



What is the Pathways through Participation project?

It is a joint research project being led by NCVO in partnership with the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) and Involve. Funded by the Big Lottery Fund through its Research programme, the project started in April 2009 and will last 2.5 years.

What are we exploring?

The project aims to explore how and why people get involved and stay involved in different forms of participation over the course of their lives. It looks at participation in a very broad sense and considers the act of taking part in a wide range of social or civic activities, including:

- fundraising
- boycotting a product
- voting
- being a school governor
- campaigning
- volunteering for a charity
- signing a petition
- helping out in a local fete
- responding to a local council consultation
- joining a community group

The project seeks to address a gap in knowledge on how people's motivations and patterns of participation emerge and develop over time. Through the improved understanding of the reasons for, and the contexts of participation, the project also aims to influence policy and practice, and encourage the development of opportunities for participation that are better suited to people's needs and aspirations.

It focuses on the following questions:

- How and why does participation begin and continue?
- Can trends and patterns of participation be identified over time?
- What connections, if any, are there between participation in different forms of participation and what triggers movement between them?
- How can policy-makers and practitioners enable and encourage different individuals and communities to participate?

Pathways through participation



What do we plan to do?

This is a qualitative research project, which will explore participation in three contrasting case studies areas: Leeds (inner city), Enfield (suburban) and Suffolk (rural).

Within each case study area a series of activity mapping sessions will be carried out with the local community to identify where and how participation takes place. These sessions will be followed by a number of in-depth interviews with individuals involved in a cross section of participation activities in each community, and with those who do not participate.

The final research phase will involve participatory workshops where emerging findings and recommendations will be discussed and explored with a range of stakeholders including local residents, voluntary and community organisations, public service providers and policy-makers.

Want to know more

For more information and to subscribe to our newsletter, please visit our website:

<http://pathwaysthroughparticipation.org.uk/>

Or contact the researchers working on this project:

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