



London Take Part Champion Programme 2010-11

Evaluation Report

London Civic Forum & Zahno Rao Associates, March 2011

Executive Summary

In 2010-11 London Civic Forum led the Take Part Champion Programme to promote active citizenship learning approaches. This was part of the national Take Part programme managed by Community Development Foundation. Through a £45,000 Development Fund and further 'Champion Offer' support for London agencies across sectors, we aimed to create a strong legacy for Take Part active citizenship learning approaches beyond 2011.

This evaluation reflects a wide range of positive outcomes for the programme, as well as learning from some less successful elements. Local agencies used Development Fund resources to help local people develop their skills, confidence and knowledge as active citizens, through a wide range of activity. The most successful work was flexible, tailored, delivered by local experts and supported by a strong understanding of local need; it worked best when integrated with other empowerment programmes and was very successful when it was used to empower public agencies and officers as well as local people. Learning points include the importance of using small pots of funding to catalyse further resourcing, allocating longer periods of time for project development, and supporting public agencies and community activists to work constructively together.

1. Introduction

1.1 What is Take Part?

Take Part is a learning approach which helps people gain the skills, confidence and knowledge to become more active citizens. Take Part works with a very broad definition of active citizenship – this could mean anything from being a good neighbour, taking part in social action (civil society participation), or influencing local decision making (civic participation) for example by becoming a school governor, magistrate or councillor.

The key characteristics of Take Part learning is that it is learner-led, active and reflective and community based. So Take Part is about people shaping their own learning, tackling real issues in their own communities, and reflecting on what they've achieved.

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

The national Take Part Programme was funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government and managed by the Community Development Foundation from 2007 to 2011. Eighteen regional Take Part Pathfinders across England developed and delivered a wide range of activities to people in local communities; their outcomes have been impressive (see CDF Evaluation).

1.2 The Take Part Champion Role

In early 2010 London Civic Forum became the Take Part Champion for London (as one of 9 regional Champions). The Champion role was to support a strong legacy for Take Part by widely promoting the approach to agencies across sectors (with a particular focus on public sector agencies) and supporting them to embed the approach in their existing and new active citizenship development work.

As part of this, Champions managed the Development Fund, £45,000 to support the development of new, small scale Take Part activity with a number of partners, to support them to learn about Take Part through delivering it, and to make further plans to embed it in their work. In London, £20,000 of this was offered, through an application process, to local authorities in the first instance. This sum was eventually split between four local authorities and one partnership made up of two voluntary and community sector organisations. The remaining £25,000 was allocated to the Community Leadership Legacy Programme (CLLP) a London Empowerment Partnership project working across fifteen London boroughs, also based at London Civic Forum, and funded through Connecting Communities. The aim of the CLLP was to coordinate community leadership activity at a sub regional level through sharing good practice, supporting the continuation of existing local community leadership activity and working with identified community leaders to increase engagement at a local level. The five CLLP Coordinators are based at Councils for Voluntary Service and work across sector and across boroughs, divided into five patches – North, South, West, Inner East and Outer East. The Take Part Development Fund was used to fund activities to fill in gaps in leadership activity and was about trying to get community leadership activity embedded into the work of both local authorities and CVSs.

1.3 The Purpose of the Current Evaluation

The current evaluation will explore the outcomes of Development Fund activity and the wider Champion Role. Our research questions are in four areas:

- 1. Who was involved, who benefited, and what motivated them?*
- 2. What has been the impact of Take Part Champion activities?*
- 3. What legacy and sustainability has been created?*
- 4. How well was the programme managed at LCF?*

1.4 Research methodology

This evaluation report is based on:

- demographic information about participants
- evaluation forms completed by participants and Champion Offer contacts
- evaluation reports submitted by Development Fund project leaders
- telephone interviews with Development Fund project leaders, by an independent evaluation consultant

- telephone interviews with Champion Offer contacts at other agencies, by an independent evaluation consultant
- face to face interviews with beneficiaries at 8 Development Fund projects

All interviews with Development Fund project leaders and Champion Offer contacts were conducted and transcribed by our independent evaluator. This report has been written in-house by the Take Part Co-ordinator at LCF. All raw data is available from LCF on request.

2. What objectives and needs was Champion support designed to meet?

2.1 Development Fund

All Development Fund project leaders identified strong, coherent objectives for their projects which fitted the overall Take Part aim to “help people gain the skills, confidence and knowledge to become more active citizens”.

Specific project objectives were developed on the ground to meet the needs of specific groups (rather than to address specific themes): examples in project leaders’ words include “to give skills and confidence to people who belonged to groups who were not very active”, “empower women”, “to bring together a group of people from the area who may not have been communicating before”. It is interesting that project leaders tended to place a more generalised emphasis on skills and confidence, and less on knowledge, and even less on the learning outcome of more active citizenship – taking part in neighbourhood activities or influencing local decisions.

Two Development Fund projects identified a strong need for statutory sector officers to develop improved skills, knowledge and confidence to engage more effectively with communities in order to support sustainable efforts towards the Take Part aim, and ran ‘mirror image’ learning programmes for these groups. Both of these projects had very positive outcomes, as explored below.

Most projects were planned to meet the individual needs of groups of people identified by geographical area, and occasionally gender or age. One project strongly identified the need for improved community cohesion as a motivation for involvement in the programme. Projects which had invested time in researching need in partnership with local community groups tended to have more successful outcomes (evidenced below).

One Development Fund programme aimed generally to meet the needs “of residents to have their voice heard” and “did not actively look for disadvantaged people – only those people who had not engaged before”. Recruiting a more disparate group of individuals, this programme was less successful in retaining learners – “people couldn’t see what they would get out of the course”. If the project leader was to run the programme again, she says she would “target a known group”.

The five Development Fund projects developed and delivered by the Community Leadership Legacy Programme coordinators fulfilled Take Part objectives, including outputs such as the delivery of communications skills training to local residents, support for volunteers with tenants and residents

associations, and support for local residents to engage with the Big Local Trust in Mottingham. Although running Take Part activities through CLLP was intended to encourage more cross-borough coverage and coordination, Take Part activities tended to have a highly local focus. It is notable that since CLLP Coordinators were based at CVSs, there was a strong emphasis on delivery to people already engaged with, or running, local voluntary and community sector activities. In this way, Take Part work delivered through CLLP tended to engage groups of people who were more likely to go on to act together to influence the quality of life in their neighbourhood, as shown in a range of positive outcomes cited below.

It should be noted that the independent evaluation of the CLLP itself notes that the specific, front-line and individual-oriented delivery of Take Part activity appear to have caused the CLLP as a whole to drift from its main objective of coordinating community leadership activity across sub regions.

2.2 Wider Champion Role

LCF undertook a wide range of activities with the aim of promoting the Take Part approach to London agencies and practitioners across sectors, and supporting them to embed it in existing work. Examples include a wide range of presentations and workshops at London-wide and local level, a Take Part Celebration event for 80 delegates in February 2011 and a wide range of 'Champion Offer' support to specific agencies, including training for Local Authority/NHS/police community development workers and the development of new learning resources and materials. A full list of 'Champion Offer' can be found in section 3.2, below.

The objectives of all Champion Offer activities were highly targeted to meet existing needs and objectives in partner agencies. In several cases this targeted approach was identified by Champion Offer contacts as a success factor in meeting need and achieving objectives.

However, in one case after initial contact and commitment had been made, the beneficiary agency pushed for input which drifted away from the overall Take Part focus on active citizenship learning – for example, one agency required a 'Train the Trainer' course which, while based on Take Part learning principles, would not feed into community-based learning sessions aimed at increasing levels of active citizenship. In the planning stages for another session – Skills for Police Ward Panel Chairs', the session became a more front-line 'Take Part' session (more appropriate for delivery by Take Part Pathfinders than Champions) – rather than addressing the Champion elements of legacy and sustainability. In a programme staffed only one full-time worker, resources used delivering such sessions would have been better spent on activities furthering objectives around legacy. However, the majority of Champion Offer support delivered was highly focused on enabling organisations to embed Take Part approaches in their own work – for example training to support council officers to take a Take Part approach to delivery of a community-based learning course, followed by an information session with that council's Strategic Engagement Group; and support planning a community learning session to empower disabled people to engage with local decision making.

3. Activities

3.1 Development Fund

Lead Organisation/s	Sector	Activities	Partner Organisations	Spend
Account3 and Carmel Bridge	Voluntary and community	48 local residents benefited from: - Residential weekend: 'Woman be Heard' - 20 ESOL learning sessions - 10 communications skills sessions - Support for new Women Tenants' Forum	- WEA (provided Woman Be Heard training materials) - Tower Hamlets Homes -Stonewall Housing	£4,000
LB Lewisham	Public	16 local residents benefited from two courses of 4 learning sessions held in areas of low engagement	Local trainers/ consultants	£4,000
LB Greenwich	Public	30 Police Community Support Officers benefited from two full day training sessions held for 30 Police Community Support Officers	Mango Communities CIC	£4,000
LB Newham	Public	25 residents of all ages benefited from 4 learning sessions	Advance to Deliver	£4,000
LB Hounslow	Public	- 11 residents benefitted from 4 learning sessions - 15 LB Hounslow staff members benefitted from engagement training - Residents benefited from improved communications re Residents' Panels, and support for those engaging	Workers Educational Association	£4000
Community Leadership Legacy Programme (CLLP) North	VCS	- 79 Enfield residents and workers benefited from a 'Big Society' event - 19 people based in Enfield/Barnet benefited from <i>Stronger Voices</i> course	NAVCA	£3,500
CLLP South	VCS	- 66 South Londoners benefited from a 'Big Society' event - 20 Mortlake residents attended Take Part training	-	£5000

CLLP West	VCS	29 local people benefitted from 4 full day communications and public speaking training sessions -24 Silchester Estate residents benefitted from a community discussion session	Workers Educational Association	£5000
CLLP Outer East	VCS	- 14 local residents benefitted from a community meeting - 12 local people benefitted from 5 training sessions in community activity	Local trainers/consultants	£6,500
CLLP Inner East	VCS	36 Bexley residents benefitted from 4 training sessions	Local trainers/consultants Operation Black Vote	£5000

3.11 What motivated agencies to get involved?

Interviews with Development Fund leads based at local authorities and voluntary and community sector organisations (other than CLLP) shows that factors motivating involvement included:

- the availability of funding, albeit in small quantities
- the fit of the Take Part remit with existing priorities, plans and identified needs
- the flexibility of Development Fund to enable tailored work.

On this last point about flexibility, one local authority lead, on the contrary, found the Take Part remit too restrictive, and that she felt pressured to use a non-local 'preferred provider'. The Take Part Coordinator responds that this perception seems to have resulted from a miscommunication at a meeting when the delivery partner in question was mentioned only as a suggestion. This perhaps reflects the time pressure imposed on Development Fund project leaders, who were required by the national managing organisation to develop and run projects in a period of 6 months, due to concerns over the stability of funding agreements at a national level. With more lead-in time and more clarity in written communications, such a misunderstanding could have been averted.

As noted above, funding was already ring-fenced for the Community Leadership Legacy Programme.

3.12 Who has benefited from Take Part Champion Activities?

As detailed above, 444 Londoners took part in Take Part Development Fund activities. Of these, 45 participated as paid members of staff (Greenwich police and LB Hounslow).

The following table gives demographic details of a sample of 215 Take Part Development Fund participants who took part in activities voluntarily (ie. not as paid staff). The sample was randomly selected from participants who completed activity evaluation forms at all 9 projects which worked with local people on a voluntary basis.

Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Disability
71% Female	Under 16 16-17	Asian Bangladeshi Asian Pakistani	82% no disability
	1%	16%	
	0.5%	0.5%	

29% Male	18-24	0.5%	Asian Indian	0.5%	12% disability (mobility, learning disability) 6% prefer not to say
	25-34	28%	Asian Nepalese	1%	
	35-44	32%	Asian British	3%	
	45-54	15%	Black African	21%	
	55 – 64	13%	Black Caribbean	8%	
	65+	10%	Black British	7%	
			Chinese	2%	
			White British	16%	
			White Irish	0.5%	
			White European	23%	
		White other	1%		
		Other/prefer not to say	0.5%		

It is clear that the sample includes stronger than average representation of particular groups of Londoners – for example women, Bangladeshi, Nepalese and White European people. Project leaders confirm that this reflects the targeted approach taken to recruitment in most projects, where less engaged residents were sought out and engaged with. The figure for participants with disabilities reflects the fact that none of the projects specifically targeted or conducted outreach with disabled participants. It should also be noted that participants’ own definitions of disability might vary and the figure above is thus fairly subjective.

Finally, of course, the figures above could also reflect two trends – firstly, the ongoing difficulties engaging with particular groups of Londoners and secondly, ‘gaps’ in groups targeted under the current programme. The very low representation of young people aged between 18-24, for example, is likely to be a result of both of these factors.

3.13 Why did local people get involved?

Evaluation conducted directly with Development Fund participants who chose to take part in activities indicates that the key motivations for getting (and staying) involved were:

- to improve confidence and communication skills
- to meet new people and enjoy working with them
- to build new skills
- to learn ways to improve their local community
- to pursue an interest in community matters

Project leaders emphasised the strong role of one-to-one outreach in supporting people to become involved. This targeted encouragement was often a key factor in convincing people to participate.

Through the CLLP (based at local Councils for Voluntary Service) many participants got involved through existing engagement with local voluntary and community sector organisations – for example, tenants and residents associations. Many were motivated to participate in Take Part activities to better engage with developing policy around Localism and the Big Society, and to develop skills and knowledge to help them take new opportunities as individuals and in order to strengthen local community-based activity.

As well as these individual motivations, broader community considerations played a role in some cases. For example seven people got involved in one project due to particular difficulties around community cohesion in their local area. They joined the Take Part activity with the specific aim to build better links and shared understanding with individuals from other backgrounds in the local area.

3.14 How effective were materials/resources used to support activity?

New promotional resources

The majority of new materials developed by partners to support activity were promotional: almost all projects developed flyers and/or posters. In some cases this strategy was highly successful – for example one project received 30 phone enquiries in response to a flyer which was distributed to targeted individuals, by general door-to-door leafleting and at local tenants' events.

Three projects used email to promote activities; this was found to be fairly useful. However this strategy clearly has limitations where more marginalised people are being targeted: less-engaged local people are unlikely to have contact details on existing lists.

Several project leaders emphasised the importance of outreach and one-to-one support in recruiting and encouraging participants who had not engaged in community activities before. One makes the important point that “due to the broad content of this course and all the diverse possible outcomes for participants, leaflet and posters did not work as a recruitment method in these particular areas. We were also encouraging those lacking in confidence to join the course so we needed to talk to people face to face.”

Using and developing existing learning resources

During learning activities, projects worked with independent trainers who used and adapted existing resources, including WEA's 'Women Be Heard' pack, Southwark Active Citizens Hub's Community Leadership materials, NAVCA's 'Skilling up for Stronger Voices' resources and further and community engagement, confidence- and skills-building activities from Mango Communities, Advance to Deliver, Gayle Wallace Consultants, WEA, Carmel Bridge and more. In general, these were highly well received by project leaders, who found that they met the specific needs of participants. For example, one said “the course content was well managed meaning that after every session participants walked away feeling more confident and the participants also bonded well in this environment. ” Another reports that workshop activities were “interesting, easy to follow and based on an enabling process that drew on participants own experiences and skills; the facilitators were skilled and motivating.”

However one project leader was disappointed by activities which were “too basic and narrow... they took a political view and talked about community activism. As council officers we felt uncomfortable with this... we would have preferred a wider community development type approach.”

Follow-up materials

Several projects produced follow up materials to support sustainable outcomes for their projects. Three produced event reports which were circulated to participants. One produced a 'Workshop Toolkit' for distribution to participants after learning sessions had been completed. At the time of writing (March 2011), the Toolkit has just been distributed and feedback from recipients is not yet available.

Another project leader set up an interactive web page specifically for Take Part participants on the local authority community interface, which supports discussion, promotes opportunities and contains links to useful information, documents and websites. However, despite frequent email encouragement of participants, the leader has found that take up rates are very low.

Finally, London Civic Forum supported two projects to produce mini video case studies featuring participants talking straight to camera about their experiences and achievements. Participants were keen to be involved and gave permission for films to be published on local and London-wide websites. At the time of writing, films are just about to be published.

3.2 Wider Champion Role

In addition to Development Fund activity in eighteen London boroughs, the Take Part Champion Programme delivered 'Champion Offer' activities in fourteen boroughs (NB. 3 of which were also Development Fund boroughs: B&D, Lewisham, Redbridge).

Borough	Support delivered	Ultimate beneficiaries
Barking and Dagenham	Presentation/facilitated discussion for Engagement Strategic Partnership Provided Take Part Train the Trainer for LA Officer and community leader	Local residents of Barking and Dagenham
Brent	Provided Take Part Train the Trainer for 2 LA Officers Provided bespoke training for Police Ward Panel Chairs	Local residents in contact with LA Engagement Team esp through community fora; local people involved, or interested in, police ward panels
Ealing	Ran bespoke training for library staff in community engagement	Local people using (or with potential to use) Ealing libraries
Islington	Provided Take Part Train the Trainer for CVS staff member	Local people engaging with voluntary and community sector organisations
Kingston	Bespoke training for LA/ NHS Community Engagement Team Presentation/facilitated discussion for Engagement Strategic Partnership	Local participants on Community Leadership programme Local residents of Kingston
Haringey	Provided Take Part Train the Trainer for 2 LA Engagement Officers	Local residents in contact with LA Engagement Team
Hackney	Provided Train the Trainer for staff at Volunteer Centre Provided bespoke training for Police Ward Panel Chairs	Local people engaging in volunteering activities; local people involved, or interested in, police ward panels
Hammersmith and Fulham	Supported new youth engagement programme: democratic services	Newly-eligible voters in H&F
Lambeth	Collaborated with Lambeth Active Citizens Hub, LVAC	Local people engaging with ACH
Lewisham	Provided Take Part Train the Trainer for 2 LA Officers Provided Train the Trainer for staff at Volunteer Centre	Local residents involved in ward assemblies; local people engaging in volunteering activities.
Merton	Led cross-service good practice development day	Local people using a range of services in Merton
Redbridge	Provided Take Part Train the Trainer for staff at Volunteer Centre	Local people engaging in volunteering activities
Southwark	Partnership work with TP Pathfinder: Southwark Active Citizens Hub	Southwark residents
Sutton	Partnership work with TP Pathfinder: Sutton CVS	Sutton residents

Further to this, we delivered pan London work with the following agencies:

Agency	Support delivered	Ultimate beneficiaries
Community Development Network London	Presentation on Take Part approaches at conference	Community activists and local residents they support
HEAR Network (Equalities Groups)	Presentation on Take Part approaches at strategy meeting	Londoners who identify with various equalities groups
London Boroughs Community Engagement Networking Group	Presentation at strategy meeting, input at subsequent meetings	Londoners engaging with local authority services and engagement teams.
Recognition Partnership	Support with development of sustainability strategy around accreditation for community	Londoners already involved in community activity.

	development activity, including leading 2 funding bids	
Greater London Volunteering	Ran training session in Take Part training skills	Londoners engaged in volunteering activities.
International Centre for Community Development, London Metropolitan Uni	Joint-developed business case to support fundraising for international Take Part –based development work	Residents of Princetown, Sierra Leone.
Skill (National Bureau for Students with Disabilities) (national)	Supported legacy planning for outgoing young people’s engagement programme	Students with disabilities who have engaged with Skill’s youth leadership group
Disability Law Service	Helped develop new course to help disabled people engage with new policy/support developments	Londoners with disabilities
Parliamentary Outreach (national)	Supported and recruited for ‘Train the Facilitator’ training session	Londoners

3.21 What motivated agencies to get involved?

Contacts at agencies which took up Champion Offer told us that they were motivated by the opportunity to meet need which had already been identified. In all cases, the flexibility of the Take Part approach and Champion Offer was crucial, as support was tailored to fit with existing activity and priorities. The fact that support was offered free of charge was also an important motivating factor.

3.22 Who will benefit from Take Part Champion Offer activities?

Champion Offer activities all took the form of infrastructure support for organisations. As recorded in the tables above, all Champion Offer contacts were able to identify, very broadly, groups of people who it was hoped would ultimately benefit from this intervention. Insufficient time has elapsed to gather any evidence on whether, and on what scale, target beneficiaries will experience any impact of this work. However, due to the small scale of interventions, we would not expect to find any easily measurable effect on communities in the long term. Instead, we hope that the impact of these activities will be to feed into the development of good practice and increased awareness of the Take Part approach across organisations, which in turn will have widespread, longterm positive effects for beneficiaries of these organisations as a whole.

3.23 How effective were materials/resources used to support activity?

A wide range of bespoke materials were developed to support activities, including a promotional leaflet, training handbooks, learning tasks, case studies and web resources. These were generally very well received – for example, following Champion Offer training, 93% of participants evaluated materials as ‘very useful’.

4. Impact

4.1 Development Fund

There is strong evidence that almost all Development Fund activity met identified needs and objectives.

4.11 Enhanced skills, knowledge and confidence

All participants who completed evaluation forms identified improvements in their skills, knowledge and confidence to engage in community activity – and more than half identified strong improvements. Sample comments include:

“I never thought I could chair a meeting but now I will be able to – and more than that – I will be able to chair one successfully”

“I now feel I have the tools needed to start a community project in the near future”

“It made me want to contribute positively to the community and get others involved.”

“Before I started this, I couldn’t even make eye contact with strangers. Now I can talk to the world!”

There is further evidence of the impact of this improved confidence, skills and knowledge: for example on one project, fifteen previously unengaged local people had become involved in local decision –making fora, and fifteen previously unemployed people had found new jobs.

Project leaders often attributed positive outcomes to the Take Part learning approach and trainers’ skills in delivering it. For example, ‘The training sessions were extremely positive warm and friendly ... the course content was well managed... after every session participants walked away feeling more confident.’

It is clear, too, that the most successful projects were those in which project leads and trainers had clear, detailed knowledge and understanding of group and individual need. In Newham, extensive background research with local community groups led to learning sessions which met participants’ needs and had a zero drop out rate.

4.12 Interest and involvement in further community based or civic affairs

Many participants expressed strong intentions around future involvement and have taken first steps in this direction. Learners from one project have established a new group called ‘the Bellingham and Downham Champions’; they plan to start a new community information project and run an event in the near future. They have already approached a number of existing community projects in their local area and more widely in London. In Tower Hamlets, a new Womens’ Tenants Group was established, which is regularly consulted by local housing providers, and a new Eastern European support group was established in Bexley. Young and older participants in Newham identified a number of community actions they would seek to take forward, including a youth sports day and intergenerational befriending project.

Through the Lewisham Take Part sessions, one young man identified an interest in becoming a councillor and applied for a place on the Operation Black Vote councillor training course. He has demonstrated great aptitude and commitment, and the project leader is optimistic about his future chances in this area.

4.13 Influence exerted

Participants from several projects have participated in the development of local community strategies and some have become active in local assemblies; they are now awaiting the outcomes of their input. Six councillors were involved in the delivery of one project: the project leader expects participants to build on their relationships with them.

However, one local authority-based project leader expressed strong concerns about the “political view” of their delivery partner. “It was like holding the council to account – they work for you... as a council officer I felt uncomfortable about this.” This reflects findings cited in the evaluation of the London Empowerment

Partnership programme, which found that councils can be risk-averse to training ‘activists’ or encouraging challenge, and tend to prefer to use Take Part approaches to ‘capacity build’ people who have never previously taken part in community activity. There is clearly further work to be done around supporting improved relationships between local public sector services and community activists – the Take Part approach would be well placed to address this.

4.14 How did activity address barriers to participation?

Much successful activity was highly targeted towards overcoming barriers around communications and confidence; in particular, one project focussed on language barriers. Another project leader identifies the Take Part approach itself as enabling learners to overcome barriers “through participatory activities – the training was about overcoming barriers ... through confidence building”. Another identified the trainer’s delivery as crucial: “She creates a warm, motivational, aspirational environment. She creates a really amazing atmosphere. She knows her audience and knows what will make them comfortable or uncomfortable”.

4.15 How did activities support the involvement of disadvantaged people?

Project leaders identified recruitment strategies as key to supporting more disadvantaged people to get involved. As noted above, face to face encouragement was found to be crucial in engaging with less confident local people.

Most project leaders specifically did not set out to recruit from specific demographic groups, but found that by seeking out more marginalised people, they tended to recruit diverse groups. One programme focused specifically on recruiting people who were currently involved as service users but who were not active in the community: “we did not specifically target disadvantaged groups – but here, obviously, we would get diverse groups. We did get a good mix of women, young people and black, Asian and minority ethnic people”.

However, another project leader regrets taking a similar approach to recruitment and thinks that, “perhaps it would have worked better if ... it targeted people who are already participating. Perhaps it would have been better to target a known group like the Somali Women’s Group. If it really did target residents who are not involved in anything it should be more fun and involving.”

CLLP leaders, often working closely with small local community organisations, tended to work with particularly marginalised social or cultural groups – for example, undertaking outreach to Somali and Eastern European residents.

4.16 Further outcomes

A wider impact of the Take Part ‘mirror’ training with statutory sector learners demonstrates that empowering public agencies and officers is as important as empowering individuals. Police learners made strong requests for Take Part training to be integrated into the mainstream Police Community Support Officer Induction. This suggests that where Take Part undertakes ‘mirror’ work to up-skill public sector workers engaging with community members, there is a positive impact on the culture and working practices within that sector.

A further example of Take Part's positive influence on partner organisation is that of the thirteen new Bilingual Tenant Participation Officer posts created at two housing providers as part of the Future Jobs Fund programme, which were filled by Take Part learners.

The leader of this project also identified wider outcomes for individual participants around improved well-being, health and reduced isolation – although these are long term impacts that it is not yet possible to measure. On other projects, participants expressed new motivation to pursue further study and learning opportunities.

However, one project leader was sceptical about the degree to which participants involved in her project had benefited. "I'm not sure how well [the training] met the objectives. At the end people were very clear how they could contact their councillor or MP but other elements ... weren't covered. I don't think the course has had a great impact." This project leader experienced the Development Fund criteria as restrictive, "as though they were putting an agenda on us" and felt under pressure to use a "preferred provider" agency to deliver activities. This is in marked contrast to other project leaders who praised the flexible approach of the Take Part Development Fund, and how easily it could be tailored to meet local need. The most successful projects were delivered by partners in the local voluntary and community sector or by local consultants who already had a strong relationship with the lead agency.

4.2 Champion Offer

4.21 Did activities meet identified needs and objectives?

We received positive feedback, from recipients of Champion Offer support. Again, it must be emphasised that support, and objectives, were small-scale due to time, staffing and resource restrictions.

A voluntary sector worker who received support planning a new training programme says, "I received support to get my ideas in a structured format. It was helpful to have someone to build on my ideas... it was extremely useful and certainly met my objectives".

Learners on several LCF-led tailor-made 'Take Part Train the Trainer' courses made positive comments including, "It was clear, empowering, interactive and varied"; "It was very relevant to what I wanted to learn", and "There was a good mix of practice and information." "Great opportunity to think broadly and more widely than is often the case"; "It's given me ideas about ways we would ideally involved people in libraries; "It was great to think about barriers to entry ... good to be able to clearly think about what is blocking them".

However, where the Take Part Champion Coordinator recruited learners for a partner organisation who delivered their own Take Part Train the Trainer course, there was a mixed response. The manager of one learner stated that it was "useful to network with other participants and learn of the different techniques they use. However... the activity was aimed at community activists and as such it wasn't directly relevant... There were other people from local authorities on the course who were similarly confused..." There is a strong message here about the importance of tailoring training to meet the specific needs of the participants recruited, rather than delivering off-the-shelf packages.

4.22 Addressing barriers to participation and supporting disadvantaged people

Several Champion Offer Contacts who were interviewed agreed that activities helped them address participation barriers. For example, one stated, “These short courses will directly empower disabled people and those that support them”. Another noted that a training session helped participants build “tactics for dealing with difficult people ... they will be able to deal with these sorts of situations in a better way.” The course gave tactics about dealing with difficult people – those who get angry etc. and they will be able to deal with these sorts of situations in a better way.

5. Legacy, Sustainability and Embedding Take Part

5.1 Legacy Outcomes

A key objective of the Take Part Champion Programme was to create a strong legacy for Take Part in London by enabling a wide range of organisations across sectors to embed Take Part approaches in their work. It is notable that embedding the Take Part approach more widely was not cited by any agency as an objective of their own Take Part project. LCF took steps to address this at a ‘Take Part Lunch’ event for Development Fund project leaders in Nov 2010; all 8 in attendance showed enthusiasm for fundraising for further work, ongoing networking as a group, and participating in a London-wide legacy event. However project leaders identified barriers to embedding learning more widely within their own organisations: public sector funding cuts and the ensuing organisational change, creating high levels of uncertainty in both local councils and voluntary and community sector agencies.

Nonetheless it seems the Development Fund provided good opportunities for agencies to pilot Take Part activities which they planned themselves, with support from the Take Part Champion Programme. In several cases, participants themselves will sustain legacy work, having been empowered to continue to work together as a volunteer-led group – for example, the Eastern European Group in Bexley, Women Tenant’s Group in Tower Hamlets, and Bellingham and Downham Champions in Lewisham.

In some cases, the small pot of Development Fund projects has provided a catalyst for further work through new networks, sustainable partnerships and resourcing opportunities – for example in Tower Hamlets, the lead “made the links with two housing associations and one has agreed to fund ESOL classes on an ongoing basis”. She goes on, “This work has made us look more to working in partnership with housing associations. This will enable us to diversify our income... We used the Take Part money as part of a package of funding to encourage more women to go into housing as an employment option, as well as to help them solve their housing issues”. Another project plans to build on Development Fund work “through a connection we made with the ... Uprising project (we met them at the Take Part Event)... they will work with two of the groups... we will also maintain the links made with [other partners]”. Another project lead hopes to apply to the EU Integration Fund for a project supporting early involvement through English as a Second Language and citizenship classes. As a result of success with the CLLP West project, Kensington and Chelsea Social Council have submitted a Big Lottery Reaching Communities bid for a similar post to continue the work. Again in CLLP West, Hillingdon Council set up and resourced a Community Champions programme as a direct result of positive outcomes of CLLP work with local people.

However, where project leaders had not been able to secure further support or funding, they expressed a wish to pursue further work, coupled with a pessimistic assessment of the likelihood of this: “We would do something similar throughout Lewisham – if there’s funding! Without funding it’s difficult!” “If more money came in Greenwich would definitely undertake more training with PCSOs but we don’t have funding ourselves.” It is clear that the legacy outcomes from such a small pot of funding are much more limited where project leaders have been unable to secure further resources.

While Champion Offer support was very small scale and thus has less potential for legacy, recipients of support identified potential in the opportunities Take Part had provided for networking, new partnership with LCF as a delivery partner, and better links with other local agencies and services. Furthermore, recipients of Champion Offer training were highly positive in evaluation and many said they would use their learning about Take Part approaches in their ongoing work: “I will now think about learning outcomes in terms of skills, knowledge and confidence”; “this was very timely”; “I will use what I learned when I deliver community training myself”. Another recipient of strategic Take Part support identified a broader legacy outcome: “We have been able to work on a more structured offer ... and so to work in a more proactive way instead of more reactively.”

LCF built on the legacy potential of new networks and partnerships by holding a ‘Take Part Lunch’ for Development Fund partners and a large public ‘Take Part Celebration Event’ in February 2011. LCF received positive feedback following its event about the legacy potential of the national Take Part website and Take Part network. Several of LCF’s social media contacts (through Facebook and Twitter) have followed up an interest in Take Part by exploring these sites. Not enough time has yet elapsed to explore what impact this has had on LCF’s Take Part contacts. It is disappointing that the national Take Part website was not available earlier in the Champion Programme to enable LCF to better embed it in the Champion work it was undertaking.

Learning from involvement with Take Part

Development Fund project leads identified some interesting learning points emergent from their involvement with Take Part. “We targeted younger women, a group we don’t usually work with. They had fresh new ideas and enthusiasm and challenged our ideas a little and caused us to re-think what we were doing”. Another project leader said she learnt that “trying something different can work”.

However the short time frame meant that for one project was not able to exploit learning potential: “there was not enough time to develop and run the programme as we would have wanted to”. Another project leader had learnt from the more limited success of her project, “We would do it a different way if we did it again ... We do want to take forward active citizenship”.

All Development Fund project leads and Champion Offer contacts interviewed said that they had identified strong further need for active citizenship learning activities.

6. LCF’s management of the London Take Part Champion Programme

To ensure an independent view, the following section was written by the external evaluator who conducted all interviews with project leaders.

We found out that LCF's support in helping the project leaders set up their programmes was very much valued: "The LCF officer is enthusiastic"; "She did a really good job. She gave us clear guidelines and was not dictatorial, and she got us resources for the Women Be Heard course"; "LCF was generous and helpful. They were really involved and encouraged us to contact them for help e.g. with leaflets."

Similarly, LCF's support in its Champion's role was appreciated: "The Take Part officer was flexible and very responsive to emails etc. She was good at digesting information and was able to help us structure our course"; "She was really very good. She prepared the ground, meeting our people, met deadlines and delivered a good presentation."

There was some criticism, however, of the process of bidding for the Take Part funding. One respondent to the evaluator felt that LCF had not had a comprehensive marketing strategy aimed at informing all eligible council officers of the availability of funding; however, they did acknowledge that it would have been difficult for LCF to have a comprehensive list of council engagement officers in all departments. Another criticism by one respondent was levelled at the bidding process itself. This was felt to be restrictive and it seemed that it had to be done in a particular way using preferred providers. The respondent felt that this was the emphasis of the Take Part model, rather than LCF's, which appears to emphasise learning in its own right, rather than practical outcomes around subsequently taking part in actively improving the quality of life in their neighbourhood. To be fair, however, not all respondents interpreted the Take Part activity in this way and used their own trainers. In particular the use of the Development Fund to enhance CLLP activities meant that the activities were more tailored to identified need and tended to focus on outcomes for community groups and/or neighbourhood activities. However, this range of interpretations as to how the Take Part funding could be used leads us to conclude that the original specification could have been clearer.

7. Conclusion

Broadly, a wide range of successful outcomes have emerged from the London Take Part Champion Programme, and areas of difficulty have provided a number of learning points to be built into future work.

It is clear that the Take Part approach is most successfully championed where it is:

- flexible and tailored in approach, to meet the specific needs of local communities and agencies
- targeted, in order that support meets identified need and existing organisational priorities
- supported by thorough research and understanding of local and individual need
- delivered by local experts, in a local context
- promoting a broad definition of active citizenship, including community activity, influence and individual rights and entitlements
- used to empower public agencies and officers, as well as local community members
- integrated with other programmes and resource streams, to enable stronger, more holistic impact for participants around well being, health, employability and more.

Key learning points from the programme are that:

- Short delivery time places serious limitations on organisational learning from pilot work, and their ability to embed it in future activity.
- Small pots of money lead to limited success unless they are integrated with other resources or used as a catalyst to secure further funding.
- Training and support needs to be tailor-made in response to need –‘off the shelf’ Take Part training delivered both to community members and local agencies through this project was much less successful than bespoke training.
- There is a need to support public sector agencies to build more constructive relationships with community activists, requiring a big culture-shift, particularly in local authorities.