

Community Development Foundation

# Evaluation of Regional Take Part Champions

Qualitative interviews with Regional Take Part Champions and Development Fund Recipients

A report by OPM on behalf of the Community Development Foundation

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## Executive summary

During October and November 2010 OPM interviewed eight Regional Take Part Champions and 26 Development Fund recipients to evaluate the role of the Regional Take Part Champion as a distinct element of the Take Part programme. The majority of Champions and recipients had Take Part activity underway although a small number of both were in the early stages of their work together.

Champions and recipients generally had a highly positive story to tell. Both groups felt that their Take Part activity had been a success and had led to strong community empowerment outcomes. The Champions were clear about their role and the recipients were pleased with – and often surprised by - the ‘added value’ offered by the Champions as part of the broader Take Part offer.

The challenge has been to split out the Champion support from the other Take Part resources, to understand the specific impacts of the Champion upon the development fund recipients and their work within the communities. Nonetheless, this report suggests that the role of the Champion is very important in bringing together the different elements of the Take Part programme. When done well, the Champion enables activity and adds value beyond the financial worth of the development fund.

### Key findings

**Recruiting Champions and recipients who already had strong local and regional networks was one key to their success:** The recruitment process for both Champions and recipients followed a similar process. Both groups were approached through relevant community empowerment networks and many were personally approached through their organisations. As networking and relationship building is crucial to embedding recipient work in the existing community empowerment landscape, the development fund activity benefitted from the pre-existing relationships of Champions and recipients. It also ensured that they were credible and could ‘hit the ground running’.

**Champion support was valued more by those with less experience in community empowerment work:** Despite the targeted nature of the recipient recruitment process in Year 1 due to the short timeframe for delivery of the first year of the programme, some recipients had more experience than others in community empowerment work. More experienced recipients were more confident in delivering their activities alone whereas those with less experience highly valued the support and advice of the Champion, in particular the embedding of the Take Part approach and the ongoing monitoring of outcomes and objectives.

**The development fund was a key motivation for many recipients to apply to Take Part:** Recipients were primarily motivated to apply to Take Part because of the possibility of funding through the development fund. There were other reasons for their

interest in Take Part (including a sense of shared values with the Take Part approach and desire to build up existing community empowerment work) but the funding itself was key to initial participation.

**Champions increased the value of the development fund activity beyond the actual financial value of the grant:** Despite the fund being a key motivation for recipients to apply to Take Part, most recipients felt their activities had delivered beyond the promise of the initial development fund. Some felt this was due to their own understanding of the Take Part approach and their own networks. Others, usually those with less experience in community empowerment activities, felt their activities had benefitted from the particular support of the Champions. These recipients highlighted the way the Champions had helped to tailor their development fund activities according to the Take Part approach and so maximise the impact of their work within the communities.

**Champions developed recipients' understanding of the Take Part approach over the duration of the project:** Some recipients felt that they already followed the Take Part approach as a process if not by name before they joined the Take Part programme. For other recipients, the impact of the champion on their understanding of the Take Part approach was significant. Champions were credited for their support during the application stage of the development fund, particularly in ensuring that proposed activities led to strong community empowerment outcomes. They also supported recipients over the course of the work by offering advice or tailoring resources to specific needs. In this way, recipients understanding of the Take Part approach grew over time and within the delivery of their projects.

**Local authority engagement happened mainly through development fund work:** Overall, the main contact with local authorities happened in their capacity as development fund recipients. In these instances Champions worked to ensure community empowerment outcomes by providing the local authorities tailored support offered to all development fund recipients. Some local authority recipients felt that the Take Part grant gave them additional credibility when working with community groups as it was seen as an 'independent' source of funding. However, there are some other examples of profile raising activity and 'consultancy-type' activity that occurred with local authorities separate to the development fund.

**The Take Part development funding activities will enable future work:** For a few recipients the value of the development fund was felt to extend far beyond the activities directly paid for; it was believed to have acted as a springboard for future community empowerment work, either by providing an opportunity to demonstrate the impact of specific approaches, or by giving recipients momentum in an area of work that may not otherwise have happened.

**The Champions have embedded the Take Part approach within the development fund activities:** From the point of applying to the development fund, Champions offered recipients support in writing their project-plan and, in particular,

breaking down their proposed activity according to the Take Part approach. By linking projects up across networks and capitalising on existing relationships, Champions raised the profile of Take Part in their projects and beyond. Recipients talked of strategies to make their work sustainable, both direct in terms of continuing their activities or carrying out follow-on projects. The majority of recipients felt that the champion had been highly valuable in supporting these approaches and in opening up opportunities for recipients to continue their work.

**The legacy of the Take Part brand is in the process of the approach:** The majority of champions and some recipients, by virtue of being existing community empowerment 'experts,' felt they already practiced the Take Part approach before understanding the concept as a brand. Several likened this to a 'chicken and egg' situation. Nonetheless Champions and recipients alike commented how the Take Part approach mirrored their own approach to community engagement and how they shared the same values. Champions and recipients were confident they would continue the Take Part approach in their future empowerment activities although they debated whether this would happen under the Take Part brand. In this way, the process will be sustained in principle, if not in name.

# Introduction

## What is Take Part?

Take Part is a three year programme (2008 – 2011) managed by the Community Development Foundation (CDF) and funded by the government department for Communities and Local Government (CLG). Take Part is a distinctive approach to learning that enables people to make an active contribution to their communities and influence public policies and services.

Through increasing the skills and confidence among citizens, particularly those from more disadvantaged communities, Take Part aims to increase levels of participation in civil and civic activity; and to encourage the take up of community leadership roles.

There are two key strands to the Take Part programme: the pathfinders and the delivery of national support activity. The Pathfinders are partnerships between local authorities, third sector bodies and educational institutions in a particular area, coordinated by one lead organisation, aiming to support community leadership and active citizenship learning.

The delivery of national support activity aims to complement the work of the local pathfinder projects and to support the roll out of the Take Part approach across new sectors and locations. This has included the production of a series of Take Part resources and case studies for practitioners to use, and the appointment of a Regional Take Part Champion in each region to distribute a development fund and facilitate new Take Part activities.

Nine Regional Take Part Champions offer resources, information and guidance to those that deliver empowerment and engagement projects in the local community. They also run the development fund which is used to commission new or existing projects to initiate or sustain the delivery of community empowerment activities.

## What is the purpose of the Regional Take Part Champion Evaluation?

This evaluation is to look specifically at the role of Regional Take Part Champion within the Take Part programme and is designed to uncover the specific processes involved in delivering the Champion work. The key aims and objectives of this evaluation are to explore and assess:

- The methods used to act as a Regional Take Part Champion
- The variety of approaches to securing local authority engagement and support
- Ease of allocation and management of the development fund
- Effectiveness of signposting to pathfinder/national support programme or production of new resources
- The impact of regional shared learning events and networking

- Effectiveness of linkages related to empowerment programmes in the area

The evaluation is also a means of capturing data relating to the experiences of the development fund recipients. The key data gathering aims are to:

- Capture information on recipients' experience of applying for and obtaining the development fund
- Collect data on recipients' motivations for applying and adopting the Take Part approach
- Examine the types of work being undertaken with these grants
- Collect feedback on the advice and support recipients have received from their respective Regional Take Part Champion
- Assess potential sustainability and legacy of the work e.g. skills transfer, partnerships, match funding, ongoing usage of the Take Part approach

This evaluation is designed to complement the self-evaluations of development fund recipients currently being led by the Champions within the regions.

### **The analytical framework and methodology**

This evaluation was conducted around the 'why, how, who and what works?' framework. This is a simple but effective means of unpicking and understanding the key processes operating within a specific intervention. A detailed overview of the methodology is included in the appendix but it is worth noting that this is a purely qualitative study. It is based on evidence taken from semi-structured qualitative interviews with eight Champions and 26 recipients across the nine regions.

Given the number of respondents and the diversity that had to be accounted for within the sample, it is not possible to make numerical inferences in the evaluation regarding variation by region, Champion or recipient type or according to whether projects were funded for Year 1, Year 2 or both. This report describes the range of experiences presented in the interviews, and makes practical suggestions based on these experiences.

### **Reading this report**

The report presents a qualitative assessment of the Regional Take Part Champions from both the perspective of Champion and the development fund recipient. It focuses on the intended role of the Champion, the extent to which the Champions fulfilled these roles and on any barriers to delivery as well as areas of greatest value. This report structures these insights and data around the following themes:

- Managing the development fund
- Engaging local partners
- Networking and access to support
- Capacity building and community engagement

- Sustainability and embedding Take Part

Each thematic chapter begins with an overview of the key findings, followed by more detailed analysis and data to support the findings in depth. The overriding narrative is the question around the relative 'value' of the Champion versus the other resources on offer to the development fund recipients and their impact on the actual delivery of community empowerment projects.

A number of considerations and technical points must be raised before reading this report. The way in which the Champions operated varied by region, but in most cases one person has taken the role, with a support team behind them. An alternative approach, adopted by two of the nine regions, has been to have more than one person involved in carrying out the Champion work where one person is responsible for the strategic planning around the role, and the other for the 'on the ground' communication with the development fund recipients.

For the purposes of the evaluation, in cases where more than one person is involved in the work of the Champion we have considered the data as relating to one role. This is because this role division did not have a noticeable impact on the delivery of the work, and as such seems to be purely a reflection of differences between the internal structures of the lead organisations.

In addition to this, the timescales of the Champion programme have meant that there are differences between Year 1 and Year 2; specifically, in one region there was no Champion in post for Year 1. This has meant that, to some extent, the findings are weighted towards the experience of Champions in relation to Year 2, however, where possible, comparisons have been made between the work across the two years. Furthermore, some of the Year 2 recipients were in the early stages of delivery and therefore the evaluation focussed on their expectations of working with Take Part.

Finally, the Champions are expected to promote and support the use of the Take Part approach with diverse sets of stakeholders, and the primary conduit for this work is the development fund. As such, and because of our interviews with 26 development fund recipients, this evaluation considers all aspects of the role of the Champion but is particularly helpful in understanding the value and impact of the Champion role on the work of the development fund recipients.

# 1. Understanding the role and value of the Regional Take Part Champions

The Take Part offer for the local regions – beyond the support offered by the Take Part Pathfinders – consists of two distinct but interrelated elements. These are:

- Regional Take Part Champions
- Development fund

The central thread running through these two elements, the Pathfinders and the wider national support activity, is the Take Part approach. This section reviews the Take Part approach itself and how it was received by the recipients before exploring in more detail the value offered through the Champions and the development fund.

## Overview of the Take Part Approach

Central to the role of the Champion in promoting and supporting Take Part activities is the Take Part approach itself. The Take Part approach works to promote active citizenship by equipping people with the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to contribute to local, regional and national decision-making. It is described as an enabling process, designed to increase the skills and confidence among citizens, particularly those from more disadvantaged communities. This approach focuses on<sup>1</sup>:

- Community-based learning to build the skills, confidence and experience needed to tackle local, social and technical challenges
- An informal, practical approach that gives people an understanding of how power works and how they can learn to influence decisions and policies
- Open dialogue and reflection as key learning tools, recognising that change in a community emerges from individuals working together

It is both a structured and flexible approach. It is structured in that it offers a specific process to understanding community empowerment issues, and flexible in that this process can be tailored to meet the needs of the local communities. In other words, the structure is designed to ensure the achievement of community empowerment outcomes but the flexibility lies in the unique ways these empowerment activities are delivered.

The evaluation revealed that the majority of development fund recipients were aware of the Take Part approach, but the depth of this awareness varied according to the recipients themselves. For those recipients that were already aware of the Take Part approach, there was a sense that it fitted in with what they were trying to achieve as a part of their organisation. For those recipients that learned about the Take Part approach through their

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from a Take Part *Further Information* leaflet

work with the development fund, some felt the approach mirrored the way they already worked with communities. For others, Take Part offered a welcome consultative approach to identifying and supporting local needs:

*“Once we knew about it, it was great; we could see how it was a fit with us and where we could apply it.” Recipient<sup>2</sup>*

Notably, recipients’ understanding of the Take Part approach grew over time and within the delivery of their projects. In this way, the impact of the Champion on the recipients’ understanding of the Take Part approach was significant. Champions were credited for their support during the application stage of the development fund, particularly in ensuring that proposed activities led to strong community empowerment outcomes. They also supported recipients over the course of the work by offering advice or tailoring resources to specific needs.

In this way, most development fund recipients embraced the Take Part approach and understood it as a means to structure their community empowerment work. Some recipients, particularly those with long term experience in the sector, were able to apply the approach directly to their activities. For some recipients however, it was the additional support of the Champions that helped embed the approach within their project and gain the most value from the approach.

### **Overview of the Regional Take Part Champion role**

The regional Take Part Champion has a broad role description. Primarily the Champion is responsible for the development of Take Part activity within their region through the management and allocation of the development fund. They also work directly with existing and new partners to raise the profile of Take Part and embed the Take Part approach within the broader community empowerment landscape.

The regional Take Part Champion role was outlined in an *Invitation to Apply*<sup>3</sup> that was sent out through CDF networks to organisations that might be willing and capable of leading the activity. Box 1 below includes the different responsibilities and activities associated with the Champion role.<sup>4</sup>

Box 1: The role of the Regional Take Part Champion

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<sup>2</sup> All quotes have been referenced as either Champion or Recipient to denote whether from a Regional Take Part Champion or from a development fund recipient.

<sup>3</sup> Invitation to Apply leaflet, CDF 2009

<sup>4</sup> The following findings of this report are framed in relation to each of the sub-headings contained in this table. This has acted as a means of cross referencing our evaluation findings against the expectations of the role description.

**The role of the Regional Take Part Champion is to:**

**Managing the development fund:**

Manage and deliver a development fund by identifying and committing spend of up to £10,000 per local authority, with up to six local authorities per region. This will occur in Year 1 with follow-through work planned into Year 2.

**Engaging local and regional partners:**

Ensure development fund activities are linked into other regional programmes, such as Connecting Communities, Regional Empowerment Programmes, Empowerment Fund Activities, and Community Learning Champions.

**Promote, advocate and tailor Take Part approach within their region:**

Nurture partnerships and relationships with local authorities, third sector organisations and other stakeholders in the delivery of Take Part activities.

**Capacity building and community engagement:**

Assist local authorities in improving their understanding of how Take Part approaches and methodology can assist them in supporting under-represented groups to engage in democratic processes and support the proposed Duty to Promote Democracy.

**Networking and support:**

Offer advisory, coaching/mentoring and troubleshooting support to stakeholders interested in using Take Part methodologies;

Give information, advice and guidance, signposting as necessary on:

- How to develop and run Take Part programmes/activities
- Funding and accreditation options
- Take Part available resources

Support regional shared learning and development of Take Part through appropriate mechanisms such as Action Learning Sets, peer support programmes etc.

Assist in evaluation of the impact of the Champions funding and development fund investment.

Each government region in England has a Champion in place, and their role runs from January 2010 to March 2011. This time period has been divided into two 'years' of work:

- Year 1 of the Regional Champion programme (running from January 2010 to March 2010)

- Year 2 of the Regional Champion programme (running from April 2010 to March 2011)

All of the Champions became involved in the Take Part programme through a lead organisation for which they work. These lead organisations were directly invited by CDF to apply to be Champion organisations and, upon successful application, host the Champion in each region. The lead organisations for each region are to be found in Appendix A.

As the Champion role is embedded within the Take Part Pathfinder programme the majority of these lead organisations are also Pathfinders, with the exception of WEA North West, Inspire East and the London Civic Forum, the latter two of whom also lead Regional Empowerment Partnerships (REPs).

The Champions have at their disposal the Take Part resources (the development fund and other materials) and their own experiences of community empowerment activities and networks within the local community. Their role is to bring projects together, making the whole of the recipient activity bigger than the sum of its parts. As one Champion commented about their facilitative roles:

*“Part of [my role is] trying to stitch together a whole set up so that you get the best value for money out of what’s going on rather than just isolating little bits of work.” Champion*

Several Champions recognised the importance of locating the development fund firmly within existing structures and networks in order to build upon existing activity and get the best value out of the grant. This was a highly tailored process:

*“What we’re trying to do is build on what is working and what exists in the community to strengthen and resource stuff that’s there already rather than trying to set up something completely from scratch [because] with £10,000 it’s not going to work, or if it does work it will only work for a while.” Champion*

*“This means that the grant will go the furthest – not to set up entirely new work but to put new work within established structures.” Champion*

The role of Champion is therefore to add value to the financial possibilities offered by the development fund by targeting spend according to existing provision and through well-networked recipients. It is also to use, raise awareness and embed the Take Part approach within the community and community empowerment networks.

### **Overview of the Development Fund**

The development fund is designed to support the delivery of Take Part activities and is managed through the regional Take Part Champions. As such the Champions are

responsible for identifying and approaching potential delivery partners, supporting the application process and allocating the funds according to these proposals.

As the Take Part programme supports flexible, community-led initiatives, it follows that the development fund recipients represent a diverse range of organisations and implement equally diverse forms of community empowerment activity. A breakdown of the development fund recipients according to their sector (for example local authority or VCS) is contained in the methodology but they included local authority teams, community organisations, residents associations and other local partners.

The activities funded by the development fund all vary in size and scope – although their common objective is to achieve community empowerment outcomes. Figure 1 (below) summarises the types of activities being undertaken by the recipients we interviewed. Each organisation developed their own initial objectives, approaches to community engagement and target audiences depending on factors such as local need, potential partnerships and links to other regional and local work.

The development funding experience was crucial to the Take Part programme in that it was a tangible incentive for recipients to run additional activity or to shape current activity to best deliver community empowerment outcomes. One Champion described the development fund as the ‘glue’ that held all projects together and the recipients felt the grant was invaluable. Many felt that without the development fund, much of their work would not have taken place:

*“It wouldn't have happened. Everything that I've just told you... we financially as an organisation were not in a position to deliver training, we would have had to try to access the funding elsewhere, and funding is tight, isn't it? So I don't know that we would have even been successful.” Recipient*

Recipients and Champions generally agreed that the actual value of the grant was, in the greater scheme of things, a small sum of money, particularly in comparison to cost of other local authority projects. Despite this both Champions and recipients commented on how much activity had come from such little cash. One Champion claimed that out of all the projects managed through their lead organisation, the development fund, despite being the smallest pot of money, had led to tangible impacts upon the local community:

*“It's [our] smallest funded project... It's little pots of money that have enabled some really good stuff to go ahead [which is] making the difference in local communities.” Champion*

However, the recipients also felt the Take Part programme had offered them more than money alone. Box 2 below gives more perspectives on the ‘value’ of being involved with the Take Part programme, beyond the actual development fund.

Box 2: Recipient feelings about the ‘value’ of the Take Part programme

### **The 'value' of the Take Part programme**

**The funding alone is not enough:** Despite the high value recipients placed on the development fund, some of them explicitly felt that it was not just the funding that had made their work a success. The role of the Champion and the lead organisation was felt to have increased the value of the money by focussing the work through the Take Part approach onto sustainable community empowerment activities. Recipients also appreciated ongoing maintenance and target setting support:

*“I got the funding and then I started getting calls from this person... [I thought] ‘this isn’t normal, you just give me the money normally and then I send you a monitoring form at the end’...it’s helped focus how we’re meeting our aims... it is something that other funders should adopt.” Recipient*

**Added valued of the Champion versus other funders:** A few recipients made favourable comparisons between their experiences of the development fund and work with other funders. They reported that it had been easier to work with the Champion and lead organisation because there was an open dialogue and ongoing support.

*“We’ve had funding from local authorities before and I have to say that although we have good working relationships with them, sometimes we don’t get that sort of conversation going at the same sort of level.” Recipient*

**Recipients valued the 'independent' funding:** A few local authority recipients talked of the importance of independence of Take Part, both in terms of the funding and in terms of the support offered by the Champions. One local authority explained that community groups could be suspicious when grants were offered them directly through the council, concerned there was a specific agenda attached to the funding. In this way the Take Part funding offered local authorities an independent route into community groups. Another local authority recipient felt that the Champions could offer empathy and experience to community groups that they themselves could not:

*“I think the money’s helped, but also the people; being able to sit down [with those] who weren’t seen as council staff and were seen as a community group who’d come from similar backgrounds themselves...that was an important element...” Recipient*

**The funding will enable future work:** For a few recipients the value of the development fund was felt to extend far beyond the activities directly paid for; it was believed to have acted as a springboard for future community empowerment work, either by providing an opportunity to demonstrate the impact of specific approaches, or by giving recipients momentum in an area of work that may not otherwise have

happened.

*“It’s a bit like pump priming future work.” Recipient*

**The development fund was the right size:** Most recipients believed that the size of the development fund grant was appropriate for the work being carried out and that it induced realistic expectations about what could be achieved, particularly within the timescales of the programme.

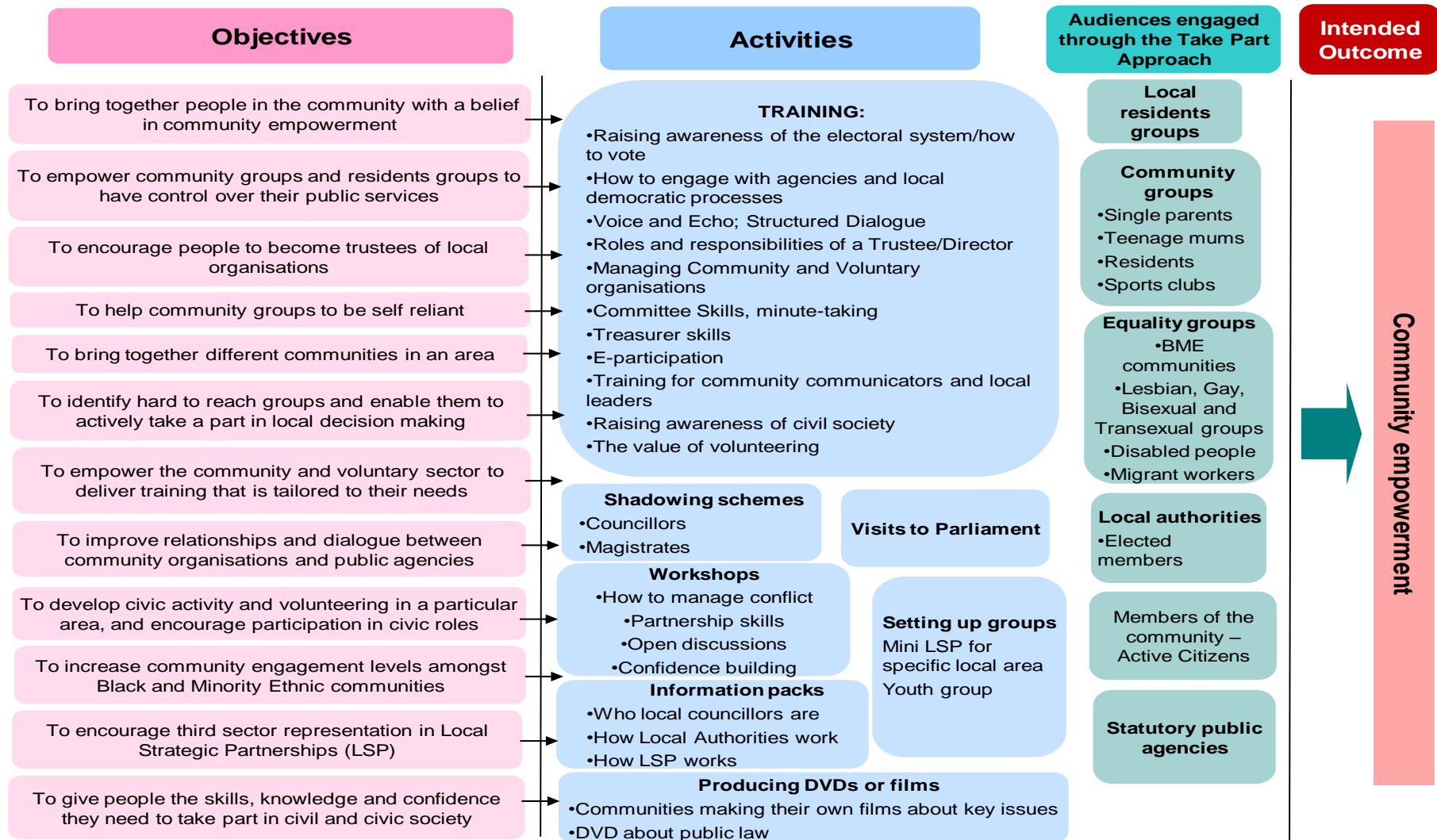
*“I think the money was satisfactory, if they’d have been offering us twice as much I’m not sure we would have done anything different...”*

In these varied ways, most recipients raised the point that the development fund had led to impacts that outstretched the financial promise of the actual value and that a little bit of money had gone a long way:

*“There’s been some fantastic outcomes, as I say from such a small amount of money it is quite staggering in a way.” Recipient*

Therefore the most positive response to the relatively small grant came not in relation to actual financial value but in the way the development fund was seen to deliver outcomes way beyond its promise. This was achieved through the range of interventions and nature of the support offered by the Champion to recipients. In this way the Champions transformed small pots of money beyond their financial value and brought the aims of Take Part, increased civil and civic participation through community empowerment, into fruition. The factors that lead to this ‘added value’ are explored in the subsequent chapters.

Figure 1: Overview of the development fund recipient activities (double click to view):



## 2. Managing the development fund

### **The role of the Champion is to:**

Manage and deliver the development fund. Focus on identifying and committing a spend of up to £10,000 per local authority, with up to six local authorities per region. This will occur in Year 1 with follow-through work planned into Year 2.

Box 3: Role expectations of the Champion in relation to managing the development fund

Each Champion is responsible for £105,000 for the development fund with £60,000 in Year 1 (January – March 2010) and £45,000 in Year 2 (April 2010 – March 2011). How they spend the money is entirely at their own discretion providing that the main outcome from the activity results in community empowerment. The Champion is tasked with identifying, approaching and supporting potential recipients to apply for a portion of the development fund. Our findings suggest that this was achieved in a range of ways:

- The Champion approached potential recipients through their networks. This approach enabled the Champions to quickly identify suitable partners with the potential to ‘hit the ground running’
- Recipients had various motivations for applying to the development fund which reflects their varied situations within the community and objectives for the fund
- Recipients had positive experiences of the application process and felt the process was appropriate and constructive
- Working together at the fund application stage was helpful in establishing relationships and embedding the Take Part approach
- There are differences between the recruitment and experiences of Year 1 and Year 2 recipients particularly as Year 1 operated under tight deadlines

These findings are explored in more depth in the remainder of this chapter.

### **The Champion approached potential recipients through networks**

All of the Champions targeted development fund recipients through their existing networks. Several advertised the Take Part approach (including the development fund) through their contacts or asked partners to nominate potential sites on which the programme could be marketed. One Champion set up a ‘Task and Finish’ group to debate, structure and manage the process. Another conducted a local survey to determine who best to approach. As a result Champions generally recruited recipients with whom they were either directly familiar or knew through one of their partners.

*“I phoned up our contacts and [I asked them to nominate] people who we knew would have something to bring to the table and were keen to deliver something.” Champion*

The use of personal contacts or recommendations ensured that applicants already met some of the criteria for development funding; they were organisations with experience of managing or delivering community empowerment activities with an approach to community engagement that broadly mirrored the Take Part approach. As one Champion commented, shared values and ways of working were important:

*“It doesn’t always have to be someone that you’ve known for ages... if the values are the same and the way of working is the same, then it goes fairly smoothly.” Champion*

The recipients echoed this approach. Most recipients talked of pre-existing relationships with the Champion’s lead organisation and how their knowledge of the Take Part approach and programme came through these relationships, broader networks and their longer-term experience within the sector.

### **Recipients had various motivations for applying for the development fund**

Recipients talked of a range of motivating factors that inspired them to apply for the development fund. These motivations are outlined in Box 4 below.

Box 4: Motivations of recipients in applying for the development fund

#### **Motivations of recipients in applying for the development funding**

**The funding/size of the grant:** A core motivator for many interviewees was the development funding itself. Many recipients shared the view that having a designated ‘pot of money’ for a set piece of work was felt to be invaluable and an opportunity to carry out work that would otherwise not have been done.

*“We work closely with our voluntary and community sector we know exactly what they need, they’re constantly telling us, but we don’t always have the money...this year’s been extremely difficult for us financially so obviously there was the funding ...it was just absolutely ideal, it couldn’t have been more perfect.” Recipient*

**The Take Part Approach:** The majority of recipients felt they shared common values with Take Part approach. Some felt they already used the Take Part approach (if inadvertently). Other recipients felt they shared the common values but were excited particularly about developing the Take Part approach within their activities:

*“We didn’t really have anything that was specifically aimed at active citizenship and particularly around young people, so I think for us it was more a case of an opportunity to do something that was more targeted to a specific audience.” Recipient*

**To build on existing work:** In many cases the work was designed to add value, or expand, on work being carried out through other regional empowerment programmes or

funding streams.

*“It fits in really well with the rest of the work that we’re doing in terms of being an empowering authority and the rollout of neighbourhood management.” Recipient*

**Opportunity to be innovative:** For a couple of recipients the development fund was seen as a worthwhile opportunity to test out new approaches to community empowerment and try to reach new groups. It was felt that it could help them to improve their performance as an organisation through a targeted piece of work.

*There was a real opportunity to be innovative, the criteria wasn’t strict and it enabled us to build on the work that we’d done in July.” Recipient*

**Common values with the people involved** (the Champion and lead organisation): A few recipients reported that they had been more willing to apply for the development fund because they felt the Champion and the lead organisation had shared values and a genuine commitment to community empowerment. They reported that rather than the Champion offer being important it was their enthusiasm which drove their involvement:

*“As soon as I came into contact with the Take Part people it was absolutely crystal clear that we understood each other and that we shared a similar outlook...what motivated us was some common ground and a lot of common desire to enable the community to take power in its own hands.” Recipient*

### Recipients had positive experiences of the application process

Recipient experiences of applying to the development fund were generally very positive; almost all recipients felt that the process was favourable in comparison to their experiences of applying for other funding and terms such as ‘straightforward’, ‘simple’ and ‘quick’ were commonly used with reference to the process.

Whilst there was flexibility in how the application process could be managed by different Champions and regions there was a generally overarching structure to the process. Not all Champions offered every element of the following process – and not every recipient required each stage – but nonetheless, a supportive and transparent application process was on offer by the Champions if the recipient requested it.

Table 1 below outlines the stages of the application process, the extent to which they were experienced by the recipients, and their perceived value.

Table 1: Stages of the application process experiences by recipients

Application	Frequency (what proportion of	Perceived value for those that
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process stage	recipients experienced this)	experienced it
Initial meeting	<p>The majority of the recipients we spoke to had experienced an initial meeting to discuss the process.</p> <p>This meeting was either in the form of a one-to-one visit from the Champion, or through an event for all potential partners (this was the case in three areas).</p>	<p>Highly valuable. Feedback from the recipients was that having an initial conversation with the Champion about the expectations of the work helped them to develop their bid.</p> <p><i>“It helped us to have an understanding of the types of things we could do, which was really useful.”</i></p>
Action Plan	<p>All of the recipients we interviewed had to develop an action plan or written overview of their proposed work. Most recipients were given a pre-set template with headings from the Champion.</p>	<p>The action plan process was considered to be simple and effective by all recipients; it compared favourably to other funding applications for most of the interviewees.</p>
Support and Guidance	<p>The level of support from the Champion varied, but the majority of recipients had asked for at least some advice or guidance.</p> <p>For the few recipients that did not access support from the Champion, the view was that it was not needed due to the simplicity of the process.</p>	<p>Most of the recipients were very happy with the support received from the Champion, regardless of the level.</p>
Criteria	<p>There was an even mix between those recipients that were aware of funding criteria, and those that were unsure of whether there had been any.</p>	<p>For those that were aware of criteria the perception was generally that it was ‘user friendly’ and based on themes for the work that were easy to understand.</p>
Feedback	<p>Approximately half of the recipients had received feedback on their application; this was generally positive to say they had got funding, but in a couple of cases re-submission was needed due to a desire to shift the focus of the work.</p>	<p>Reflections on the feedback received was positive; recipients felt that the Champions had been supportive in giving them praise on successful bids or in helping them to re-submit.</p>

Champions talked about the different criteria they used to select the recipients in their area. The following are some of the most important characteristics referenced by Champions when looking for potential partners:

- Experience of existing community empowerment activities and extent to which the organisation was already linked-in to local networks
- The ‘fit’ between Take Part and their existing community work

- Strength of the activity described and whether it mirrored or could be adapted to meet the Take Part approach
- Capacity of the site to deliver quickly, in particular because of the short timeframe of Year 1 of the project
- Credibility of the agency within the local community

*“If you really want to work with the kind of hardest to reach people, you’ve got to be in their communities and the only way you can be in their communities is by working with people who are of the community.” Champion*

Champions – and the testimonies of the recipients – demonstrate that the recipients often successfully combined a number, if not all, of these characteristics.

### **Working together at the fund application stage was helpful in establishing relationships and embedding the Take Part Approach**

In the majority of instances the Champion looked to the recipients (as experts within their own communities) to determine the shape of the actual proposed activity. However the Champions’ role in helping scope out the focus of the proposed activity immediately after the selection phase was considered extremely important in determining both the direction of the activity and in establishing a strong relationship between Champion and recipient. This process varied according to the needs and approaches of each individual recipient but generally involved a meeting to re-examine the activity and ensure it was designed to gain the best value from the Take Part development funding.

In order to gain best value some of the Champions described the process of breaking down the proposed activity according to the Take Part approach. Several Champions described this as a process of strategic planning, and how they worked to influence the thinking and approach of the recipient, whilst often retaining the initial delivery and activity plan. This was important to embed Take Part at the heart of the activity and, fundamentally, ensure the activity would meet broader community empowerment objectives. Box 5 presents a selection of quotes from the Champions, which demonstrates this process in action.

Box 5: Champion descriptions of the embedding the Take Part approach in activities

#### **Champions embedding the Take Part approach**

*“We would identify how they were doing things and what they were doing in such a way that we were connecting with the key elements of the Take Part approach and in that way making and using the Take Part approach.” Champion*

*“I’ve kind of tried to make sure that what they say they want to do fits with the criteria and the Take Part approach – to push work and activities to stretch beyond initial objectives.”*

*Champion*

*“It wasn’t just about creating an action plan and delivering that and going, “okay we’ve done, let’s tick the box,” it was actually always about, “right, what happens as a result of what we’ve provided, what can people now do that they couldn’t do before?”” Champion*

Recipients reported different experiences of this strategic planning process with the Champions although feedback was generally very positive. One recipient described how they only had vague ideas on how to implement and develop relevant activities and support from the Champion in terms of the focus, objectives and audiences was highly valued:

*“We had two or three very broad, slightly vague ideas of what we might apply for and [the Champion] did help us shape it... she came up with some good ideas and some advice and helped us shape it.” Recipient*

However, in a small number of isolated occasions the influence of the Champion over the focus of the development fund work was perceived less positively. Specifically, in a few regions it was felt that the Champion or its lead organisation, may have exercised too much control over the scope of the work. One recipient felt Take Part approach was potentially restrictive because it had been pre-defined. The same recipient also felt pressured to work with a pre-determined partner for the actual delivery of the work.

The recipient reflected that it was not a negative experience specifically, but more a matter of principle in that they could not freely decide what to do with the funds. Indeed, the Champion actually provided reassurance about the process:

*“[The Champion] probably allayed a few of my fears about what it was all going to entail because initially it did feel a lot like, you know, all this money is sort of earmarked for this particular company to do this particular training and it isn't like there's any scope for other stuff.” Recipient*

There was a similar concern about the influence of the lead organisation from a recipient in a different region. The recipient felt that there was a potential ‘conflict of interest’ in that the Champion’s lead organisation was also the organisation that wanted to deliver their project:

*“I’d say the only barrier I had from day one is - I was very wary of people wearing two hats.” Recipient*

A small minority of recipients reflected that more input or support from the Champion in the initial stages would have been beneficial. For example, for one recipient there was some

confusion about the expectations for the work, specifically in terms of what the outputs should look like, once it was underway:

*“What would have been clearly helpful at the early stage would be to have [it] all written down... we had no examples of what it would look like...eventually I felt that we did and [we’re] converging on something that is what Take Part wants, but it isn’t necessarily what we thought it was going to be at the start.” Recipient*

However, despite these variations in experiences, the majority of recipients were positive about the strategic planning offered in the early stages of partnership. Again, this stage is crucial to embedding the Take Part approach, creating a transparency of aims and objectives, and securing the Champion-recipient relationship.

### **There were differences between Year 1 and Year 2 experiences**

Several Champions discussed the time pressures of Year 1 and the particular challenges of identifying potential partners, encouraging their application (and adherence to the Take Part principles) and distributing funds within three months. As a result of this pressure, several Champions described their reliance on existing contacts as a necessity; as an expedient means to ensure deadlines were met:

*“All the money had to be committed with six new partners by the end of March. It was just crazy to try and get anything up and running. The only saving grace was that the activities didn't have to be delivered in Year 1 - they could just be commissioned - otherwise it would have been impossible really to get anything.” Recipient*

In most instances, particularly in year one, the Champions approached partners that they knew were already doing related work and could quickly develop an appropriate project. Owing to the timescales, it was accepted that Champions would need to be pragmatic about utilising the development fund and may not be able to forge completely new relationships or projects until year two.

This time pressure was observed by some recipients, particularly Year 1 applicants. One recipient reflected on the short period between being approached and the deadline for applying (in some cases this was just over a month). This recipient was aware of the pressures associated with central government funding:

*“It did seem like this was one of those application processes that is driven by central government timelines and so it all seemed very rushed to be honest... I don’t think that was CDF’s timelines necessarily, but it’s this old story of you know government departments not approving funding until January for something that they want to get spent before March.” Recipient*

Several Champions discussed lessons learned from the short Year 1. Some continued to work with Year 1 recipients into Year 2 whilst some re-tendered for new applications. The use of existing networks in identifying potential partners was still an important process, attracting old and new applicants. The real change in behaviour however related to the time available to 'think through' the activities once funding recipients were selected:

*“We promoted it through our empowerment network to say that the funding was available, so some came in from those applications who had previously applied, and some came in from new organisations that had not been involved before.” Champion*

*“The work that we've commissioned in year two has been much more thought through [though], the process has remained the same.” Champion*

The recipients from both Year 1 and Year 2 were aware of a difference in the role of the Champion between the two years. For example one recipient designed a piece of work with little input from the Champion for Year 1, but then drew on the expertise of the Champion when applying for the Year 2 funding in order to take the learning's forward and embed the approach for the year ahead. This suggests that the importance of the Champion developed over the duration of the funding.

### 3. Engaging local and regional partners

#### **The role of the Champion is to:**

- Promote, advocate and tailor Take Part approach within their region;
- Nurture partnerships and relationships with local authorities, third sector organisations and other stakeholders in the delivery of Take Part activities;
- Ensure Development Fund activities are linked into other regional programmes, such as Connecting Communities, Regional Empowerment Programmes, Empowerment Fund Activities, Community Learning Champions, etc.

Box 6: Role expectations of the Champion in relation to engaging partners:

A key aspect of the regional Take Part Champion role lies in their ability to effectively engage local and regional partners and programmes to raise the profile and awareness of Take Part as a brand and as a community engagement approach. The Champions are expected to identify and build networks and partnerships to embed the work within community empowerment structures in the longer term. This can be both through the development fund activity or independent to it.

To fulfil these expectations, the Champion must be adept networkers, effective communicators, strong presenters and, overall, knowledgeable of and passionate about community empowerment activities. The findings are:

- Recruiting Champions who already had strong local and regional networks was key to their success
- ‘Linking up’ was crucial for recipients to achieve the best value out of their work and the Champions brokered relationships across recipient and regional partners
- Recipients already had some relationships with local and regional partners and programmes and these became stronger through involvement with Take Part and the work of the Champions

These findings are explored in more depth in the remainder of this chapter.

#### **Recruiting Champions who already had strong local and regional networks was key to their success**

Champions were employed on the strengths of their networks, knowledge of the sector and ability to work within existing community empowerment structures. Several Champions explained they had heard about the role or had been approached by Take Part through their pre-existing networks. These networks within the community were seen to be crucial for the Champion to understand what’s happening locally when working across such diverse

geographical regions. The reach of the lead organisation enabled Champions to quickly extend their influence across these different local communities.

*“We've got that understanding and awareness of what's happening in the communities in which we're working. So I think that helps with those partners because we can say, 'oh we're working with such and such' or 'we know so and so' or 'our organisers know so and so'.”*

*Champion*

This connection with the sector, and the reputation of the Champion and the lead organisation within community empowerment structures, enabled Champions to ‘hit the ground running.’ They talked of the importance of trust and how their visibility and profile within the community meant they could quickly access the right people in the right projects. As two Champions explained:

*“A lot of people who we're working with will have understood our work or worked with us before so that really helps, particularly in this role as a Champion because you're a known organisation... I think it gives you a sort of foot in the door to bring other ideas to the table, to help coordinate things and help build up a regional perspective on what we're trying to do.”*

*“The WEA [Workers Educational Association] is lucky in that we do have staff embedded in communities across the region.”* Champion

Pre-existing contacts with community empowerment networks gave Champions a ‘foot in the door’ when approaching new partners and identifying possible recipients. These personal contacts and the networks of the lead organisation were bolstered by the Take Part brand identity and together gained the Champion further credibility in the community empowerment landscape. Some Champions talked about new contacts gained for themselves and for their lead organisation as a result of their work as a Champion, in particular access to busy local authority departments. As one Champion explained, being associated with Take Part had opened otherwise closed doors to them and their lead organisation:

*“Take Part has been different [in that] we've actually made some new and different links with the local authorities – including Communities Teams and Democratic Services teams.”*

*Champion*

### **‘Linking-up’ was crucial to recipients getting the best value out of their work**

The role of the Champion in supporting the establishment of new partnerships – whether at a local or regional level - was generally highly valued by the recipients. Often referred to as a process of ‘linking-up,’ these new contacts gave recipients the opportunity to cross-fertilise ideas, share best practice and generally talk through events and strategy.

*“[The Champion] co-linked us in with some partners... who have been delivering some work and we invited the partners up to participate in both of our events so that we could share practice, share knowledge, share learning.” Recipient*

This linking-up of recipients with other local organisers also offered them the opportunity to build capacity within the community by consolidating and focussing their work on existing activity. As one Champion explained:

*“What we try and do in terms of building capacity is link it into other stuff that we're doing, work with our local organisers who've got an understanding of their community.” Champion*

As well as creating new contacts, this linking-up was perceived to be helpful in developing a more coherent structure to a disparate community empowerment landscape. This meant that recipients could feel part of the Take Part identity and wider network, rather than simply being grant beneficiaries:

*“Because we've got a broad base of things that we're involved with it's not just, 'this is one project in isolation.’” Champion*

Being part of the Take Part network was said to be of secondary importance to the recipients, as compared to the opportunities to share best practice around community empowerment techniques. However, this notion of an overall structure and the access to the support that entails was a further finding that emerged.

### **Champions helped to strengthen recipient’s engagement with local and regional partners and programmes**

Recipients had different relationships with local and regional partners, and with other regional empowerment programmes. Most recipients had some pre-existing partners and links to programmes that were developed prior to their involvement in Take Part, but the majority of recipients also engaged new partners through the Champion, and through their development fund activities. In this way the Champions helped strengthen and create new local and regional partnerships.

Box 7 provides an overview of the local and regional partners engaged by recipients, as well as the regional empowerment programmes they are involved in.

Box 7: Recipients’ local and regional partnership relationships

#### **How linked-in are recipients?**

**Engagement with local organisations:** Most recipients had pre-existing relationships with local partners, developed through other community empowerment work (i.e. those not connected to Take Part). This was largely due to recipients being organisations actively involved in community empowerment projects and used to engaging with local authorities,

voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations, and other stakeholders in their day-to-day roles.

*“A lot of my role, apart from managing the project, is about external relationships with the local authority, getting involved in the LSP and building and forging partnerships.” Recipient*

*“We liaise directly with the local communities and we’re also the partner that works...between the voluntary sector and the public sector. So we act as sort of the support between the two.” Recipient*

In many cases, the Champion played an active role in enabling the recipients to meet with new local partners, and to work with other organisations in their areas. Primarily this was through signposting the recipient to regional events, hosting networking activities, and by fostering relationships with partners that could support the delivery of the recipient projects. Particularly valued was the advice on how to access relevant local authority teams, which was seen to be a challenge in some areas.

**Engagement with the lead organisation as a partner:** At a regional level, the most common partnerships for recipients were with the Champion lead organisations. For some recipients these partnerships had already been established through previous community engagement work, and often it was these pre-existing relationships that had led to the recipient’s involvement in Take Part and with the development fund, rather than vice versa. For those recipients that had not previously worked directly with the lead organisation, the Take Part Champion work was felt to be a valuable way into these partnerships.

*“I think it has helped us to build relationships... for example [the lead organisation is] a partnership that we’ve not had before.” Recipient*

Most recipients felt that the Champion had directly contributed to reinforcing and developing these relationships.

**Regional bodies and networks:** The recipients reported being involved in a number of regional partnerships prior to their involvement with the Champion programme. These were:

- **Regional Empowerment Partnerships (REPs):** Membership or involvement with these was a common way of maintaining links with others in the region.
- **Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships:** Involvement with these was less common, but occurred in some regions e.g. the West Midlands (IEW).
- **Regional Development Agencies (RDA):** A few recipients had established relationships with their RDA and this was another source of funding for their work.

Some recipients felt the Champions strengthened their involvement in these networks because their work with the development fund often directly related to other work being carried out with these regional partners.

**Take Part Pathfinder organisations:** For many recipients the Champions acted as a conduit to new regional partners, and particularly to the Take Part pathfinder organisations (where this was not the same as the lead organisation). Liaison with these often occurred through the Champion, and they were used to gain valuable information about good practice and successful approaches to community empowerment.

In those regions where the lead organisation is also a Take Part Pathfinder, the linkages were even stronger; in one case, the pathfinder site provided training to all recipients to provide guidance around how to use the fund effectively and to share their approaches to community engagement.

**Regional empowerment programmes:** Many recipients were involved in other regional empowerment programmes, such as;

- Connecting Communities
- Network of empowering authorities
- Working Neighbourhoods Fund
- Targeted Support for Empowerment and Participation Improvement
- Community Asset Transfer
- Community Learning Champions

The majority of these recipients felt that their work with the Champion had added value to this wider work, and the development fund was commonly used for work that would directly expand it.

## 4. Capacity building and community engagement

### **The role of the Champion is to:**

Assist local authorities (and other development fund recipients) in improving their understanding of how Take Part approaches and methodology can assist them in supporting under-represented groups to engage in democratic processes and support the proposed Duty to Promote Democracy.

Box 8: Role expectations of the Regional Champion in relation to capacity building and community engagement

The Champions engage with local authorities directly, disseminating information about the Take Part approach providing tools or support as required. They also work with local authorities as development fund recipients, building their capacity and influencing their approaches to community engagement. The development fund recipients then themselves disseminate the Take Part approach, build capacity and engage with the community, either directly with the community or through other community organisations. Findings include:

- Champions mainly engaged local authorities in their region through the development fund
- Champions built the capacity of their recipients to deliver community empowerment work
- Champions influenced the community engagement approaches used by recipients
- The recipients used a range of approaches to build capacity and engage citizens in empowerment opportunities.

These findings are explored in more depth in the remainder of this chapter.

### **Champions mainly engaged local authorities through the development fund**

Champions felt there were no single effective way to engage the different local authorities in their region. This was often reflected by the fact that Champions might have excellent relationships in one local authority but report difficulties in engaging another.

Engagement was easiest when the Champion had pre-existing contacts within the relevant local authority departments. Trust, mutual-understanding and longer term relationships helped their approach. Champions were often sympathetic to local authority pressures and workloads, but some were frustrated that success in a particular authority could depend more on the individual in the post than anything within their own remit.

There were some examples where Champions approached local authorities independent of the recipient fund. One Champion talked of developing a 'Take Part offer' and so present themselves in a consultative community empowerment role. This was positioned as a strategic means to consolidate Take Part as an expert for local authorities, especially as councils will be expected to develop community organising activities as part of emerging national policy (discussed in more depth below). The type of support involved in this offer included:

*“Publishing materials to promote active learning and active citizenship opportunities... and consultancy around planning and developing new active citizenship learning activities.”*

*Champion*

*“We’ve delivered a lot of support in terms of advice and guidance, training... toolkits on how to go about delivering actual learning sets, conversation café approaches... all the boroughs have received support materials and the [local] coordinators will receive the Take Part induction pack as well as the Take Part training they did.”* Champion

Champions' main interactions with local authorities, however, happened through development fund work. The fund was seen as an effective way of gaining local authorities attention as well as delivering community empowerment activities through their local networks. One Champion explained how a small pot of money funded a local authority councillor training project. Although this was not directly working with individuals within the community, it offered a strategic route into the local authority department and the opportunity to:

*“Educate the people with power, as well as the people without the power.”* Champion

The difference between local authorities (as with all development fund recipients) lay not just in terms of personnel, structure or geography but also in terms of style, priority and their experience in community empowerment activity. Some local authorities relied heavily on the Champions to guide them through the Take Part process and actively sought out additional training and Take Part resources. Others wanted a more 'arms-length' relationship, happy to implement the activities independently.

### **Champions effectively built the capacity of their recipients**

The Champions offered recipients various forms of support to help build the capacity of their recipients. This was done through the following ways:

- **Provided education and training:** Many Champions offered training to recipients through their lead organisation or local Pathfinder organisation.

Examples include the Take Part Train the Trainer course or facilitator training for specific approaches (such as the Voice and Echo approach)<sup>5</sup>.

- **Provided guidance, resources and support materials:** Many Champions gave recipients national Take Part resources or materials from their lead organisations to help them with their activities. Examples include a Take Part Induction Pack outlining the Take Part approach, 'How-to' guides on leading action learning sets, and access to online tools to help recipients to use social media.
- **Gave opportunities to network:** Some Champions provided opportunities for recipients to meet each other, and other partners, in order to learn different approaches, reflect on their work and share best practice. For some recipients, this sharing of ideas had a direct impact on their community empowerment work. As one Champion suggested:

*"I feel that we [the lead organisation] are fairly successful in building capacity...it's not just what can you learn from [us], it's what can organisations learn from one another and the review meetings are crucial to that...making those connections [and give people] time to discuss their work and their concerns." Champion*

The following case study in Box 9 demonstrates how one Champion built the capacity of their recipients by providing the opportunity for them to meet and network, provide resources and guidance with input from the Pathfinder and through specific training. This built up relationships and invested in the long term skills of the recipient.

### Box 9: Building the capacity of development fund recipients

#### **Case study: Building the capacity of development fund recipients**

In one region the Champion built the capacity of their recipients by offering and delivering a training session.

Upon the allocation of funding, the Champion brought all the recipients from the region together. The Champion invited a speaker from the local pathfinder organisation to explain their work, provide more information about the Take Part programme and inform recipients about the Take Part Train the Trainer course.

The Champion presented a number of options of how to use the development funding. One option was for the recipients to pay directly for trainers and facilitators to deliver their planned activities in the community. The other option was for recipients to participate in the Train the Trainer course, enabling recipients

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<sup>5</sup> For more information on the Voice and Echo tools, visit: <http://changesuk.net/>. Accessed 1st June 2010.

themselves to deliver training in the community. The Champion would deliver this course directly to the recipients.

One recipient felt this was a sensible way to make the work sustainable. In particular it equipped them with the skills needed to deliver the training to the participants in their project, both as part of the development fund work and in the future in other projects.

### **Champions influenced the community engagement approaches used by recipients**

Champions also influenced the recipients' approaches to community engagement. This was essentially through the Take Part approach but there were other ways the Champion worked with their recipients. This was done through the following ways:

- **Providing clear directives:** Champions supported recipients in understanding how their work fit with the Take Part approach and the objectives of the development fund.
- **Provided advice and support:** Champions offered various forms of advice and support and particularly acted as a 'sounding board' when recipients were exploring the feasibility of different types of work.
- **Provided knowledge and expertise:** Particularly in relation to the Take Part approach, Champions offered recipients an expert view on what worked in the community.

A small number of recipients felt the Champion had not influenced their approaches to capacity building or community empowerment. The reasons for this were linked to the positioning of the recipient organisations; there were some recipients that felt they had already established successful approaches to community empowerment in other work, and that the support or input of the Champion was therefore not needed:

*"I think realistically it's good to have a contact point and someone who can Champion the work but given that we're in different cities and we have a lot of experience already I'm not sure it made a huge difference for us." Recipient*

*"I think for smaller organisations... the idea of a Champion is really good. It gives you that chance to check out whether they think your idea's okay, to add any comments or refinements that they might think that you could offer, but also having access to other projects that might have worked in other areas." Recipient*

These recipients were often from larger organisations and/or were those who felt they already had strong networks and experience. This meant that they had less need to rely on the Champion when developing their approaches to community engagement and capacity building. Some of them did, however, reflect on the value of the Champion role more generally and for other organisations, or comment that the Champion supported them in different ways, such as through providing tailored resources or ongoing monitoring.

### **Recipients used a range of innovative approaches to build capacity and empower citizens in participant communities**

As already suggested the Champions built recipients' capacity and influenced their community engagement strategies in a number of ways. This enabled the recipients to deliver in turn in their communities.

The approaches to community engagement used by recipients varied according to the influence of the Champion (as discussed) but also according to factors such as: local need, partners, target audiences and the resources available to them (including the size of the development fund). The main approaches can be grouped into the following types in Box 10:

Box 10: How recipients built the capacity of, and engaged with, the community

#### **How recipients built the capacity of, and engaged with, the communities**

**Training and development:** Running one-off, or series of, training sessions to target groups. These have been held for elected members, community organisations, active citizens, and hard to reach groups. The content of these sessions varied but some examples of the training on offer was:

- How to manage community and voluntary organisations (how to be a trustee, how to chair meetings, treasury skills etc.);
- How to engage with local and national democratic processes;
- Awareness-raising around civil society and the value of volunteering.
- Delivering or attending Take Part courses, such as Train the Trainer

**Workshops:** Holding discussion forums to enable voluntary and community sector and public sector organisations to share best practice and network. Workshops were also held to help communities acquire specific skills, such as developing partnerships and managing conflict.

**Specific community projects:** Giving target audiences the opportunity to carry out projects. Examples include a micro-level Local Strategic Partnership for a small area, and enabling community groups to make their own films about their work and how they have used the Take Part Approach.

**Other approaches** have included producing lasting outputs such as DVDs and information packs, coordinating visits to Parliament and sessions with local representatives, and establishing shadowing schemes.

### **Case study: Influencing the recipients and the delivering directly to the community**

The following case study examines the relationship between one Champion and recipient. It demonstrates how the Champion influenced the approach of the development fund activity and highlights some of the key impacts this work had on the community group as a result.

Box 11: Case study on Champion support and influence on recipient activity

#### **Case study: Champion support for recipient approaches to community engagement and capacity building**

One of the recipients has run a Young Person's Parliament Project, working in partnership with of the local secondary schools and the colleges in the area, and with the Parliament Education Service.

##### Champion influence and support

The recipient felt that the Champion had influenced their approaches by **giving them opportunities to share practice** with partners and by **giving clear guidance** on what the objectives of the work should be at the bid stage. The Champion **reinforced the importance of training** as an approach to capacity building the community. They also stated that training was one way to **ensure the sustainability** of the development fund work.

##### Recipient capacity building and engaging the community group

The recipient met with the various partners and they collaboratively designed an **interactive training session** for young people from across a range of schools, both private schools and schools from more disadvantaged areas.

The training got young people to think about politics and about what they would do if they were elected. It gave them the opportunity to form their own political parties and debate policy ideas. The parties were then asked to **create their own political broadcasts**, which are to be sent out to all the schools as interactive DVDs, posted on You Tube and made 'viral' through a social networking site.

The recipient has also worked with a local theatre to stage a **'Big Debate'** for the political parties to stand up in front on an audience of young people to discuss their views. Follow on work is planned (not via the development fund) for mock elections, with money to allow the young people to implement some of their policies. The young people have also been taken

on a visit to Parliament.

Impacts on the community group as a result of the development fund activity

The recipient commented how the activity had surpassed his expectations, led to improved relationships across schools. It also **raised awareness of political structures** and the right to **political participation**. Furthermore it **broadened the horizons** and **improved the confidence** of the disadvantaged young people that were part of the project.

## 5. Networking and access to support

### **The role of the Champion is to:**

- Offer advisory, coaching/mentoring and troubleshooting support to stakeholders interested in using Take Part methodologies
- Give information, advice and guidance, signposting as necessary on: - How to develop and run Take Part programmes/activities; Funding and accreditation options; and Take Part available resources
- Support regional shared learning and development of Take Part through appropriate mechanisms such as Action Learning Sets, peer support programmes etc

Box 12: Role expectations of the Champion in relation to networking and support:

The Champions are responsible for disseminating information from the national to the local level, and then for presenting findings and outcomes from the community back to the Take Part national team. In this way the Champion pulls together diverse and disparate regions through the Take Part approach and resources. They also offer a supportive, advisory role to recipients, tailoring resources according to their specific needs.

Key findings in this section include:

- The recipients highly value the support offered by the Champions
- The Champions highly value the support offered by the national team
- Tailoring national resources into regional materials is particularly important in engaging the regions

These findings are explored in more depth in the remainder of this chapter.

### **‘Value’ of support provided by Champion to recipient**

Most of the recipients drew support from their Champion at some point, and were generally very satisfied with the support and advice available to them. This was evidenced through favourable comparisons with their experiences of working on other projects and with other funding bodies.

*The support and the interest...have been exceptional really, compared to what you're used to with getting money.” Recipient*

The nature of this support varied according to the needs and experience of the development fund recipient. Box 13 below reviews the different forms of support and advice offered by the Champions.

Box 13: Support and advice provided by Champions to recipients

**Support and advice provided by Champions to recipients**

**Networking opportunities:** As discussed elsewhere, the majority of Champions offered their recipients opportunities to meet with local and regional partners. This has been through different forums including regional events such as ‘networking lunches’ or by signposting other relevant regional events for recipients to attend. These opportunities were felt to be extremely valuable for almost all recipients, both in terms of increasing the impact of their projects (through enabling them to work with resourceful partners) and providing them with lasting contacts.

*“They’ve acted as a very productive network partner... they’ve been able to give us very, very specific contacts so that we can actually bring other people into the work that we do and that’s extended from people like the Workers Educational Association to the parliamentary outreach team.” Recipient*

This networking support led to contacts beyond local and even regional networks:

*“They’ve put me in touch with the European Parliament...so it’s gone beyond the local democracy aspect of what we concentrate on and it’s put us in touch with people who have the national perspective as well.” Recipient*

**Keeping the work focussed:** Most recipients highly valued the support from Champions to monitor progress and ensure that the development fund work was ‘on track’. Recipients frequently referred to the value of having an external perspective provided by the Champion and many of them felt that this support had helped them to ensure their work was outcomes-focussed. Generally this support was offered through regular catch up meetings between the Champion and recipient, but one Champion had established a formal process in the form of a monthly update from their recipient:

*“I think it brings the external perspective...sometimes it’s difficult to have fresh thinking because you get kind of stuck in your challenges and limitations and in the culture of where you work...So I think it certainly brings a fresh perspective.” Recipient*

**Problem-solving support:** Some recipients had accessed help and advice from their Champion in relation to specific problems. For example, one recipient took part in a ‘Train the Trainer’ course through a Take Part pathfinder and then sought to access the ‘Train the Trainer’ resources to use in their own activity. The Champion offered their support and negotiated with the pathfinder organisation to access the resources. The recipient felt that this support was valuable:

*“[The Champion] intervened and between us we came up with a bit of a compromise and we*

*had a bit shared with us, but not possibly as much as I would have expected.” Recipient*

**Encouragement:** For a small number of recipients, support from their Champion was in the form of encouragement and enthusiasm. These recipients believed that this had given them increased confidence in their work. In a few cases, recipients felt that the passion of the Champion has been a key driver behind their involvement with Take Part and the success of their development fund projects.

*“I think the key word running through all of this is ‘Champions’. I’ve never met such committed people as the Take Part staff and workers. They are true Champions and that rubs off on everybody else and so if we all keep doing that then we’ll inspire other people to be Champions for their communities as well.” Recipient*

**Practical support:** For a few recipients the main value of the Champion for their work was as a source of practical information, for example through providing resources such as evaluation forms and application guidance. In this sense, the value of the Champion was felt in how the processes around the recipient activities were made to run more smoothly.

*“Stuff like evaluation forms which I used at the event... standardised forms which is very useful, saves reinventing them.” Recipient*

In one case, a recipient reported being dissatisfied with some of the support on offer, but this was not from the Champion but from their lead organisation more widely. Specifically, they had been asked to attend regional level meetings that had been poorly organised:

*“I have to say what has been absolutely dreadful is attempting to bring people together on a regional basis, the different Take Part projects, at really short notice. I don’t have a diary that enables me to drop everything... I found that frustrating and quite irritating.” Recipient*

Nonetheless, the majority of development fund recipients were able – and willing – to highlight a range of different ways they felt supported by their Champion.

### **Champions benefit from the flexible and tailored support offered by the national team**

The Champions were highly positive about the support offered and provided by the national Take Part programme team. Champions talked about the different types of support on offer to them and were generally impressed with the responsiveness and thorough replies from the national team, irrespective of the nature of the enquiry. The nature of the national Take Part programme support resembles that offered by the Champions to the recipients in that it is supportive, flexible and tailored to the needs of the individual. It is also a balance

between targeted support – and the option of being left alone to get on and deliver. Box 14 contains a number of quotes from Champions relating to this balance:

Box 14: Champion quotes about the balance of Take Part national team support

*“If I’ve ever had an issue or a problem or I’ve wanted a clarification they’ve always been very supportive and very flexible.” Champion*

*“I’ve had a very good working relationship with CDF and I think they’ve been really good in terms of letting you get on with it but being there if you need them which I think is the perfect way to be really.” Champion*

*“They are facilitating rather than controlling and I think that is good.” Champion*

*“I think the support’s generally been good and probably just right as well, sort of making sure things are done on time and things happen, but kind of not too intrusive.” Champion*

The Champions also talked positively about the quarterly meetings and in particular the opportunity to meet with other Champions and to share best practice and experiences. This forum was particularly important to ‘lone’ Champions; some Champions were employed by the same lead organisation and therefore had the opportunity to share within these broader structures whereas other Champions operated without organisational links to the wider national team.

*“I’ve attended all of the quarterly meetings... I’ve found them brilliant and just meeting people from different regions... it’s absolutely fascinating how different people have approached you know how they’ve done it.” Champion*

The Communities of Practice website received a more mixed reception from Champions. Some admitted a lack of engagement with the site preferring to work directly with other Champions from within their organisation or to go direct to the national team. Others found the online tool to be a positive resource offering the chance to interact and share experiences with other regions:

*“Something that I’ve found useful is the Communities of Practice website... it feels as if there’s not a huge number of projects that are really actively using it, but those that do... are really supportive and willing to share materials which has been really invaluable.” Champion*

*“From a personal point of view, the Communities of Practice site has been very good in terms of sharing ideas and resources.” Champion*

## **Tailoring national resources into regional materials is highly valued**

Champions talked of the importance of tailoring national Take Part approaches and resources into relevant tools for the development fund recipients in their specific regions. This is a process of appropriately disseminating information and strategy in accessible and relevant formats. Champions, particularly those from regions furthest from London described how national policy making could feel very distant and removed from their local communities. In this way, it was essential that national resources were made locally relevant.

*“A lot of resources they’re using are stuff that we’ve given them from our experience and things that we’ve developed rather than national support.” Champion*

As well as geographically shaping resources, Champions talked of the importance of creating ‘hard copy’ resources. Several Champions and recipients talked about the need for understanding the Take Part approach, a fairly abstract process, in a simple format so that people could digest it:

*“What we felt was really important ... was to produce this brochure... we felt we were getting a lot of criticism because there was nothing that existed to hand to people so they could really get their heads round it.” Champion*

This process, of tailoring national resources into locally-relevant material, was one way the Champions worked to make the Take Part programme accessible in the regions. This was especially important for those that felt geographically distant from London.

## 6. Sustainability and embedding Take Part

The Champions are responsible for embedding Take Part in the development fund activities and through their other work with local and regional partners and programmes. This process is designed to sustain the Take Part legacy – in terms of branding and the approach – once the funding for the main Take Part programme comes to an end.

Key findings include:

- Champions have embedded the Take Part approach in their work and in the work of the development fund recipients
- Recipients are actively looking to sustain their development fund activities through other funding or through new or existing partnerships
- Champions feel uncertain about their own roles as funding stops, but feel hopeful that their community empowerment work is relevant to government policy priorities
- Both champions and recipients are confident the Take Part approach will continue as funding ends but they question the extent to which the brand will remain

These findings are explored in more depth in the remainder of this chapter.

### **The Champions have embedded the Take Part approach in their work**

The Champions believed that embedding the Take Part approach within the recipient activities was key to sustaining the activity after the development funding finished. They felt that this was achieved through the networks opened up by Take Part activity and reiterated the importance of building on existing activity and within existing structures.

*“I also think we’ve got loads of people now who are kind of just committed to this way of working... it’s the links that we’ve made with other organisations and partners [which] is key” Champion*

Some Champions also discussed active ‘legacy planning’ to embed sustainability that they were tailoring to their regions, in particular specific legacy events or building ‘learning partnerships’ to support the recipients in the future:

*“This event next week will help us to start to have conversations about “where does this go from here, what you’re planning in terms of embedding the work in terms of legacy?””  
Champion*

*“We are producing a learning partnership that can help them to identify how they are doing things and how they can improve the work that they are doing in the future.” Champion*

One Champion also revealed their support for recipients in sourcing future funding through partnership bidding:

*“We did some work with partners around fundraising, invited partners that we work with to come along to that to encourage them to also make bids and encourage partnership bidding”*

Recipients’ work was also made sustainable through the partnerships gained through the development fund activities. Some recipients felt that the creation of a network of local partners was an extremely valuable way of securing future project work, and in some instances the recipients were working together to offer their work to other partners (such as local authorities) as a package.

Recipients were embedding a broad range of approaches into their work in order to sustain their development fund activity after the end of the programme. Table 2 below reviews some of these approaches.

Table 2: Recipient approaches to making their work sustainable

Approaches to sustainability	How the recipients are implementing these approaches
Pursuing follow-on work	<p>Some recipients have been expanding on their development fund activities through follow on work, therefore working to continue or extend the projects. Examples of this include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Repeating the work to new audiences or in new areas;</li> <li>- Carrying out more of the same activities;</li> <li>- Approaching partners to deliver the work for them.</li> </ul>
Capacity building the people involved in the development fund work	<p>One of the main elements for some of the recipient work has been to build the capacity of the people involved. The aim is that this will then stimulate further community empowerment work.</p> <p>In some projects, this has involved providing training and equipping beneficiaries with the skills needed to become community facilitators, or even deliverers of further training.</p> <p>In others projects the emphasis on capacity building has been more general; with the view that increasing the beneficiaries confidence and abilities to influence their communities will impact upon their work at a local level.</p> <p>For many of the recipients, this capacity-building work is the main source of sustainability for the development fund.</p>
Networking	<p>For some recipients the main source of sustainability for their work will be the partnerships and contacts gained. These are being used to share best practice and scope out opportunities</p>

	for future work.
Other sources of funding	<p>Many of the recipients were looking into alternative sources of funding streams in order to enable them to continue, or build upon, their projects. Examples of these included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Big Lottery funding</li> <li>- Reaching Communities Fund</li> </ul>
Demonstrating impact and cost effectiveness	A few recipients felt that the main way in which they could make the work sustainable would be to clearly demonstrate its impact and value. For these, the evaluation process was therefore essential in showing the success of the work.

For many recipients the value and impact of the Champion role became most evident when considering the sustainability of their work. Having an external figure to keep a perspective on the overall aims of the activities had provided an ‘added focus’ on the outcomes of the work. Some recipients felt the Champion role had also helped to develop them as an organisation, beyond the development fund work.

*“[The Champion] invested in us for the future, so that now we’ve got new sets of skills, new networks, new contacts, new ambitions and a new understanding of the fact that we’re not the only people who are trying to achieve this and that there are other people beavering away, building capacity in the community to hopefully grow our own people into community Champions...” Recipient*

One recipient felt that their work with the Champion lead organisation helped their long-term sustainability. They felt the Champion and other lead organisation staff were able to offer examples and advice (relating to embedding their work) grounded in experience.

### **There is uncertainty and hope for the future**

Several Champions referenced current policy developments, in particular the recession, localism bill and the Big Society, when talking about their futures. The uncertainty of budget cuts, particularly for local authorities and voluntary and community organisations, meant an unsettled present in terms of morale and expectations for the future. Champions reflected that the end of funding (and potential lack of future funding) contributed to the anxiety of both themselves and their recipients:

*“The VCO’s are all feeling a bit vulnerable at the moment and don’t know whether they will continue to have funding and the local authorities are all losing lots of people and are feeling that they’re very low on capacity.” Champion*

Despite the sense that the development fund had managed to achieve a great amount of activity in relation to its relatively small financial value, there was still the recognition that some money was needed, even in the narrative of Big Society:

*“I mean it absolutely ought to kind of fit with the Big Society stuff, but I think that you know Take Part shows that a little bit of money supporting those things goes a long way and if a little bit of money isn’t there then it might be more difficult.” Champion*

There was some hope however, despite the uncertainty of budget cuts, that the experiences of the Champion and the recipient align with national government priorities for community organising and that, therefore, their work would be valued and maintained:

*“One would hope Big Society won't try and reinvent the wheel and it will use everything that's been learnt from Take Part to underpin whatever it is they're trying to deliver when they've worked out exactly what it is.” Champion*

Not only was community empowerment important to broader Big Society policy but the Champions talked of their experiences of understanding how these activities were to be delivered particularly within disadvantaged areas. If the government were to commission community empowerment pilots or release funding for programmes directly within the disadvantaged communities, the Champions were presenting themselves as contenders to deliver this future policy:

*“We’ve got some very strong messages about the importance of Take Part type programmes for making sure that Big Society are going to be accessible to all, including minority groups and more disadvantaged groups and so I suppose by having very clear messages about that as part of our Championing work, we’re supporting people to see where we fit in possible futures as well.” Champion*

In referencing national policy and through their knowledge of improving public participation of disadvantaged communities, Champions were positioning their work squarely within the Big Society framework.

### **Take Part in nature, not in name?**

There was some debate regarding the Take Part legacy. Both Champion and recipient interpreted legacy in different ways and in some instances the Take Part brand was split out from the Take Part approach.

Whereas some Champions felt confident that the Take Part brand was established in their region, other Champions talked more abstractly about the approach as separate to the brand. For some, the Take Part approach was something they just did anyway; unsurprising perhaps considering their knowledge of community empowerment approaches supported

their successful recruitment to the role of Champion. This sense of ‘chicken and egg’ meant that there was confidence that the approach would exist as a process, even if it did not necessarily exist by name.

*“I mean I’m not that worried about what we call it, if it gets another name, I think it will kind of keep happening.” Champion*

*“The Take Part approach is just the way that we work and a lot of organisations work and therefore it will continue to work.” Champion*

As one Champion highlighted, borrowing from what has gone before is an important element of legacy and arguably more important – in terms of longer-term impacts and developments – than the branding attached to the process:

*“I think when you're looking at the activities, will these activities continue beyond Take Part, I think the answer's yes they will in some shape or form. Will they be remembered as Take Part? I don't know, but Take Part wasn't unique, it built on things that had happened and gone before and I think other things will come on.” Champion*

Nonetheless, the hole that would remain were Take Part to leave the community empowerment field would be particularly felt in terms of the overriding structures provided by the programme.

*“It would be great if all this could work or last but I think often what happens is people carry on in their own little areas and try and do what they can and then something else hopefully will link in.” Champion*

The Take Part approach has been embraced as a means to ensure community empowerment is the outcome of development fund activities. The champion however embeds the money and the approach and, furthermore, connects the dots and supports recipients in feeling linked-in. As one champion explained:

*“I see my role as a kind of facilitator, pouring oil on stuff and using my networks across the region and between the regions to make sure people know what’s happening, what’s available, give support and avoid too much duplication of effort.”*

## 7. Conclusion

This report considers the relative 'value' of the Regional Take Part Champion programme in supporting the capacity building and engagement work of the development fund recipient in empowering the community. The key conclusions are:

In **managing the development fund**, Champions developed effective approaches for identifying recipients early on (using their existing networks), and these approaches were refined in the second year of the work, when time pressures decreased. Recipients felt the application process was straightforward process and the Champion supported recipients to make sure their proposed activity reflected the values of the Take Part approach.

Recipients were motivated to apply primarily by the funding, although the values of Take Part were felt to be closely aligned to their own and the Champion support was increasingly valued over the course of the project. Most recipients felt that the development fund offered a mutually beneficial opportunity to develop some innovative practice around community empowerment.

All of the Champions also made use of their existing networks when **engaging local and regional partners**. They used the knowledge and expertise of their lead organisation to form relationships with diverse stakeholders that could support the delivery of Take Part, particularly local authorities within their region. Champions engaged with new local authority partners through their work with Take Part and raised the profile of Take Part amongst their existing contacts.

Champions also supported recipients in developing these partnerships, providing opportunities for them to 'link-up' their work, maximize pre-existing partnerships and avoid any duplication of provision. Recipients were involved in a number of other regional empowerment programmes and Champions were able to usefully add value to the work being done with these or introduce recipients to new networks.

Champions were also able to add value to the wider Take Part programme by undertaking and supporting **capacity building and community engagement** activities. Champions had a direct impact on the activities of their development fund recipients, by shaping the focus of the work and offering ongoing support and development. They worked to build the capacity of recipients who in turn worked to build the capacity of their communities through their development fund activities.

The **networking and support** activities of Champions were positively received by the majority of development fund recipients. Recipients particularly appreciated the opportunity to attend shared-learning events to disseminate good practice and they used their Champions as an external sounding board for the development fund activities. Champions themselves felt supported through the CDF and Take Part national teams and also enjoyed the opportunity to meet and learn from other Champions. Their role as an interpreter of

national resources into regional materials was particularly important for regions geographically distant to London and who felt the most disaffected from national politics.

Recipients felt that most of the support provided by Champions would have a lasting impact on their work, helping them to make it **sustainable** in the future and to embed the Take Part approach. Champions have also made a wider contribution to the **legacy of the Take Part programme**; making sure that the work carried out has a lasting impact on learning around active citizenship and community empowerment, through the people involved, if not as a brand.

The Champions played a crucial role in raising the profile of Take Part, and successfully supported the delivery of community empowerment activities within their regions by bringing together the development fund and the Take Part approach. The evidence suggests the 'added-value' role of the Champion lies in making the whole of the recipient activity bigger than the individual value of its constituent parts.

## Appendix A: Methodology

The evidence in this report is taken from in-depth semi-structured interviews with eight (out of nine) Champions and 26 recipients (almost three recipients per each of the nine regions).

### Evaluation framework

This evaluation has been grounded within the ‘why, how, who and what works’ framework:

- **Know why** action is needed, why doing something in a particular way is thought to bring about intended outcomes;
- **Know how** activities are being carried out – what approaches are being used?
- **Know who** is involved and at which stage - involves understanding local needs as well as information on key stakeholders necessary for potential solutions;
- **Know what works:** what approaches are most useful?

The five key research areas in the CDF brief<sup>6</sup> were deconstructed according to this framework. This exercise shaped the research tools, the interviews and the structure of this final report.

### Mapping and sampling

The brief was to interview all Champions and a sample of 27 recipients from across all nine regions: this was a total of 36 interviews in a six-week window. Under such time considerations, phone interviews were the most effective means of collecting the data. The high number of recipient interviews necessitated a tight and well-organised approach to identifying and booking prospective participants.

In order to select the recipient sample we mapped out the terrain according to certain criteria. We wanted to tease out the similarities and differences across recipients in order to select interviewees that could offer a broad range of diverse experiences. Qualitative research is concerned with exploring topics in-depth and the meaning attached to certain issues, rather than prevalence or numerical findings. Whilst some recipients map against corresponding criteria, these findings are still reported experientially rather than to suggest representative experiences.

We mapped development fund recipients against the following criteria:

- Sector (i.e. Local Authority, Voluntary or Charity organisation)

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<sup>6</sup> These five areas are those around which this report is framed, namely ‘managing the development fund,’ ‘engaging local and regional partners,’ ‘capacity building and community engagement,’ ‘networking and access to support,’ and ‘sustainability and embedding Take Part.’

- Audience (i.e. specific target group or for entire community)
- Size of grant
- Long or short-term activities
- Number of people involved
- Comments

These criteria were applied to both Year 1 and Year 2 recipients.

In order to quickly and efficiently gain the information required for the mapping, a pro-forma was developed and sent directly to the Champions for them to fill out and return. This pro-forma was designed to be as non-cumbersome as possible and each was tailored according to their specific region, building on information already supplied by the CDF. As we received completed pro-formas at staggered points over a number of weeks, and because of short timelines, we mapped recipients within their own region as opposed to mapping all recipients at the same time according to national characteristics. This meant that the selected recipients reflect the regional experience rather than correspond to national weightings.

Where possible we approached recipients based on their regional mapping criteria in order to rationalise our sample. However, we also included a 'comments' option on our pro-forma where some Champions added whether they felt particular recipients would be good to approach. Whilst this 'comments' option could bias our sample – encouraging Champions to select those recipients which they felt they had the 'best' stories to tell – it did provide us with a 'back up' list of recipients we could contact if we needed to approach more projects in the region in a short space of time.

### **Research tools**

As explained above, both topic guides for Champions and recipients focussed upon the five research questions which were deconstructed through the evaluation framework. The topic guides and themes were adapted for both Champion and recipient and submitted to CDF for approval and sign off.

The topic guides consisted of both general, open questions, asking for broad experiences of different elements of the Take Part programme as well as more specific questions relating to the work of the Champions within their project. This combination reflects that whilst this evaluation is focussed specifically on the Champions it is impossible to understand their contribution without understanding the broader context of Take Part and, broader still, the other conditions, nature and experiences of the recipients within the community empowerment landscape.

As both Champions and recipient interviews were semi-structured the topic guides were exactly that; they acted as prompts to the interview rather than a rigid structure. This allowed the interview to be tailored according to the experiences of the interviewee,

especially as they were busy people and with only a certain amount of time available for the interview.

### Champion interviews

The aim of the study was to interview all nine of the Champions. Due to unforeseen circumstances, one Champion was unavailable for interview during the field work period so the survey was limited to eight Champions. The Champions were part of the following lead organisations:

- Inspire East (East of England)
- SkillShare (North East)
- Workers Educational Association (WEA) Yorkshire and the Humber
- Workers Educational Association (WEA) North West
- Workers Educational Association (WEA) Southern (South East)
- London Civic Forum (London)
- Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council (VCS) (West Midlands)
- University of Lincoln (East Midlands)
- Exeter Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) (South West)

We approached the Champions as named on the CDF contact list and held semi-structured in depth phone interviews which lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. Interviews were recorded – with the participant’s permission – and transcribed for submission alongside this report.

### Recipient interviews

The aim of the study was to interview three recipients per nine regions, identified and approached as a result of the mapping exercise (which in turn was facilitated by the information returned on the Champions’ pro-formas). Of our target we completed 26 phone interviews; the one which was not completed was cancelled at last minute because of external issues.

Where possible we interviewed recipients according to their mapping criteria but in several instances we did approach ‘recommended’ recipients if we were short of the target in a particular region (a result of initially-targeted recipients being unavailable). Like with the Champions, phone interviews were recorded – with the participants – permission and transcribed for submission alongside this report.

Table 3: Overview of the number of Champions and recipients interviews conducted per region

Region	Number of Champions	Number of recipients
North West	1	3
North East	1	3

Yorkshire and the Humber	1	3
West Midlands	1	3
East Midlands	1	3
East of England	1	3
London	1	3
South East	1	2
South West	0	3
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>26</b>

### **Analysis and reporting**

The data was both very rich and very broad. As a means to manage extensive detail and multiple perspectives the report contains only certain perspectives relating to the interviewees' experiences of community empowerment activities within and without Take Part. The research team focussed the analysis according to the key themes of the report. This allowed the opportunity to test out hypotheses and reflect after the extended and intensive interview period. The analysis was completed by those that had also held the telephone interviews which provided consistency to the reading of the data.

A note on quotes: as the accompanying transcripts demonstrate, quotes have not always been included in this report verbatim. Some quotes have been adapted. However this was always for ease of understanding and clarity and care has been made to ensure the meaning of the words were not lost in the process.

## Appendix B: Sampling tables

**Table 4: Breakdown of development fund recipient interviewees by region, sector, year of involvement and size of grant**

Region	Sector of DFR	Year of involvement	Size of grant (brackets)
East	Local Authority	Year 2	£5,000 - £9,999
	Local Authority	Year 2	£5,000 - £9,999
	Local Authority	Year 2	£5,000 - £9,999
East Midlands	CVS	Both years (1 & 2)	Unknown
	CVS	Both years (1 & 2)	Unknown
	CVS	Both years (1 & 2)	£3,000 in year 1, unknown year 2
London	Local Authority	Both years (1 & 2)	£10,000+ over both years
	CVS	Year 2	£5,000 - £9,999
	CVS	Year 2	£5,000 - £9,999
North East	Local Authority	Both years (1 & 2)	£5,000 - £9,999
	Local Authority	Both years (1 & 2)	£10,000 +
	CVS	Both years (1 & 2)	£10,000 +
North West	Local Authority	Both years (1 & 2)	£10,000+ over both years
	CVS	Both years (1 & 2)	£10,000+ over both years
	CVS	Both years (1 & 2)	£10,000+ over both years
South East	Local Authority	Both years (1 & 2)	£10,000+ over both years
	CVS	Both years (1 & 2)	£10,000+ over both years
South West	CVS	Both years (1 & 2)	£10,000+ over both years
	CVS	Both years (1 & 2)	£10,000+ over both years
	CVS	Both years (1 & 2)	£5,000 - £9,999
Yorkshire and the Humber	Local Authority	Year 1	£5,000 - £9,999
	Local Authority	Year 1	£10,000+ over both years
	Local Authority	Year 1	£10,000+ over both years
West	Local Authority	Both years (1 & 2)	Unknown

Midlands	CVS	Both years (1 & 2)	Unknown
	CVS	Both years (1 & 2)	Unknown

**Table 5: Breakdown of development fund recipient interviewees by Year of involvement (compared to all development fund recipients)**

This table shows how our sample compares against the breakdown of all development fund recipients, specifically in terms of whether they were involved with Take Part over Year 1, Year 2 or over both years.

Region		Year 1		Year 2		Both years		Total:
		n	%	n	%	n	%	
East	All DFR	0	0%	6	100%	0	0%	6
	Sample	0	0%	3	100%	0	0%	3
East Midlands	All DFR	0	0%	0	0%	6	100%	6
	Sample	0	0%	0	0%	3	100%	3
London	All DFR	2	16%	6	50%	4	34%	6
	Sample	0	0%	2	66%	1	34%	3
North East	All DFR	0	0%	0	0%	6	100%	6
	Sample	0	0%	0	0%	3	100%	3
North West	All DFR	3	25%	6	50%	3	25%	12
	Sample	0	0%	0	0%	3	100%	3

South West	All DFR	0	0%	0	0%	9	100%	9
	Sample	0	0%	0	0%	3	100%	3
South East	All DFR	2	25%	2	25%	4	50%	9
	Sample	0	0%	0	0%	2	100%	2
West Midlands	All DFR	0	0%	1	17%	5	83%	6
	Sample	0	0%	0	0%	3	100%	3
Yorkshire and the Humber	All DFR	9	70%	4	30%	0	0%	13
	Sample	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3

**Table 6: Breakdown of development fund recipient sample by sector**

Region	Local Authority	VCS	Total:
East	3	0	3
East Midlands	0	3	3
London	1	2	3
North East	2	1	3
North West	1	2	3
South East	1	1	2
South West	0	3	3
West Midlands	1	2	3
Yorkshire and the Humber	3	0	3
<b>Total:</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>26</b>