



EVENT REPORT

Active Citizenship for All Londoners

**Celebrating the achievements
of Take Part in London**



**24th February 2011
Mary Sumner House
Westminster**



1. Introduction

Take Part is an approach to learning for action within communities, which helps people gain the skills, knowledge and confidence to become involved in their communities and to influence the decisions that affect their daily lives.

Active Citizenship for All Londoners brought 74 people together from across the capital to celebrate the achievements and future aspirations of the Take Part programme in London.

The event was hosted by London Civic Forum, London's Take Part Champion, in partnership with Southwark Active Citizens Hub, the Take Part Pathfinder for Inner London. It was funded by the London Empowerment Partnership.

At London Civic Forum we feel passionately that it has never been more important to support all Londoners – including the most disadvantaged – to take up all the new rights and opportunities opening up under localism and the Big Society.

We believe that since 2006 Take Part has taken large strides towards this, and that it is vital that we find ways to sustain the learning and achievements of the programme.

Take Part is about people shaping their own learning, tackling real issues in their own communities, and reflecting on what they've achieved together.

Take Part is underpinned by the values of social justice, equality, diversity, cooperation and participation.

You'll find a wealth of Take Part resources at www.takepart.org and on www.londoncivicforum.org.uk. For photos of the event please see our Your Voice, Your City page on Facebook.

For more information, please contact Kate Burls, Take Part Co-ordinator at London Civic Forum at kateb@londoncivicforum.org.uk or on 020 8709 9773.

This event was funded by the London Empowerment Partnership, based at London Civic Forum.





2. Keynote Presentation

Take Part: Celebrating Active Citizenship for All Londoners

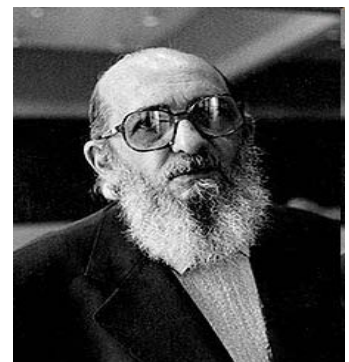
Professor Marj Mayo, Goldsmiths College, University of London

Professor Marj Mayo is a leading voice in active citizenship learning and research. She was involved in Take Part from the start, working on and evaluating the Active Learning for Active Citizenship pilots in 2004 and co-authoring the Take Part Framework, first published in 2006 and due for re-release in an updated edition in 2011. Her latest book, *Taking Part? Active Learning for Active Citizenship and Beyond* (co-authored with John Annette) was published in 2010, and she will be part of the ESRC *Taking Part? Research Cluster* in 2011-12.

The roots of Take Part

Take Part builds on best practice. It developed out of a long tradition of community-based active citizenship learning which goes back to Paulo Freire's work around community learning in 1970s Brazil, and builds on a strong history of community development in the UK.

In England, this work was piloted through the Active Learning for Active Citizenship Programme (ALAC) (2004-6). ALAC defined citizenship not only as voting and participating in governance but also as promoting social justice and social solidarity. There was a strong emphasis on user-led, experiential learning, using a range of participatory methods including workshops, mentoring and visits, as well as more formal courses.



Saul Alinsky



Learners in the West Midlands

ALAC was rooted in partnership work between voluntary and community sector organisations, universities and colleges. The programme supported a wide range of groups and individuals, including black and minority ethnic working class women, people with disabilities and their carers, refugees and asylum seekers, migrant agricultural workers, faith-based organisations and groups, white and established black and ethnic minority groups.

The programme was explicitly opposed to a 'deficit' model of community-based learning (one which assumes that learners have 'gaps' which need filling), but based on an approach which promotes local and global solidarity and learning from shared experience and reflection.

The outcomes from ALAC were impressive, demonstrating strong individual learning and progression, increased participation in voluntary and community sectors as active citizens, evidence of positive responses from some service providers and evidence of strengthened local community cohesion and international solidarity.

In 2006, the Take Part Learning Framework was published, articulating the learning from ALAC and building the case for continuation.

Learner perceptions

- 'I became the rep for disabled people in the community and started getting involved in decisions affecting disabled people in the community'...
- '...gave me real confidence...I am now deputy chairperson of the PCT'
- 'I have developed the drive to make change and the confidence to influence...'
- 'It has made me feel more influential...'
- I feel much more interested in politics...'
- We are building bridges with different groups in the community' (including between children, young people & adults)
- 'I am chair of the local Somali community organisation. I have learnt a lot about government in London & I will be taking that information back to my community'
- 'The openness & transparency ... has made us reflect on how we can work together better' (Local authority representative)



From 'I' to 'we'

Take Part: building on the first phase

The Take Part National Network has continued to grow, bringing together practitioners, learners, individuals and organisations to develop, support and promote Take Part learning. Take Part Pathfinders and the Champion Programme have further developed the approach. Finally, the Third Sector Capacity Building Research Cluster developed studentships, placement, vouchers and participatory research around active citizenship learning.

Recent and current Take Part initiatives include building on Empowerment Partnerships; enabling local communities to make their voices heard; enabling service users and carers to 'Speak up' effectively; developing learning partnerships with migrants, asylum seekers and refugee organisations and supporting their own research and development; learning citizenship via e-democracy; providing anti-racist popular education, and building solidarity and social cohesion and learning global citizenship; building research capacity in partnerships more generally, including women's organisations, with young people's initiatives, with community arts projects and with trade union organisations.

Take Part has never been more important. We face unprecedented challenges for public, voluntary and community sectors following the 2010 comprehensive spending review and new spaces for active and creative citizenship in context of decentralisation and related policies. Their success absolutely depends upon active, informed citizens Taking Part.

3. Take Part Showcase



Big thanks to all the project leads and learners who took part in our project showcase – Aisha, Angela, Ana and Modupe from Southwark Active Citizens Hub, Debby from the Community Leadership Legacy Programme, Nadine, Aiden, Betty, Mick and all the young people who attended from Newham, and Jartua from Carmel Bridge.

Their presentations were inspiring! Here are some highlights:

“Take Part changes everything... it affects all your senses.”

“I would never have done public speaking before. Take Part has helped me become an active citizen.”

“Take Part is all about working together to create peace, love and harmony.”

“None of us knew each other before and now we know each other really well... we had a lot of fun.”

“This project has been a fantastic opportunity for the young people at our club. They are fantastically talented people! And now they have been about to think about new things, and work with people that they haven’t had the opportunity to before.”

“It made us think about new things we could do in the future... like a sports day and adopt a granny.”

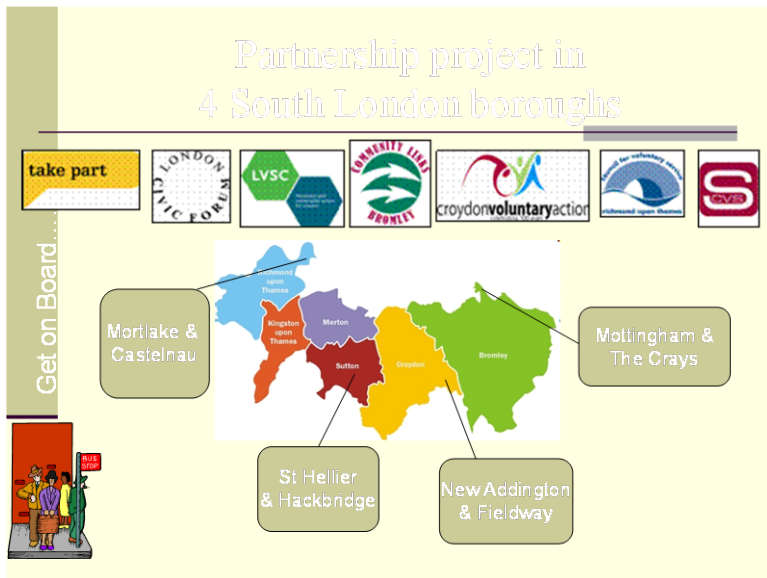
“I came through a Take Part course in public speaking at Southwark Active Citizens Hub. It inspired me to set up my own social enterprise, and now I’m delivering Take Part learning myself.”

For more information on the many achievements of **Southwark Active Citizens Hub** and its learners please see http://www.volunteercentres.org.uk/active_citizens_hub.

The following pages contain Debby Matthews’ presentation on the work of the **Community Leadership Legacy Programme** in South London, followed by case studies on featured **Take Part projects in Newham and Tower Hamlets**. Case studies on further projects can be found at www.londoncivicforum.org.uk/takepart/.

Community Leadership ...

What might it mean in one of the poorer estates in S. London?



CLLP (managed by LVSC and funded by the LEP at London Civic Forum) is running in 15 London boroughs, through 5 Coordinators. The CLLP approach:

- One year targeted support in selected areas
- Community leaders as local 'do-ers', not 'sayers'
- Involved people in meaningful projects, not just formal structures and meetings
- Training needs may be different than for community reps
- Some training might be for CVSs and local authorities, not just residents
- What does Big Society actually mean?

Event – Don't Miss the Big Society Bus, November 2010

Themes:

- Sutton's pilot projects: local v national government
- Potential for online virtual neighbourhoods to support real communities
- What needs to change at level of community representation?
- What skills might people need to make the Big Society work?
- What are Community Organisers?

As a Big Society Vanguard, Sutton is giving communities a bigger say on neighbourhood planning in Hackbridge, giving people influence and greater local choice over local transport, creating more engagement in local health provision and supporting young people to learn new life skills. Sutton CVS is also a Take Part Pathfinder.

Findings – at a neighbourhood level, we need to define our own 'social capital' and know our own patch:

- Is there a clear boundary and locality that everyone recognises?
- Who lives here, and who gets involved?
- What sort of services are there for people?
- How easy is it to travel out to other places?
- How safe do people feel? Do they know their neighbours?
- How do people find out about what is going on?
- Where do people go for help or advice if things go wrong?
- What role do the councillors play?

Case study – A New Project in Mottingham

One South London estate: Mottingham



- Planned in the 1980s mainly social housing
- On the edge of Borough, links to different Boroughs for services
- Poor transport links
- Shops shutting, only one main shop: the Coop
- Need to travel out for schools and shops
- Fear of crime

Many positives...

- Many long term residents are committed to improving things
- There is green space
- 5 years' funding through Big Local Trust
- The local community centre has just reopened
- Mottingham Forum is getting support to build capacity
- Local authority is involved

This group are not the 'usual suspects': there are some disability issues, including learning and reading difficulties. Participants prefer to use mobile phones, not email. Many are economically inactive. The group is racially mixed, although based in a predominantly white area. Most live in poor housing. They dislike formal meetings but are happy to help out.



The Mottingham group gets together

The group's priorities for action at this early stage include:

- Events
- Facebook page
- Mobile phone text messaging
- Better local information, including a Welcome Pack for new residents
- A local photo competition.



Looking at the positives,
working on the negatives

Some early learning:

- We can't expect people to do this on their own.
- Local Authority members might feel threatened
- Allow the group to change and evolve.
- Use people's skills and ideas!
- Word of mouth is best!
- Build trust by running activities.
- Communicate the good news stories.

For more information please contact
Deborah.Matthews@cvalive.org.uk.

Project Profile:

Take Part Workshops

Newham



London Civic Forum supported the London Borough of Newham, Royal Docks and Beckton Councillors, and local third sector consortium Advance to Deliver running sessions supporting residents to engage in community work and decision-making.

Throughout January, twenty five Newham residents – with an age range from 14 to 70+ – gathered in community spaces and worked together to build their skills, confidence and knowledge.

Sessions like these are crucial in raising the aspirations of young people in our community

Councillor Alec Kellaway



These sessions have given me a way to be active in my community.

I now know who my local councillors are, and what they do for my community!

Take Part is an approach to learning for action, which helps people gain the skills, knowledge and confidence to become involved in their communities and to influence the decisions that affect their daily lives.

Take Part is at the heart of London Civic Forum's vision of a strong, active and inclusive society working across London to build healthy communities and improve quality of life for all.



Take Part Workshops

Purpose: To bring residents together to identify solutions to local problems, and develop the skills, confidence and knowledge to become further involved in their communities and with their Council.

Take Part's informal learning approach was crucial in building individuals' confidence, helping people find common ground and enabling them to apply new skills.

Activities: Sessions were based around the process of planning a local community event, and took place in four different local community venues. Through group work, learners explored...

- Making ideas happen
- Finding the right support
- Problem-solving with Council and Councillors
- Organising and managing community events

Outcomes:

- Learners agreed that the course had helped them develop better knowledge, confidence and skills to get more engaged in local activity and democracy.
- Seven learners have since become Newham Active Community Team (ACT) volunteers, eight became Newham volunteers, and others are planning to become Olympics volunteers
- The course was hugely successful in bringing together younger and older community members to learn from each other, breaking down barriers and preconceptions

Into the future...

Participants hope to take forward projects including parenting support, outreach to the Chinese community, a community clean-up, Asian dress-making, drugs and health awareness, and teaching Brazilian martial art Capoeira.

For further information please contact:

Kate Burls, Take Part Coordinator, London Civic Forum: kateb@londoncivicforum.org.uk

Jenny Wilmott, Head of Community Leadership, LB Newham: Jenny.Wilmott@newham.gov.uk

Project Profile:

'We Can Make a Difference'

Tower Hamlets



take part

Account3 is a not-for-profit training and development company which aims to support the development of local people through the provision of advice and guidance, training, enterprise support and access to resources within a vibrant environment where skills and potential are valued.

Carmel Bridge is a social enterprise committed to empowering and developing Britain's diverse migrant communities.

With support from LCF, they created 'We Can Make A Difference', a Take Part programme of residential and weekly support sessions for 48 unemployed Tower Hamlets residents.

Now I know what to say to the council when my boiler breaks!



I understand English but now I feel I can speak it well too.

I have been able to learn in my own time, at my own pace.

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‘We Can Make A Difference’ Training Programme

Purpose: To empower, support and provide the necessary confidence and skills needed for female tenants living in social housing in Tower Hamlets to engage with local housing and residents’ services.

The Take Part model of learner-centred, active and reflective, and community-based learning helped participants learn at their own pace, tackling issues that impact on their lives, in a relaxed and friendly environment.

Activities:

- Residential course based on ‘Woman Be Heard’ materials (WEA)
- Weekly communications learning sessions: focus on local participation
- Weekly English as a Second Language (ESOL) sessions: focus on local participation

Outcomes:

- All learners say their confidence and communications skills have improved as a result of this programme, and that they are more aware of local and national news.
- 15 learners now regularly take part in local decision-making fora.
- 13 learners are now employed in newly created Tenant Liaison roles, and 2 have found employment with other agencies.
- Learners have established a new BME Women Tenants Panel which is regularly consulted by local housing associations.

Into the Future...

As a result of this programme 13 new Tenant Liaison posts were established at Tower Hamlets Homes and Stonewall Housing. Tower Hamlets Homes has committed to continuation funding of the ESOL classes.

For further information please contact:

Kate Burls, Take Part Coordinator, London Civic Forum: kateb@londoncivicforum.org.uk

Toni Meredith, Director, Account 3: ToniM@account3.org.uk

Jartua Gilpin, Carmel Bridge: jartua@carmelbridge.co.uk



4. Take Part Legacy

Jason Nuttall, Community Development Foundation

Nationally, Take Part was led by Community Development Fund and funded by Department for Communities and Local Government from 2008 to 2011. Nationally, Take Part supported 6569 people in 2009-10 and 8067 in 2010-11 (note there may be some double-counting in this figure!).

Take Part found that the key barriers to influence are practical issues, lack of confidence, knowledge of how to get involved, and understanding jargon.

Take Part has enhanced skills including communication and negotiation, improved knowledge of local, regional and national government, removed barriers to participation and learning by being flexible with participatory elements, and increased levels of confidence to influence officials, families and friends.

The long term impact of participants' enhanced knowledge, confidence and skills, leading to increased involvement with decision making, higher likelihood of pursuing volunteering and training opportunities, and a positive impact on educational and vocational activities.

There is clearly synergy between Take Part and the Big Society: building a fairer society, helping communities to overcome barriers, playing a part, social responsibility.

In the future, many Take Part Pathfinders and Champion organisations are committed to continuing or building on their Take Part work in some form, and continuing to establish new networks and partnerships. Sustainable partnerships such as the London Empowerment Partnership, buy-in from local authorities, continued sign-posting of learners and alternative sources of funding will help sustain Take Part support.

Take Part has been embedded in many ongoing courses and activities. The ESRC-supported *Taking Part? Research Cluster* will pursue research across higher education establishments in 2011-12.

Importantly, the national, independent Take Part Network will carry forward the programme's legacy.

5. More information

To learn more about Take Part or join the Take Part network, please see www.takepart.org. The website contains a wide range of downloadable support, learning and promotional materials and resources.

For information on London Civic Forum and Take Part in London please see www.londoncivicforum.org.uk/takepart/

Please contact Kate Burls at kateb@londoncivicforum.org.uk or on 020 8709 9773.



Volunteer Centre
Southwark
Making Volunteering Easy



6. Delegate List

Yousif	Al-Khoei	Al-Khoei Foundation
Jennifer	Anderson	Greater London Volunteering
Adnan		Take Part Hounslow
Alison	Blackwood	LVSC
Matthew	Booth	Ealing Council
Allison	Borden	Planning Aid for London
Charlotte	Brewster	LB Hounslow
Aisha	Bryant	Southwark Active Citizens Hub
Kate	Burls	London Civic Forum
Mary	Carroll	Abbey Youth Club
Annabel	Cattin	London Civic Forum
Petrulla	Clarke	
Christine	Collins	London Borough of Brent
Jill	Crumpton	London Borough of Greenwich
Lorna	Davies	CLLP North
Barbara	Drozdowicz	Barking and Dagenham CVS
Jasmin	Eriksson	Stop Smoking Service
Peter	Eversden	London Forum
Benjamin	Fraimow	Operation Black Vote
Nadine	Ford	London Borough of Newham
Debbie	Forde	London Borough of Newham
Alex	Gooding	BNRRN

Ann	Griffins	Ealing Council
Ularzee	Griffiths	
Syed	Haque	London Borough of Newham
Claire	Harding	London Civic Forum
Ann	Hayes	WEA
Ilana	Henderson	New Ventures PR Ltd
Preeti	Jha	BBC London
Aidan	Keightley	London Borough of Newham
Alexis	Keir	Elfrida Rathbone Camden
Adiva	Kestenbaum	Uprising
Barbara	Ludlow	London Borough of Camden
Modupe	Majekodunmi	Take Part Active Learning - Southwark
Beverley	Martin	HM Revenue & Customs CLLP South
Debbie	Matthews	
Marj	Mayo	Goldsmiths College
Angela	McIntosh	Southwark Volunteer Centre
Deirdre	McGrath	London Civic Forum
Catherine	McLoughlin	London Civic Forum
Dorothy	Mdoe	Ultimate Big Break
Miranda	Meadowcroft	
Toni	Meredew	Account3
Steve	Miller	SVM Associates
Sylvie	Montgomery	
Dorothy	Newton	CDNL
Jason	Nuttall	CDF
Nick	O'Donnell	Census 2011

Gordon	Owen	Messrs G Owen and Co
Joshua	Pame	Lewisham Take Part
Ana	Pinto	Southwark Volunteer Centre
Selma	Piro	Tower Time
Lesley	Powles	Forest Hill Peace Garden
Maya	Raczkowska	Londynek.net
Bartle	Sawbridge	London Borough of Merton
Matt	Scott	Community Sector Coalition
Dave	Sharman	Vanborough Community Association,
Kenyasue	Smart	Caribbean Network Community
Kahil	St.Aimee	BNRRN
Tobias	Staph	Toynbee Hall
Manolis	Stavrakakis	London Civic Forum
Nancy	Stridgen	London Borough of Lewisham
Zoe	Sykiotis	London Civic Forum
Kim	Tan	London Civic Forum
Nic	Vincett	Capacity Global
Ashok	Viswanathan	Operation Black Vote
Andrew	Wakefield	London Civic Forum
Gayle	Wallace	G.W Training & Consultancy Ltd
Katarzyna	Zagrodniczek	CLLP Inner East
Kamila	Zahno	Zahno Rao