



Zoraida Mendiwelso Bendek is a senior researcher in citizenship at the Community Organisation Research Group of the Lincoln International Business School UK, where she is the leader of community based research and community empowerment. Her research focuses on co-production of democratic knowledge within community self-organisation and community based university- community partnerships. It has contributed to social learning processes and has influenced civil society organisations in policy processes, as well as to projects to enable civil society organisations to research the impact of initiatives to strengthen participatory democracy.

At Lincoln, since 1998, her contribution has become a multi-disciplinary programme that has articulated how effective participation in communities and organizations requires the formation of self-constructed action learning spaces observing structures and processes. This research has developed a critical approach of active citizenship learning, enabling school, community groups and third sector organizations to construct their sense of identity through actions and conversations about their communities. The research has elaborated the central significance of the organization and structure of citizenship learning through actions, taking account of the circularity between observation and reflection with conversations shaping knowledge, practice and theory-in-use.

This research includes projects funded among others by the Home Office in the UK, Department of Communities and Local Government and the East Midlands Development Agency. It has contributed with evidences to support the production of a National Learning Framework for Active Learning for Active Citizenship (2006-2011) and the Government's White Paper "Safer and Prosperous Communities 2006". The Learning Framework was also being recognised by the Government's White Paper "Communities in Control 2008", and her research has been funded by the ESRC research and capacity building programme "Take Part" (2008-2014). Currently she is working in European and global alliances of community based programmes in partnerships towards Sustainable Development Objectives.