



Informal volunteering in deprived Scottish communities

Pathways into, out of and between voluntary activity throughout the lifecourse

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Structure

1) Situating the study

- Voluntary activity: formal and informal.
- Journeys...
- Cause and effect?: Policy

2) Research questions and developing a 'spectrum'

- Informal volunteering, marginal communities & the lifecourse
- From 'ladders' to 'spectrums'
- The research framework

3) Emerging themes

- ...and potential implications.

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

- 37 indicators
- 7 domains:
 - Current income
 - Employment
 - Health
 - Education, skills and training
 - Housing
 - Geographic access
 - Crime
- Spatial variations in deprivation and spatial variations in the culture of volunteering...

1a) Volunteering: Formal and informal

• Marginal communities *(Williams 2003a, 2003b)*

- Although there are still higher levels of both informal and formal volunteering in more affluent communities, of the total activity in marginal communities proportionately more is informal than in affluent areas

	Most affluent	Most deprived	% point difference
Informal volunteering	71	59	12
Formal volunteering	47	29	18

- More frequent *(Hall et al. 2006)*
- Practical and psychological barriers *(Institute for Volunteering Research (unknown))*

• BME communities *(Home Office 2003, 2005. Kitchen et al. 2006)*

	Informal (2001 – 2005)	Formal (2001 – 2005)
White	67%	43%
Mixed Race	65%	41%
Black	64%	42%
Asian	56%	36%
Chinese	56%	33%

1b) Journeys...

- The formal volunteer:

- 'Stages'
- 'Progression'

- The 'ladder' to formal volunteering:

'Few people go straight from a situation of no involvement to one of active engagement with their neighbourhood: knowingly or not most are on a 'ladder of involvement' with simple acts of good neighbourliness at one end, and a regular commitment with a formal voluntary or statutory organisation, or a position of community leadership at the other'

Home Office (1999)

1c) Formal volunteering, informal volunteering and policy

- Cause, effect and confusion!

'...but everyone knows just how much more could be done. How many elderly people could benefit from neighbours doing simple things like picking up shopping, or cooking a meal. How many children could use help learning to read...If we can engage people the next task will be to channel that enthusiasm into carefully designed programmes for giving time' *(Blair 1999)*.

'A Britain energised by a million *centres of neighbourliness* [italics added] and compassion... that embody that very British idea – civic society... and my vision is of communities no longer inward looking and exclusive, but looking outwards, recognising that when the strong help the weak, all are stronger... People – over the life cycle from the cradle to the grave – helped in childhood, helping in youth and adulthood, helping again – and helped in old age – reciprocity across the generations – making a reality Burke's definition of society as 'a partnership extended over time' *(Brown 2005)*

1c) Formal volunteering, informal volunteering and policy

Only recently is there a realisation that:

'it is...important to recognise the diversity of types of volunteering that contribute to social inclusion, especially the more informal, community-based varieties. Failing to recognise this can mean that a considerable amount of volunteering by groups at risk of social exclusion can go unnoticed and may remain undervalued'

Ellis-Paine et al (2007)

1c) Formal volunteering, informal volunteering and policy

•Scotland:

Active Communities Initiative (2000)	Volunteering Strategy (2004)
Bring about more positive attitudes at all levels towards volunteering and community action.	Focussing on Project Scotland and young people.
Locate volunteering and community action at the heart of policy and practice.	Dismantling the barriers to volunteering and closing the opportunity gap.
Broaden the range of people involved.	Improving the volunteering experience.
Increase the number of people involved.	Monitoring evaluation and ongoing policy development.

(Scottish Executive 2000: 3, 2004: 3-5).

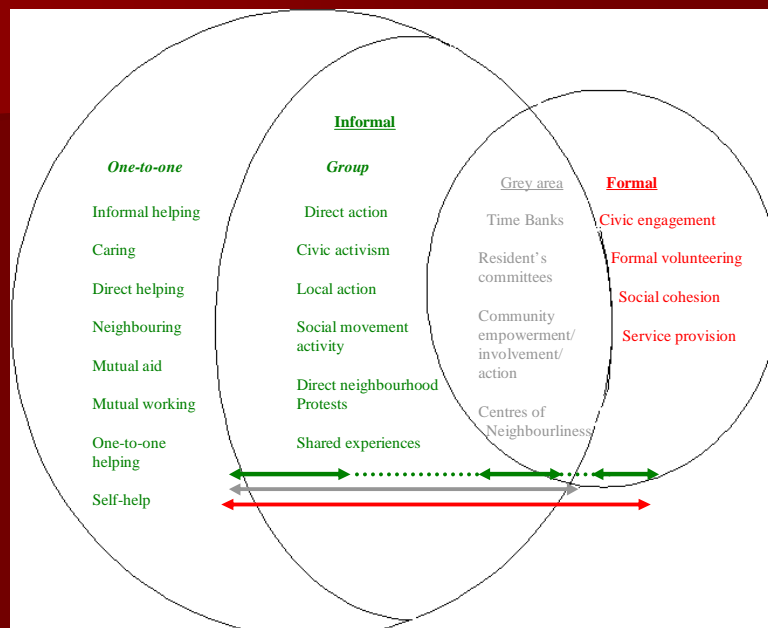
•Informal volunteering largely neglected.

2a) Informal volunteering, marginal communities and the lifecourse

Research questions:

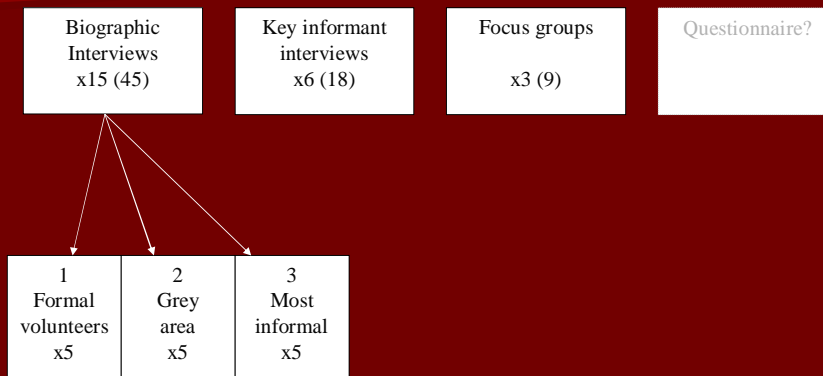
1. What is the nature of, and motivations for, informal voluntary activity in a variety of marginal communities across Scotland?
2. How does the nature of individual journeys across the volunteering spectrum made by members of marginal communities across Scotland vary, and what barriers may be faced?
3. How has the professionalisation of certain voluntary activities impacted on the pathways of individuals from marginal communities across the volunteering spectrum, and how is this being changed by, and changing the Scottish volunteering landscape?

2b) From 'ladders' to 'spectrums'



2c) Research framework

- 3x deprived areas of Scotland (SIMD)



3) Emerging themes

- Understanding voluntary activity from the volunteer's perspective:
 - Formality?
 - Efficacy?
 - Not what, but for whom...
 - Geography
- Informal volunteering:
 - Key lifecourse events (familial, health, socio-economic) and activists.
 - Giving and receiving
- Journeys across the 'spectrum'
 - Backwards?
 - Forwards?
 - Barriers
 - Facilitators
- A change of perspective:
 - 'We need more formally organised informal volunteering'

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