

Public Action

Public action by and for disadvantaged people, undertaken by non-governmental public actors, is increasingly significant at local and international levels. The focus of the programme is not just on non-governmental organisations (NGOs), but on a broader range of formal and informal non-governmental actors concerned with poverty reduction and social transformation.

These might include:

- advocacy networks
- peace groups
- campaigns and coalitions
- trade unions
- peace-building groups
- rights-based groups
- social movements
- faith-based groups
- independent media groups

Building systematically on research to date, this programme is developing theory, generating new empirical findings and fostering beneficial links between researchers and users.



*Mothel Trade Union-Moremi.
Photograph taken in Botswana
by NGPA Researcher Prlina
Werbner, Keele University.*

Further Information

To find out more about the NGPA, please visit www.lse.ac.uk/ngpa or contact us at:

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Non-Governmental
Public Action
Programme



*Capoeira and public action (Cultures of Participation project)
Photograph taken in Brazil by NGPA researcher Udi Butler,
Goldsmiths College, University of London.*

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The **Non-Governmental Public Action Research Programme** is an ESRC initiative directed from the London School of Economics and Political Science which aims to better understand the impact of public action by non-governmental actors.

We fund a wide range of researchers working in the UK and internationally. The researchers are based in universities, think-tanks, civil society organisations, projects and networks around the world.

The NGPA programme helps researchers gather data and build theories of social change using a range of approaches including ethnography, international comparative analysis of political and economic data and organisational sociology. It also supports them to present their ideas and information to a range of audiences.

We are actively building links and sharing learning between researchers, policy makers and practitioners in the field of non-governmental public action. We do this using a variety of methods, including organising workshops, publishing papers and presenting findings at conferences and meetings.

The director of the NGPA programme, Professor Jude Howell, is based at the Centre for Civil Society, in the department of Social Policy at the London School of Economics. For more information about the Centre, go to www.lse.ac.uk/ccs

The NGPA programme is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

The Programme

The programme is divided into three strands. These strands are designed to encompass the complex nature of non-governmental work, looking at the effects of public action on three different levels:

- **Strand A** – Organisations and non-governmental public action
- **Strand B** – The non-governmental sector and public action
- **Strand C** – Global processes and impacts in non-governmental public action

We encourage international comparative work. While some projects will consider general international and global issues, others will also focus on work in particular countries.

Geographical Distribution of NGPA Projects



To see a complete list of projects go to www.lse.ac.uk/ngpa

Programme Aims and Objectives

We aim to strengthen research, policy and practice in civil society by building theory in relation to non-governmental public action. Using a range of approaches to data collection and analysis we will generate empirical knowledge about non-governmental public action, processes, institutions, organisations and networks. We will strengthen the co-production of knowledge by researchers and those being researched, bringing benefits to social actors, government policy makers, and wider knowledge communities.

The key outcomes for the programme will be:

- Journal articles
- Books
- Working papers
- Presentations at seminars and conferences
- International collaboration
- Engaging NGO practitioners and civil society activists in research processes
- Disseminating research findings widely and in forms accessible to non-academics
- Evidence of policy impact
- Knowledge transfer
- Coverage in the media
- Building research capacity

Projects in Action – Rio De Janeiro

Cultures of Participation: young people and their perceptions and practices of citizenship

'We worked with **The International Centre for Research and Policy on Childhood**, a action-research NGO based in Rio's PUC university (CIESPI), to lay the groundwork for the project. We made contact with 20 key projects, organisations and social (and cultural) movements in Rio de Janeiro's civil society which focus on young people and the theme of inclusion, social justice and citizenship. Many of these organisations work with young people through cultural forms (such as music, dance, theatre, cinema, photography) in order to engage them in reflection on social or political issues. We also contacted media groups working with young people, and a variety of civil society actors.

We gathered data through semi-structured interviews, field-diaries, and questionnaires. For example, we cooperated with an alternative youth media project, working to set up an alternative radio news programme made by and for young people. This experience gave us the contacts and the background knowledge to move on to interviewing the young people who participate in these projects.

Working from that basis we moved on to doing life-histories. By learning how people's lives unfolded and how they participated in public action, we could identify more nuanced meanings of participation. The project will end by working with young people to create a product, chosen by them, like a video, magazine or radio programme.'

Udi Mandel Butler (Goldsmiths College)

Projects in Action – UK

Striking a Chord: the role of music and musicians in non-governmental public action

'There has always been a connection between music and politics. Politicians can use music as a great campaigning tool, and music and musicians often challenge politicians on popular issues. Central to the research is a comparison between two case studies of the music-public action relationship. The first is **Rock Against Racism** (founded 1976, but revived as Love Music, Hate Racism), and the second is **Jubilee 2000** (founded in 1996), which gave rise to the Make Poverty History movement and Live 8, the most recent and most high profile example of music and musicians' connection to public action.

Our research has been focused on three issues:

- how music and musicians are organised into forms of public action, and how this varies between types of cause and types of movement;
- how musicians' role as 'representatives' of causes is legitimated; and
- the ways in which music and musicians are used to mobilise both instrumental and emotive support for the campaigns.

A project website has been set up, www.musicandpolitics.org.uk, and is used to disseminate findings, build networks and engage with activists. The project has been featured on BBC Radio 5 Live and Greater Manchester Radio, and in the Eastern Daily Press.'

Professor John Street (University of East Anglia)



Hilary Benn and Sir Bob Geldof at the launch of the Commission for Africa. Photo: Fiona Hanson/PA