



Institute for
Volunteering
Research

an initiative of



in research
partnership with



Understanding volunteering in its wider environment

Nick Ockenden
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Introduction

- The policy context
- Volunteering: supply and demand
- The Pathways through Participation project
- Why does participation start, stop and continue?
- Patterns and trends of participation over time
- Connections between different forms of participation
- Some implications for volunteering



Policy aims and ambitions

- Calls for an increase in volunteering
 - Aims for a 'step change' in the level of giving time and giving money
 - *'We want every adult in the country to be an active member of an active neighbourhood group.'* (Conservatives, 2010)
- Specific policies affecting volunteering
 - Grassroots activity – Community Organisers
 - More structured activity – National Citizen Service pilots
- Wider policy areas
 - The Localism Bill and the community right to challenge
- Attempts to reduce public expenditure



Volunteering: the demand side

- An assumption that rates of volunteering are rising during the recession and its aftermath
 - Volunteering levels '*doubled in recent months*' (Phillip Blond, The Observer, 2010)
 - 9 out of 10 volunteer centres saw an increase in number of enquiries about volunteering Mar 2009 – Aug 2009 (IVR, 2009)
- But...
 - Many organisations find it hard to recruit enough volunteers (55%) or enough volunteers with the right skills (57%)
 - Rates of volunteering nationally have been static for a decade and have recently started to decline



Volunteering: the supply side

- Supply may increase as volunteers are pushed into new areas (e.g. service delivery and contracting out)
- But...
 - Many organisations cannot involve all of the volunteers that come to them (36% have more volunteers apply than they can involve)
 - Some evidence that volunteering opportunities within organisations may be changing for the worse (side-lined)
 - Fewer resources may mean the volunteer experience suffers

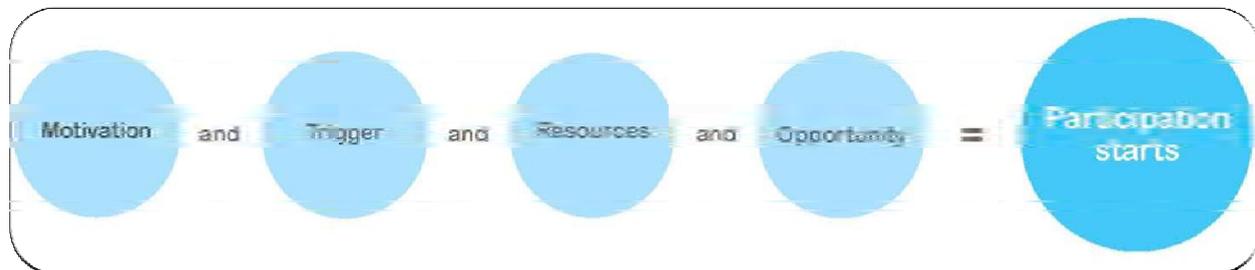


Pathways through Participation

- Joint research project led by NCVO, in partnership with IVR and Involve
- Funded by the Big Lottery Fund
- Aims:
 1. How and why does participation begin and continue?
 2. Can trends and patterns of participation be identified over time?
 3. What connections, if any, are there between different forms and episodes of participation and what triggers movement between them?
- Qualitative research project
 - 101 in-depth, life history interviews
 - Three fieldwork areas (urban, suburban, rural)

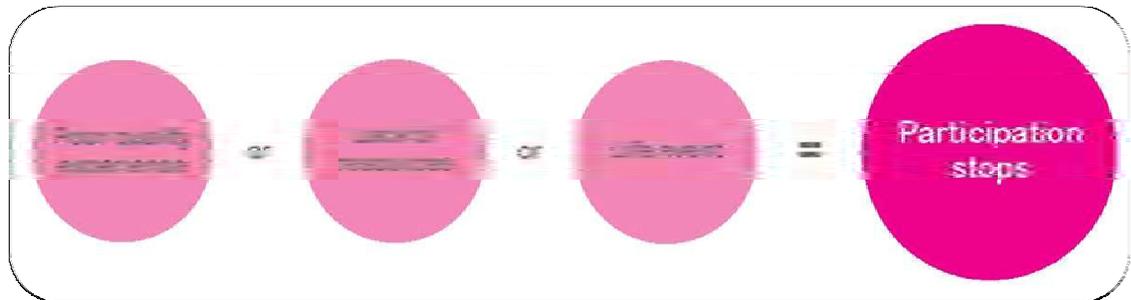
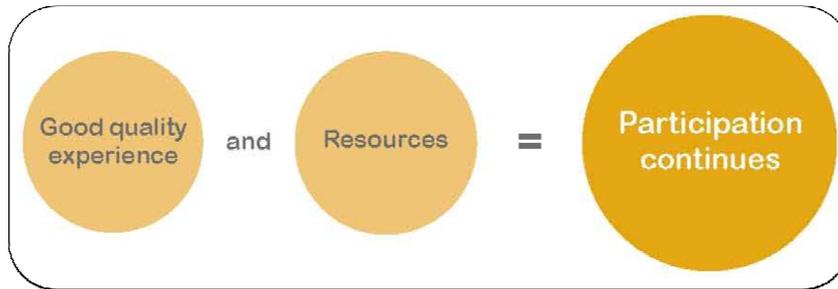


Why does participation start?



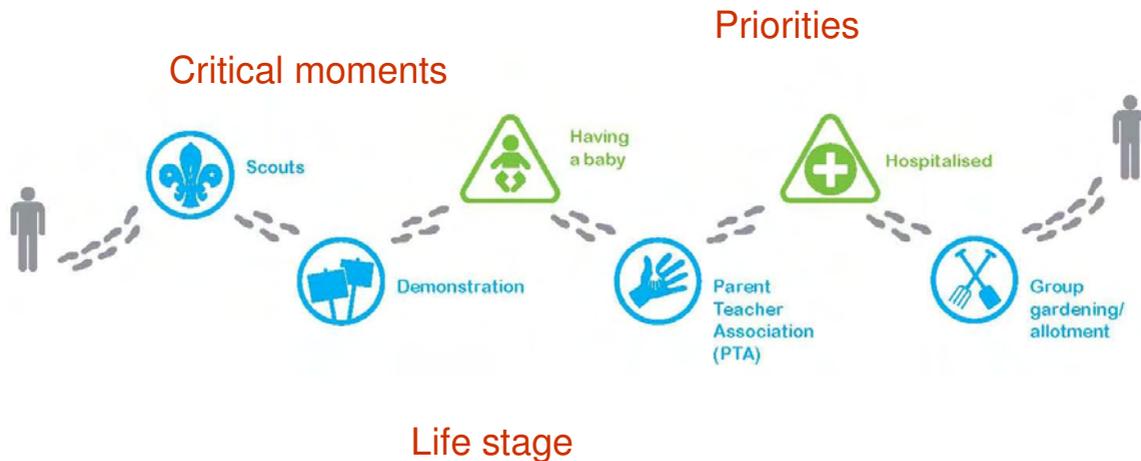


Why does it continue or stop?



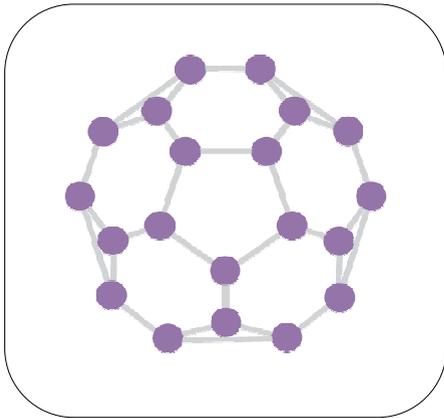


Patterns of participation over time

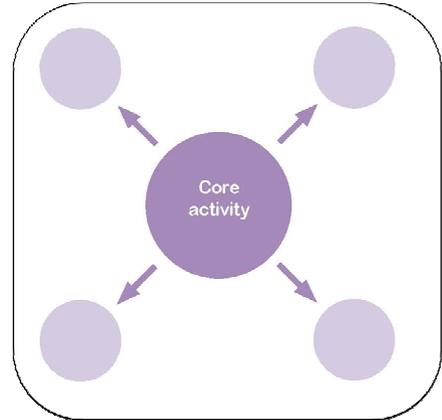
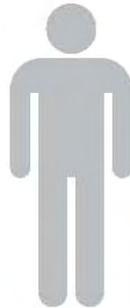




Connections between activities



Integrated involvement



Core-peripheral



Some implications for volunteering

- Recognising the depth and breadth of volunteering alongside its limitations
- Understanding the journey that someone takes around their volunteering
- Developing a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere
- Recognising and managing the negative aspects of volunteering
- Promoting the links and connections between places, communities, individuals and activities

Thank you



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The Institute for Volunteering Research is an initiative of Volunteering England in research partnership with Birkbeck, University of London

www.ivr.org.uk

www.pathwaysthroughparticipation.org.uk

