

# York post-16 participation

What are the factors that drive high post-16 participation of many minority ethnic groups, and what strategies are effective in encouraging participation?

## What do we want to know?

The overall aim of this review was to attempt to determine the factors that drive high post-16 participation of many minority ethnic groups, through a scoping of the research literature and an in-depth review focusing on interventions.

## Who wants to know and why?

Widening participation in formal post-compulsory education and training is a policy agenda common to most developed countries, with political attention in the UK largely focused on young (potential) students aged 16-21. Participation has been increasing. In 1972, only 37% of 16-year-olds were in fulltime education. Today, 87% of young people participate in education or training in the year after compulsory schooling, and 76% two years after the end of compulsory schooling. Inequalities in participation in all forms of post-compulsory education have endured over the past fifty years in the UK, with significant minorities routinely excluded.

## What did we find?

Ten intervention studies were included in the in-depth review. In a post-16 school setting, consistent high quality evidence of positive effects was found for a monetary incentive intervention in helping high achieving, ethnically diverse students to maintain their academic good standing. The strategy was found to be particularly effective in a subgroup analysis of Asian students. In a post-16 school setting, consistent medium quality evidence of positive effects was found for a school engagement intervention (two studies carried out by the same research team). There were two medium-sized randomised controlled trials undertaken by the same group of researchers, both of which demonstrated positive results for the intervention. However, the study populations were similar in both trials and of limited generalisability to the UK context. In post-16 higher education (HE) settings, consistent high quality evidence was found for positive effects of a faculty/student mentoring strategy in improving academic performance and retention.

## What are the implications?

The main strength of this systematic review lies in its rigorous design, which allows the results and conclusions of the review to be relied upon by users of the review. A further strength of the review is the broad and inclusive nature of the systematic map. The Review Group included all the UK-based aspirations studies investigating the views of participants of both traditionally high- and low-achieving minority ethnic groups and all international intervention studies, using a control or comparison group design. A limitation of the in-depth review is that there were no UK-based interventions studies fulfilling the inclusion criteria available to be included; this is a limitation of the existing research in the field. The Review Group searched for such research, but found that it has not been undertaken. A final caveat of the review is that the minority ethnic groups predominant in the studies synthesised are of limited relevance to the UK context.

A number of US-based interventions of high quality were encountered, and this is partly to do with the scale and funding of US research. Many of these studies are of limited value for a UK audience because the specific mix of ethnic minorities, their immigration patterns and history, and economic position are so different from the UK context. Ethnic participation studies are one of the areas (unlike perhaps research on curriculum areas and pedagogy) in which UK resources could most usefully be spent on 'parochial' research in the future. In particular, where interventions tested out in US-based evaluations of rigorous design and execution were found to be effective (for example, in post-16 school settings monetary incentives/sanction interventions and in post-16 HE settings faculty/student mentoring strategies), these could be tested out in the UK, using rigorously designed and executed evaluations.

## How did we get these results?

Systematic searches were made for studies that could potentially address the review question which focused on minority ethnic pupils' or students' views or aspirations about post-16 participation in fulltime (*continued over*)



education; were UK-based or evaluated interventions designed to increase post-16 participation of minority ethnic pupils or students; and which met clearly defined quality criteria.

All the main educational, sociological and psychological databases (including databases of grey literature) were searched. Studies were included that met the inclusion criteria, these studies were characterised, and the inclusion criteria were narrowed for the in-depth review question: What strategies are effective in encouraging post-16 participation of minority ethnic groups? The included studies were then data-extracted and quality appraised, and the results were reported and synthesised in terms of strength of evidence; finally, conclusions were drawn and implications were considered for policy, practice and research.

## Where to find further information

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The results of this systematic review are available in four formats:

#### SUMMARY

Explains the purpose of the review and the main messages from the research evidence

#### REPORT

Describes the background and the findings of the review(s) but without full technical details of the methods used

#### TECHNICAL REPORT

Includes the background, main findings, and full technical details of the review

#### DATABASES

Access to codings describing each research study included in the review

These can be downloaded or accessed at  
<http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/Default.aspx?tabid=2299>

Reports published by the EPPI-Centre in November 2007.

The EPPI-Centre's reference numbers for these reports of this review are 1506R (Report) and 1506T (Technical Report).

The full citations are:

#### FULL REPORT

Torgerson CJ, See BH, Low G, Wright K, Gorard S (2007) What are the factors that drive high post-16 participation of many minority ethnic groups, and what strategies are effective in encouraging participation? A systematic map, and a focused review of the international intervention studies. Report. London: EPPI-Centre, Social Sciences Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.

#### TECHNICAL REPORT

Torgerson CJ, See BH, Low G, Wright K, Gorard S (2007) What are the factors that drive high post-16 participation of many minority ethnic groups, and what strategies are effective in encouraging participation? A systematic map, and a focused review of the international intervention studies. Report. London: EPPI-Centre, Social Sciences Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.

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