

<b>Institution:</b> University of Lincoln		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 17 – Business and Management Studies		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Changing Third Sector and University Partnerships to Strengthen the Capacity of Community Organisations through Community-based Research (CBR)		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2000 - 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>  MENDIWELSO-BENDEK Zoraida HERRON Rebecca	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>  Senior Research Fellow in Citizenship Associate Professor	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> 17 Feb 03 to date  12 Jun 00 to date
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2013 - 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)  Research at the University of Lincoln International Business School focused on developing the capability of hard-to-reach community organisations, which typically lack political or economic power, to enable them to engage with democratic processes that improve their situation and their future. Strategically, the researchers reached such communities by fostering new forms of partnerships between universities and third sector organisations. Their research developed an organising framework (CDF) based on organisational systems and learning theories, which has been used to strengthen third sector management and public sector partnerships. The impact in six international partnerships and one UK partnership are described. These have informed national policies, changed the community engagement structures of universities and built university/third sector partnerships that have successfully engaged with thousands of people enabling their communities to be actively engaged in the democratic processes of social change.</p>		
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)  The programme of research undertaken at the University of Lincoln was founded on initial studies on organisational systems theory and operations management. This was applied to communities, civil society and third sector management. During this research Mendiwelo-Bendek and her team demonstrated that the dynamics of self-constructed learning spaces are important for effective community organisation and innovation. In addition, it elaborated the central significance of action in the organisation and structuring of citizenship learning, taking account of the circularity between observation and reflection with conversations shaping knowledge, practice and theory-in-use [3.1 and 3.2].</p> <p>Research (2003-2011) funded by the Home Office and the Department for Communities and Local Government used a network of local programmes to engage with communities to address aspects of public policy and management. This identified that “active learning for active citizenship requires SPACE (Social and Political Active Citizenship Education) for sustainability”. The research also identified the critical need to understand power relations in the ‘space’ of active citizenship and provided a framework for organisational systems to be developed and linked to wider policy issues [3.2].</p> <p>A further phase of the research (2008-2013) was via ‘Take Part’, an ESRC Capacity Building research project, led by the University of Lincoln (with Manchester and Goldsmiths London universities). From this a better understanding of systemic organisation of community-university relationships (for citizenship learning) was gained, thus contributing to partnership management by universities [3.3]. The findings showed how research-based evidence contributes to community development and community organisation, when owned by those third sector communities. The approach strengthens capacity, enabling communities to address current</p>		

challenges and so promotes active citizenship agendas. A **Community Development Framework (CDF)** was the main published output, explaining the evidence, concepts and approaches, along with guidance, training for trainers and tools to strengthen university and community partnerships. [3.4, p237-8].

Since 2013, the research has been extended geographically to promote, develop and study the approaches to community-based research (CBR) used to influence the democratic social transformation process in different cultural contexts [3.3]. For example, in Colombia the challenge of the post conflict situation was identified as an area where community organisation and development through community-based research in university and community partnerships could help develop the CDF contextually and create impact. At the same time the UK based action research was extended to new UK communities and widened into Europe through research partnerships. In 2015 Mendiwelo-Bendek led a European partnership submitting a Horizon 2020 proposal to use, and develop, the CDF in the context of lifelong learning, with the aim of creating potential models of inclusive approaches and organisation. The network which developed as a result of this bid enabled researchers from Lincoln to work on three separate action research programmes in Italy, Spain and Slovenia. Each of these enabled the CDF to be extended contextually to third sector organisation-university partnerships.

This research has contributed new knowledge to understand and improve the management of genuine university-community co-operation in action research that benefits all participants. The objective of such partnerships is to discover, design and develop ways to enable active citizenship and democratic social transformation, especially for less advantaged communities. To this end the approach is action-oriented, collaborative and participative. Genuine collaboration in all aspects of the process leads to greater ownership by communities, improved skills and knowledge and greater motivation to engage [3.3, 3.6].

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- 3.1 Herron, R. and Mendiwelo-Bendek, Z. (2007) Take part: Active learning for active citizenship contributing to community O.R. reflections and practices. *OR Insight*, 20(2) 3-7. ISSN 0953-5543.  
<https://doi.org/10.1057/ori.2007.7>
- 3.2 Espejo, R. and Mendiwelo-Bendek, Z. (2011) An argument for active citizenship and organisational transparency. *Kybernetes*, 40(3/4) 477-493. ISSN 0368-492X.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/03684921111133692>
- 3.3 Mendiwelo-Bendek, Z. (2015) Community-based research: enabling civil society's self-organisation. *Kybernetes*, 44(6/7) 903-912.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/K-02-2015-0056>
- 3.4 Mayo, M., Mendiwelo-Bendek, Z. and Packham, C. (eds.) (2013) *Community Research for Community Development*. London: Palgrave Macmillan ISBN-13: 978-1137034731.  
[https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137034748\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137034748_1)
- 3.5 Herron, R. and Mendiwelo-Bendek, Z. (2018) Supporting self-organized community research through informal learning. *European Journal of Operational Research*, 268(3) 825-835. ISSN 0377-2217.  
<http://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejor.2017.08.009>
- 3.6 Mayo, M., Mendiwelo-Bendek, Z. and Packham, C. (2019) Promoting Take Part Approach. In H. Tam (ed.) *Whose Government Is It? The Renewal of State-Citizen Cooperation*. Policy Press, Bristol: Bristol University Press, 213-228.  
<https://doi.org/10.1332/policypress/9781529200980.003.0013>

**4. Details of the impact** (indicative maximum 750 words)

The main impact goal of the research is to develop the capability of communities that typically lack political or economic power to engage with democratic processes and improve their situation and their future. Through the Community Development Framework (CDF), community development was co-produced through collaborative action research in the field (aforementioned CBR), revealing contextual and institutional landscapes; for instance, power, rights and obligations; and developing practices in that context. The inherent involvement of communities in the process led to greater understanding, and more importantly, greater ownership of the knowledge produced, greater sense of agency to be able to create change and thus a greater commitment to action as a result.

Much of the impact thus arises through the engagement of intermediary organisations, such as community groups and university partnerships, primarily via “Take Part”. In Take Part projects, the intermediaries use collaborative research and learning frameworks to develop their capacity to work with (rather than for) their own communities. Thus, the impact described below reports the changes in approach by these important intermediaries, showing how it has influenced their activities and benefit to their communities. Between 2013-2020 the Take Part Research Programme has been active in the UK but has expanded through partnerships in Europe, Latin America, and the USA.

A recent **UK** example is the ‘Social Issues in South Lincs’, programme. This uses the Take Part CDF to create a community-based process to identify emerging research data on social needs and local responses. The CDF supports the systemic design, implementation and mentoring of a stakeholder network dealing with aging populations, rural isolation and infrastructure, social cohesion and migration, mental health and economic/social sustainability. The CDF has generated the network’s ability to link emergency responses and service delivery (e.g. NHS) to local community providers of the needed resources [5.1]. For example, the network was able to react more effectively to the COVID crisis and develop community-led responses. This has resulted in over 900 families being fed and led to NHS professionals being able to easily identify and use local resources for Social Prescribing and emergency planning. In addition to this the network contributes to public policy, such as the Parliamentary Inquiry on Rural Health and Social Care in 2018 and ‘Holistic Mission: Social action and the Church of England’ - which was debated in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The impact of this was to “*raise awareness of the lived-realities and social needs in rural communities*” [5.1].

**In Europe**, Take Part has been used effectively to improve the community engagement of some universities active in community research, as well as having a resulting positive impact on their communities. Between 2015-2017 the University of Maribor (Slovenia) used the Take Part CDF to create a multi-layered monitoring and evaluation model, established the use of participative approaches in Summer School active projects for 60 students, improved its (Maribor’s) understanding of active citizenship and was able to align activities with civil society organisations, providing a deeper learning experience for all [5.2 letter and p6 in report].

At the University of Sassari (**Italy**), the Research and Teaching Laboratory on Social Policies and Training (FOIST), adopted the Take Part CDF approach in designing its support programmes with third sector organisations. This led to the lab developing its own CDF from the collaboration with Lincoln and ultimately changing the structure of its engagement with third sector organisations. The “*indispensable*” Take Part approach has been a key factor in enabling them to engage strategically in higher level policy making (they refer to “scalability”) with regards to social policy. For example, facilitating community/municipality policy dialogue and on community health programmes [5.3].

The Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo (UIMP) and CeiMigra - Jesuits Service of Immigrants in Valencia (**Spain**) and a group of significant third sector organisations (such as Islamic Communities, Save the Children and Amnesty International), worked with Lincoln to create a systemic based research process informed by the CDF. This was subsequently adopted in the practices and strategic thinking of regional policy on immigration [5.4 p199-210].

The focus was collaboration to address migration and integration through cooperative practices and CBR approaches. The partnership supported third sector organisations to engage more closely with migrant communities, to improve the integration of immigrants and to enable them to become active in work, education and health. The collaboration between UIMP and Lincoln continues, strengthening the work of the Valencian Immigration Observatory in support of third sector organisations working with migrants [5.5]

**Latin America:** The Lincoln research drew interest from universities in **Colombia** where communities face life-threatening challenges in the post conflict era and need to develop political and economic power to implement the national Peace Agreement. Through the University of Ibagué / Lincoln CDF, Ibagué estimate that more than 200 community leaders, students and researchers have participated in Take Part. This has led to individuals working with local authorities in the 47 rural municipalities of the Tolima region to help them engage more effectively through CBR [5.6].

In 2017 the University of Los Andes Co-Lab Paz (Peace) for Community Based Research collaborated with Lincoln to develop its own CDF. This has been used with over 1,000 people from different ethnic and community backgrounds in the Magdalena Medio, Cauca and Sur de Bolívar regions of **Colombia** to help reduce post-conflict tensions and enable them to contribute to meaningful future plans. In the region of Huila the CDF has also been used with rural educational communities to develop neighbourhood dialogues. This has involved more than 1,500 youth leaders who have contributed to the municipalities' development plans. [5.7, 5.8 p1 and 18-20]. In addition, the Take Part CDF has influenced policy on citizen empowerment in the Capital District of Bogotá and contributed to the Colombian Government's social research policy to increase the impact of social research for communities. This is elaborated in the Colombian Framework for Community Based Research [5.8] which is an important input for Colombia's national development plan for the next two decades [5.7].

**Further International reach and significance:** In 2017 a partnership between Lincoln and the Mortenson Center for International Library Programs, University of Illinois (**USA**), co-created a new experiential learning programme based on the Take Part CDF – The Community-Library Inter-Action (**CLIA**) programme. CLIA report that “*library services have been reimagined*” [5.9] with a transformation from the previous emphasis on library services *for* communities, to librarians and community workers focused on library programmes *with* communities [5.9]. 800 librarians and community leaders have participated in the USA, Canada, Colombia, India, Spain, Qatar, Peru, Costa Rica, Argentina, South Africa, and Uganda. The Director of the Mortenson Centre reported that in Colombia, Costa Rica and Peru 300 participants had supported community-designed development across 28 projects [5.9, 5.10] which had benefited over 2,000 citizens including “parents and neighbours, caregivers of disabled youth, indigenous youth, members of youth groups and boy scout groups” [5.9].

#### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- 5.1 Testimonial from the Chair of the Social Issues in South Lincolnshire Network.
- 5.2 Testimonial from the Faculty of Economic and Business, University of Maribor, Slovenia and Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Activities sub-programme final report.
- 5.3 Testimonial from the Director of FOIST (Laboratory for Social Policies and Training Processes). University of Sassari Italy.
- 5.4 Melero Valdés L. (2014) Hacia una Europa de la inclusión y la hospitalidad. Valencia [Ceimigra Migration s report 2014](#) p.199-210.
- 5.5 Testimonial from the Director of the Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo, Valencia, Spain.
- 5.6 Testimonial from the Vice Chancellor of Ibague University, Colombia.

- 5.7 Testimonial from the Pro-vice Chancellor of Research of the University of Los Andes Colombia.
- 5.8 Mendiweso-Bendek, Z., Reyes Alvarado, A. and Plata Caviedes, J. J. (2020) *Construcción de Paz en Colombia, Alianza entre la Universidad y la Comunidad*. Universidad de Los Andes, Colombia. [Colombian Framework for Community Based Research](#)
- 5.9 Testimonial from the Director of the University Library C. Walter and Gerda B. Mortenson Center for International Library Programs, University of Illinois USA.
- 5.10 CLIA Community-Library Inter-Action Libraries for Peace webpages hosted by the University of Illinois, USA.  
<https://librariesforpeace.org/projects/clia/> and  
<https://librariesforpeace.org/projects/clia/funded-projects-iberbibliotecas/>