members to design and produce programmes themselves and for the development of active citizenship content.
- Combining English Language and citizenship education provision for new arrival communities.
- Developing Participatory Evaluation Training in a learning partnership with community groups (including the community and voluntary sector managers and people in mental health networks/communities).
- Developing opportunities for inter-generational dialogue on citizenship issues and decision making.
- Exploring civil engagement, strategic leadership and public engagement issues with Project Managers from statutory sector and community and voluntary sector organisations.
- Exploring possibilities for linking active citizenship learning to social enterprise.

Statistics for Learner Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics for Learner Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Learners Enrolled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of 'events' with the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Learning Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Av. No. learning hours per person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistics for Learner Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Learners Enrolled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of 'events' with the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Learning Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Av. No. learning hours per person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Migrant Workers/New Arrival Communities

The take-up of informal learning was the greatest in this group. 39 individuals from new arrival communities attended many weekly sessions, totally nearly 800 registered learner hours with some individuals taking part in over 50 hours activity on the project.

Young People

“R U Listening?” has had support from young people and adults alike. The hours detailed here are matched by additional weekend and school-time activities and some continuing dialogue beyond the end of the formal project period.
3. Partnership working

The Lincolnshire Citizenship Network has sought to identify and engage with groups across Lincolnshire and to extend the network into the East Midlands region. It has also sought to develop the East Midlands Take Part Hub as a nationally recognised ambassador of Community Empowerment, able to contribute to policy and practice through the experience and reflection of its participants.

The partnerships created and sustained through this project are a distinctive feature of its success. Identification and access to ‘hard-to-reach’ communities has been achieved through careful partnership working – identifying and working with what is already in place at a grassroots level. Partnership working has also been important for dissemination and development purposes and for the creation of new opportunities. The Project has been closely involved with the following organisations (as well as many others):

- CALL Advocacy
- Converge Learning Consortium
- East Lindsey District Council (Equality & Diversity)
- Healthy Communities (Lincolnshire County Council)
- Lincoln College
- Lincolnshire Citizenship Network
- Lincolnshire Rural Stress Network
- Linking Voices (Community Lincs)
- Saxilby Primary School
- Share The Care
- The OASIS Project
- Victim Support Lincolnshire
- Voice.pl Lincolnshire Polish Association & Eastern European Support Group

PLUS

- Councillors connected to Saxilby village - Parish, District and County councils

appendices continued

2. Disseminating Good Practice

Engaged learning processes have led to the production of a guide to practice “Active Citizenship in Practice- Active Learning in Lincolnshire” - produced and disseminated in November 2006. This was a collaborative production, co-authored by the project team and 12 project participants.

A regional Active Learning for Active Citizenship conference was organised for November 2006 and this was a successful event; very well attended by a range of organisations, individuals and agencies. Invitations to the ALAC conference were distributed by post and email, directly from the CORU team, through the databases of project participants and through the region’s CVSs and other organisations. This conference was the vehicle for launching the National Learning Framework in the region, disseminating the guide to practice, celebrating existing work in Active Citizenship and exploring needs, gaps and opportunities – as well as being a mechanism to make new contacts for the network across the region.

Dissemination of good practice continued across the 4 subgroups during 2007 and 2008. Lessons learnt were shared with the Steering Group, with local and regional partners and with the National Take Part Network. The 3 Universities taking part in the delivery of the Participatory Evaluation Approach workshops have been working closely together to maintain the process of identifying and disseminating the lessons for active citizenship learning and education.
Partnership working with other Higher Education Institutions has led to the opportunity to develop training for community participants within this project on the theme of Participatory Evaluation. This training has been developed and delivered in a partnership between Goldsmiths College, Manchester Metropolitan University, the Community Development Foundation and Lincoln University. This Participatory Evaluation seminar series was in response to needs highlighted by several groups, in the November ALAC conference and elsewhere in our constructed conversations.

The Lincolnshire Citizenship Network has expanded during the project, and now has a comprehensive database on learning interests related to active citizenship.

The Project has been very well supported by a very strong Steering Group from the voluntary and statutory sectors. This participation has proved invaluable for the development of sustainable growth within the sub-project areas and is likely to be an important contribution to the sustainability of community learning activities after this current project closes.

External partnerships have also been developed. These include funding bodies and local and regional development agencies. Very strong links have been forged nationally as part of the Take Part national network. These partnerships have impacted on the Project in many significant ways. These impacts include the participation of national speakers in the November conference (including speakers from the Department for Communities and Local Government, Goldsmiths College, NACC, the Workers Education Association and the ALAC National Network). The Project continues to inform policy and practice at a national level.
We would particularly like to acknowledge the contribution of Prof. Marj Mayo (Goldsmith's, University of London), Carole Packman (Manchester Metropolitan University), Alison Gilchrist (Community Development Foundation), Andrew David (Siren.FM, University of Lincoln), Sara Osmond (University of Lincoln), Rachell Ballie, Christian Barlett, Phil Considine, Rebecca Dray, Kathrin Forster, Linda Loughlin, Frank Kelly, Victoria Mann, Jenny Reynolds (facilitators) Cllr Peter Walton (Saxilby) and the following individuals:

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Paulina Babuchowska,
David Barker,
Tim Barzycki,
Caroline Clarke,
Laura Devaney,
Patricia Dawson,
Rebecca Dray,
Celia Evershed,
Darius Filip,
Cameron Fitzwilliam-Grey,
Jane Fletcher,
Ria Harkess,
Jennifer Jackson,
Konrad Jakrewski,
Michal Komar,
Daniel Kopeć,
Ewa Kozak,
Chris Lambert,
Marcin Liminowicz,
Vanessa Lindley,
Gordon Massie,
Pat Massie,
Ann McGir,
Paula Noble,
Nicholas Pankiw,
Piotr Potwora,
Dawn Renne,
Jenny Reynolds,
Christine Ridgwell,
Alan Robson,
Edyta Suchan,
Gintare Svirskyte,
Michael Stephens,
John Tear,
Marianna Wieldosz,
Joanna Zygadło,
Katarzyna Lawrowska
active learning for active citizenship

best practice for lincolnshire

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