

*The UK Cluster for Active Learning for Active Citizenship
and Community Empowerment*



Further information for enquirers

CASE Research Studentship:

Active Learning for Active Citizenship and Community Empowerment

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[November 2008]



SECTION A: The CASE Studentship

The UK Research Cluster for Active Learning for Active Citizenship *is* a consortium of Lincoln, Goldsmiths (University of London), and Manchester Metropolitan Universities. This is a major ESRC backed programme to build research skills and capacity related to Active Citizenship and Community Empowerment.

As part of this exciting programme the University has one doctoral level CASE studentship (+3) (starting early in 2009) with two further CASE studentships starting in September 2009:

CASE studentships provide three years funding with an annual allowance of £16, 940 for PhD students.

Applications are welcome from candidates with a minimum 2.1 undergraduate degree (or equivalent) and a relevant Masters Degree or relevant experience. The research student will develop the identified project, bringing to it their own knowledge, experience and practical and theoretical insights. The research students will be based at Goldsmiths, University of London, and provided with study facilities there. Successful completion will lead to the award of PhD.

To apply, applicants should submit the following:

- **A completed Goldsmiths, University of London Research Degrees application form** which can be downloaded from www.gold.ac.uk/pg/apply/
- **A Curriculum Vitae (CV)**
- **A covering letter** identifying the particular skills, experience and personal qualities you would bring to this project
- **A written statement** of no more than 2000 words explaining your ideas for this research and your thoughts on the distinct challenges and opportunities it might bring
- **One example of your own academic writing.**

Please send these electronically to: **m.mayo@gold.ac.uk**

Or by post to: Professor Marjorie Mayo, Goldsmiths, University of London, New Cross, London SE14 6NW

Only those with established UK residency are eligible to apply

For further information on all aspects of ESRC CASE studentships please see ESRC Postgraduate Studentships in the Social Sciences available on the ESRC website: <http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/opportunities/postgraduate/pgtraini ngpolicy/index4.aspx?ComponentId=4667&SourcePageId=5323>

SECTION B: About the Research

Government policies for modernising public services emphasise the importance of promoting user and community voice and choice. The Third Sector has a key role to play here in the development of services that are consumer rather than producer led. Voluntary and community organisations are generally assumed to be closer to service users; however the evidence suggests that the Third Sector has no inherent monopoly of knowledge and skills when it comes to hearing user voices, including the voices of the most disadvantaged.

Can Third Sector organisations tackle existing inequalities more effectively rather than reproducing them? How can they promote increasing social solidarity rather than increasing competition within as well as between sectors? How can infrastructure organisations best support smaller Third Sector organisations, enabling them to deliver public services in distinctive and effective ways, avoiding reproducing the dysfunctions of large bureaucracies? And how can the long-term impacts upon individual volunteers and Third Sector organisations and groups be tracked more effectively?

Work has already been commissioned by the ESRC on the identification of the outcomes of active citizenship, (Ref. RES-177-25-0002) where 'little is known about the link between interventions designed to stimulate participation, the level and depth of civic engagement, and policy outcomes. The study aims to increase the understanding of this civic-outcome link'.

Although much is known about how to involve citizens at the local level, there is less systematic evidence about approaches to capacity building, linking the local with the regional and the national levels. Large, well-established national and regional organisations may need to explore new ways of promoting user and community voice and choice. Without such wider engagement strategies, the voices of the 'usual suspects', may be the only voices to be effectively heard

There is a risk that Third Sector organisations could end up reproducing the very structures that they set out to challenge, in fact, a risk that may be exacerbated as Third Sector organisations play increasingly significant roles as service providers on a larger scale. In the current policy context, characterised as it is by rapid change, previous assumptions need systematic examination more urgently than ever.

CASE studentships will seek to address research questions underpinning the development of the capacity of the third sector – in particular, the sector's capacity to engage with civic and civil society in ways that are empowering for communities and that create a more active citizenship.

The focus of this Research Cluster will be organisational cultures and structures, and educational processes. Key questions and themes for the cluster as a whole include the following:

- Can Third Sector organisations tackle existing inequalities more effectively rather than reproducing them? What is the evidence for what works and how and why this works in different contexts?

- What can be done to enable particular groups to engage in the active citizenship agenda and how can third sector organisations enable this engagement, eg, in relation to women, young people and people from black and minority ethnic groups.
- How can Third Sector organisations promote increasing social solidarity rather than increasing competition within, as well as between, sectors and communities eg, in relation to refugees, and migrant workers and ‘host communities’?
- How can infrastructure organisations best support smaller Third Sector organisations, enabling them to deliver public services in distinctive and effective ways empowering communities, avoiding reproducing the dysfunctions of large bureaucracies?
- How can the long-term impacts upon individual volunteers and Third Sector organisations and groups be tracked more effectively, drawing upon previous experiences of engagement via ALAC and other initiatives over time?
- What is required to enable effective voluntary and active citizenship engagement, in relation to infrastructure and management prerequisites, educational processes such as training for trainers?
- Are government policies and the third sector response to them increasing the opportunities for taking part in civil decision-making and civic engagement? Can the research communities build a robust relationship as critical friend within the stakeholder communities interested in these issues?
- What role does empowerment and active citizenship play in increasing community cohesion – between generations, between ethnic groups and different nationalities, between social classes and between public, private and third sectors?
- *Do* current (and imminent) government policies and social norms *empower* citizens? Do we need to create / hear a stronger, alternative voice from within the third sector? What are the roles of activists, critical friends and constructors of improved dialogue within the dynamics of social justice?

Research question:

This specific case studentship may address any of these topics

Approach:

The study will use and contribute to the Take Part Approach. Take Part is committed to the co-production of learning and knowledge-sharing. Through this approach to critical reflection and co-operative learning, starting from people’s own definitions of their issues, as individual volunteers and activists, and as members of Third Sector organisations and groups, Take Part has enabled participants to research their own needs, put these forward to service providers, take increasingly active parts in governance structures and develop voluntary and community based solutions for social change. Through informal, community-based learning, Take Part has developed capacity-building expertise to enable communities to address, negotiate and resolve conflicts within and between established communities and newcomers, as well as addressing intergenerational conflicts between young people and adults.

This approach has proven relevance across a wide range of issues and services, including mental health, services for women, for people with disabilities and for newcomers,

including refugees and asylum seekers, promoting increased capacity-building and increased understanding, recognition and mutual respect.

The broad principles of this approach have been set within the *Take Part Learning Framework*, a resource for capacity-builders across different sectors and contexts. There is a continuing need for research to examine the effectiveness of differing approaches within this framework, identifying new ways of tailoring these forms of learning, for varying user groups and communities.

For more background material see www.takepar.org

Anticipated Outputs & Outcomes

The research outputs will include a PhD thesis as well associated conference papers and policy reports which will be of interest of academics, policy-makers and Third Sector Organisations.

In addition to submitting all the requirements of a PhD, CASE students will also be expected to share their knowledge across the Cluster, the academic community and the third sector. Building successful relationships across the Third Sector and Public Sector will be an important additional outcome of the research process.

It is anticipated that CASE students will play an active role in many of the engagement, evaluation and dissemination activities. The intention is that they will also actively engage with Knowledge Transfer Partnership associates and members of the third sector and provide feedback, including relevant policy papers on an on-going basis (as agreed via the appropriate advisory committee). They will also contribute to the development of the learning packages where these are in fields related to their research focus.

SECTION C: About the Partners

1. Taking Part?: The new ESRC Third Sector Research Cluster

The *Taking Part?* Cluster is a partnership between 3 Universities involved in the Active Learning for Active Citizenship National Programme.

- Lincoln’s research programme will be undertaken at the Community Operational Research Unit / Lincoln Business School by Zoraida Mendiwelo Bendek and Rebecca Herron.
- Goldsmiths’ research programme will be undertaken at the Centre for Lifelong Learning and Community Engagement by Professor Marjorie Mayo.
- Manchester Metropolitan’s research programme will be undertaken at the Community Audit and Evaluation Centre by Carol Packham.

This CASE Studentship is based within the Centre for Lifelong Learning and Community Engagement in collaboration with the Centre for Urban and Community Research, at Goldsmiths, University of London. There will however be considerable overlap between activities in the other universities in the cluster and networking between other CASE Students within the cluster will be encouraged and supported where possible.

SECTION D: The Selection Process
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Selection Criteria:

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Eligible Applicants	UK residents only	
Education and qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) A good honours degree ii) A postgraduate qualification / or relevant experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) A good honours degree in social science ii) A research degree (eg, MRes) or other formal research training
Knowledge, work and other relevant work experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Experience in public or third sector settings or other involvement in aspects of social policy development or delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Familiarity with Third Sector organisations and/or local government ii) Experience working as a social or policy researcher or evaluator iii) Academic activities
Personal qualities and competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The ability to relate easily to members of the community and Third Sector Organisations, public officials, elected members and policy analysts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Personal organisation ii) Experienced writer (variety of audiences – academic and community) iii) IT (Office, websites etc)

	ii) Motivated and self-directing	
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Application information

Eligibility: Applicants must meet the ESRC UK residency requirements

Closing date: 9 January 2009

Interview date: Week commencing 26 January 2009

Further information

Informal enquiries are welcome. For further information on the posts and application procedure, please contact m.mayo@gold.ac.uk

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