

- **No.69**
- **Learning from University-Community Partnership: UK Research Findings**

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- **Abstract:**

- This paper presents findings from a Research Cluster in UK in line with other researchers understanding concepts and practices of the partnership learning between University and civil society. It reflects upon programmes to promote community-based learning for active citizenship in UK (2004-2011) and the lessons emerging from researching these at the Cluster. The previous New Labour government launched two consecutive initiatives first: 'Active Learning for Active Citizenship' (2004-2006) Learning programmes delivered via Third Sector organisations based in seven regional hubs working in partnership with voluntary and community sector organisations and with academic partners with relevant experience of community-based learning in their regions. Second: Take Part Programme consisted of two components, the 'Pathfinders', which were to take the learning from ALAC forward more widely improving knowledge, skills and confidence of citizens and Take Part Champions supported by 'National Support' programme which was to engage organisations beyond the Pathfinders and Champions, and to enable them to run Take Part activities too. There were eighteen Pathfinders and nine Champions bringing in several local authorities as well as Third Sector organisations and universities. Learning Partnership to support learning to take part in civil society as an active citizen has been a topical policy commitment. And Community-based learning is a key issue to enable a transformative space for citizenship engagement in democratic processes for active citizenship(Mayo and Annette, 2010).Education for more fully empowering forms of civic activism would include learning how to challenge unequal power relations working collectively to promote agendas of social justice (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004, Mayo and Rooke, 2006). The emphases of these programmes were upon learning collectively, as well as individually, and learning experientially through engaging as volunteers and participants in structures of governance. Through increasing their knowledge and their critical understanding, learners could in addition be empowered to take collective action, it was argued, in the pursuit of the values of equalities and social justice (Mayo, 2010) How effective have community based approaches been in engaging people as active citizens, including the most excluded people? And to what extent University – Community Learning Partnership have actually been prepared to facilitate this learning for active citizenship is question civil society are part of this paper. It also presents research finding of some of the current challenges and dilemmas that third sector organisations are facing, in particular we illustrate manifestations of their resilience to survive and develop strategically for the future (Buzzanell, P. 2010)