



Co-creating research

A manual for participatory research

Authors: Katharina Lutz, Jana Offergeld, Nina Freymuth and Anna Liza Arp
in collaboration with Benjamin Benz, Werner Schöning and Kerstin Walther

Typesetting: Daniela Goldman

Front page and illustrations: Ferdinand Lutz, www.ferdinandlutz.com

Print: dieumweltdruckerei.de

Translation and adaptation: Laura Verena Corsten



Sozial-Wissenschaftsladen Bochum

Project Management:

Prof. Dr Benjamin Benz, Prof. Dr Kerstin Walther

Immanuel-Kant-Str. 18-20

44803 Bochum

www.sozial-wissenschaftsladen.de

Sozial-Wissenschaftsladen Cologne

Project Management:

Prof. Dr Werner Schöning

Wörthstr. 10

50668 Cologne

www.sozial-wissenschaftsladen.de

Preface:

What is the so-called *Sozial*-Wissenschaftsladen?

The so-called *Sozial*-Wissenschaftsladen* (which literally translates as 'Social Science Shop' and is abbreviated to 'SoWiLa' in the following) is a contact point for practice institutions and civil society located at two German universities. Practitioners, associations and citizens can submit their questions and ideas for possible research projects to us, the SoWiLa. The requests are then handed over to university teachers and students who may use these for their seminars, theses, practice-oriented research projects and teaching research projects. The participation of the enquiring people in the research process itself is of particular importance since experts acting on their own behalf are considered a valuable source of knowledge that would otherwise remain unseen.

You may consult the German project website www.sozial-wissenschaftsladen.net for further information.

Funding

The SoWiLa is a pilot project of the so-called Transfer-netzwerk Soziale Innovation – s_inn (which literally translates as 'Social Innovation Transfer Network – s_inn')¹ and is located at the Catholic University of Applied Sciences (katho) in Cologne and at the Protestant University of Applied Sciences (EvH RWL) in Bochum. s_inn is funded by the German Federal Government and the *Länder* through the *initiative Innovative Hochschule* (which literally translates as 'Innovative Institution of Higher Education')². Through this funding line, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) strengthens the so-called 'Third Mission' of higher education institutions, namely transfer and innovation.³ This, on the one hand, is meant to foster the (knowledge) exchange between science, professional practice, and civil society. On the other hand, the contact and interaction between these three different stakeholder groups shall enable science to have an impact on the professional practice and vice versa. The SoWiLa is not only innovative when it comes to its goals, but also its structure: organised as a public funded network and designed as a higher education project it involves civil society players and social work professionals.

* **Translator's note:** please note that the term *social* as in 'Social Science Shop' is used to emphasise that the Science Shop is devoted to the thematic fields of Social Work and Social Care. The use of italics in the German proper name and its respective translation draws visually attention to the fact that the Science Shop usually works on social research questions and requests.

1 see also: <https://www.s-inn.net/> (accessed: 9 August 2022)

2 see also: <https://www.innovative-hochschule.de/> (accessed: 9 August 2022)

3 see also: <https://www.bmbf.de/bmbf/de/forschung/zukunftsstrategie/innovative-hochschule/innovative-hochschule.html> (accessed: 9 August 2022)

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INTRODUCTION

You are about to read a manual for participatory research written by the SoWiLa. Thus, you are likely to have at least one of the following questions on your mind: What is participatory research? What is the SoWiLa and how can I collaborate? How can I successfully plan and realize my own participatory research project? In the present manual, we try to give answer to all of these questions.

We have divided this manual into three different chapters: In the *first chapter* we introduce fundamental concepts and principles of participatory research. We outline which rules are generally to be followed in science. We also address opportunities and challenges that may arise from participatory projects. The *second chapter* describes how co-researchers may be involved in research projects. We thereby refer directly to the work of the SoWiLa. In order to give you a notion of how a possible cooperation may look like, we conclude this chapter by presenting three of our own projects. The final *third chapter* provides you with information and templates that can help you to conduct successfully your own projects. On top of that, we give a list of references and recommendations of further reading material on participatory research.



To begin with: a short example of participatory research

The following pages introduce in a rather abstract manner the concept of participatory research. Only in the second chapter, we discuss the working method of the SoWiLa in more detail. With a short example, we would therefore like to help you get started with the topic. The example is intended to convey how a participatory project that is accompanied by the SoWiLa may look like. This is a fictitious example, which did not actually take place in the described form.

A fictional example: a Master's thesis on ecological and socially equitable urban planning

*Co-researching organization: Stadt im Übergang e. V.
(which literally translates as registered association 'City in Transition')*

Background and research question

The registered association *Stadt im Übergang e. V.* is a small organization in North Rhine-Westphalia. In this organization, people fight climate change and advocate for social justice. The association brings together representatives of environmental protection and sustainable economy, advocacy groups for people with disabilities, migrants and refugees or people with lived experience of poverty. Together, they develop local measures to tackle climate change; measures that are socially equitable and improve the life of all groups of people in the city. One of these measures is the expansion of the bicycle and public transport network. For this purpose, it is necessary to submit a proposal to the city council. Bicycle lanes need to be expanded and local transportation needs to be affordable and barrier-free. In order to justify the proposal, the registered association *Stadt im Übergang e. V.* needs more expertise on the topic. One of the initiators, Barbara Grün, directs this issue towards the SoWiLa.

Procedure and research process

An employee of the SoWiLa meets with Barbara Grün and discusses the enquiry. The employee explains that the next step is to forward the research question to the university in order to find students or teaching staff that may be interested in the topic. Soon, Johanna Arndt, a student in a Master's program, comes forward. She wants to work on the research question in her Master's thesis (see *Chapter 2.2*). Then, there is a meeting between Johanna Arndt, Barbara Grün and the employee of the SoWiLa. In this meeting, all participants introduce themselves and their questions. Together, they consider how they can address the research question. In the coming weeks, further exchange takes place.



Then the following is decided: Johanna Arndt conducts an interview with a professor for spatial planning and another one with an employee of an institute for climate, environment and energy. The student drafts the interview questions, the so-called interview guideline, together with Barbara Grün and a small working group of the association. Conducting and evaluating the interviews is Johanna Arndt's own task. The results are discussed in a small working group and are then incorporated into the Master's thesis.

Transfer of results and completion

The working group is already familiar with the preliminary results of the interviews since the discussion of findings. However, to develop their planned proposal, they also need the written Master's thesis. The thesis does not only deal with the interview results – Johanna Arndt has also read a lot on the subject herself and done thorough research. Thus, the work serves as an important basis for sustainable urban planning. In a final meeting, Johanna Arndt, the members of the working group and the employee of the SoWiLa discuss together how the research process went from their point of view. The thesis is handed over. The results are incorporated into the proposal that the registered association *Stadt im Übergang e. V.* submits to the city council.

Projects accompanied by the SoWiLa can proceed like this or similar. We describe our working methods in more detail in *Chapter 2*. In relevant text passages, we refer to the described example in order to illustrate certain issues and facts. This applies especially to the following theoretical part on participatory research.

1. In theory: participatory research

You may have had little to do with research so far. This may be due to the fact, that research often appears to be inaccessible – especially when you as an individual are not directly affected by the research findings. Yet, there are at least four reasons why research does affect your personal life. Firstly, research results lead to progress that changes our life drastically. This progress includes the results of early mathematicians as well as the discovery of atomic energy or the invention of the internet. Secondly, research results shape public opinion. This can be observed in relation to climate change: studies show that Earth is threateningly warming – as a result, many people are changing their attitude towards strict environmental regulations. Thirdly, research results may influence policy decisions. Since 2007, for example, there is a law that forbids smoking at certain public spaces. Politicians justify this law by referring to scientific findings that smoking is carcinogenic and otherwise unhealthy.⁴ Fourthly, research results contribute to developing Social Care, Health Care and Education. Because the more we know about human behaviour or physical reactions, the better we can accompany people. We can develop methods and concepts based on research findings – for any work done in kindergartens, schools, hospitals, counselling service centres and all the other institutions where we work with people. In other words, scientific findings are relevant to anybody because they have a major influence on many areas of our society.

We get scientific knowledge by carrying out research. In Germany, research usually takes place at universities and universities of applied sciences. The general term for these types of institutions is higher education institution. However, research also takes place outside higher education institutions, for example at research institutes such as the Max Planck Society, the Fraunhofer Society or the Robert Koch Institute. Scientists work in all of research institutions. In Biology and Chemistry, they carry out experiments; in Mathematics and Physics, they make calculations. In Psychology and the Social Sciences, scientists study how people behave in certain situations.

⁴ Deutscher Bundestag (2007): Parliamentary Printing Matter 16/5049



People who participate in sociological or psychological studies often find themselves being merely *the researched subjects*: they are treated or observed, questioned or measured. This rather passive role makes them feel that research has little to do with their own lives. We have already disproved this assumption and explained why research results affect us all. Nevertheless, it should be noted that *the researched* provide important data – but have hardly any say in the matter, nor can they co-determine research topics.

However, research results are particularly interesting for us when they affect us directly. This is one of the main reasons for participatory research. Unlike conventional research, as described above, participatory research pursues different goals: here, the people that used to be *the researched* now determine the topics and become co-researchers and co-decision-makers. On the following pages, we introduce this kind of research.

What you can expect from this chapter

In *Chapter 1.1*, you learn about fundamental concepts that underlie participatory research. In *Chapter 1.2*, we explain which ethical principles you should know when conducting research – regardless of whether or not you carry out participatory research. In *Chapter 1.3*, we introduce you to the opportunities and challenges that arise from participatory research projects.

”

In doing our research and writing our findings we always make decisions about whose story should be told and whose left out. In doing this we are creating and constructing reality. Our production of knowledge serves to legitimate some views and experiences while challenging others.“

Traustadóttir 2001, p. 26

1.1 Fundamental principles of participatory research

You may remember: science usually takes place at higher education institutions and research institutes. In these settings scientist usually determine the research topics. However, science can also be commissioned by representatives from politics (including ministries, political parties or the EU Commission) or business (for example pharmaceutical companies, agricultural associations or the ADAC, which literally translates as ‘General German Automobile Club’).⁵ In that case, the representatives decide on the research topic. Thus, either scientists or political and business representatives determine which topics they scientifically investigate and how they use the results.

Participatory research, on the other hand, follows a different approach: **the people who are directly affected by the research topic are involved in the very same research. They take part actively in the research, this means they *participate*. In addition, they have the opportunity to initiate research themselves. This form of participation is the fundamental principles of participatory research.**

Example:

Very different people are involved in the registered association *Stadt im Übergang e. V.*, but they are all affected by the topic urban planning. The members of the association initiate the research and participate in it.

Participation means that people are included, that they *belong* to something and that they can make an impact.⁶ Therefore, participatory research particularly addresses those who normally have little influence. This may be because others disadvantage, exclude or discriminate against them.⁷ Affected people should participate in research, above all, when it involves their own living and working environment.⁸ They are **experts acting on their own behalf** – they know their living environment best and have the most knowledge because of their own lived experience. They can describe how it feels to be racially discriminated, to be homeless or to live with a disability. They identify problems that would otherwise remain *blind spots* in research.



In this manual, we use a scientific writing style for source citation, i.e. when we refer to or quote from scientific literature.

We explain the scientific writing style in the bibliography (→ [Chapter 3.3](#)).

⁵ cf. Leydesdorff & Etzkowitz 2003, p. 55 et seq.

⁶ cf. Rohrmann et al. 2015, p. 15 et seq.

⁷ cf. Aldridge 2016, p. 7 et seq.

⁸ cf. von Unger 2014a, p. 35

At the same time, experts acting on their own behalf also help to classify research results because they have a better understanding of the bigger picture.

Example:

The individual members of the association know best what they need for a sustainable urban planning: accessibility, discounted tickets, sufficiently wide and protected bike lanes, information in various languages and much more.

Participatory research has **two main goals**. The first goal is to **gain scientific knowledge**, which is also the cause for every research activity. That is, because scientists want to obtain new results with every conducted research – for example by describing and understanding social problems. In participatory research, however, scientists do not only want to understand problems – they also want to tackle them. The second goal of participatory research is to **strive for change**, which is also, what distinguishes participatory research from other types of research. The research results are intended to strengthen the long-term social participation of people who would otherwise experience disadvantage, social exclusion or discrimination.⁹

Example:

In the first place, the research provides insight into sustainable urban planning. Then, the results are integrated into a policy proposal that is meant to change the city. The members of the association focus on empowering all groups of people – especially those who are often disadvantaged: for example, people who use a wheelchair and have no access to buses, or people who receive social benefits and consider ticket prices unaffordable.

Overcoming social problems ideally also strengthens the affected people. In Social Sciences, we refer to this kind of strengthening process as *empowerment*: the term means self-authorization and self-enablement. Empowerment describes a process in which individuals acknowledge their own resources and learn to use these resources in order to (re)gain the ability of conducting a self-determined life.¹⁰

Thus, participatory research aims at understanding and tackling social problems. The claim for change is what distinguishes participatory research from other types of research. Regardless of the research type, however, there are certain ethical principles in social research that you as researchers and co-researchers must adhere to.

1.2 Notes on ethical research

In 1961, the US-American psychologist Stanley Milgram started conducting an experiment that became famous in the history of science as the *Milgram experiment*. In the experiment, one participant was ordered to punish another participant with electric shocks each time that the other person would made mistakes in matching word pairs. The electric shocks increased after each mistake, which made the punished participant apparently suffer more and more pain. However, an authority figure, the *experimenter*, urged the participant to keep administering electric shocks to the one suffering. The experiment was supposedly about how punishment relates to learning success. In reality, however, Milgram wanted to investigate to what extent individual subjects would be obedient towards authoritarian instructions. Both the *experimenter* and the allegedly suffering participant were privy to the experiment. The mentioned participant did not actually experiment electric shocks but acted out the corresponding reactions. Although this person seemed to suffer to the point of unconsciousness, most of the other participants obeyed the orders and administered electric shocks up to 450 volts.

⁹ cf. von Unger 2014a, p. 1

¹⁰ cf. Herriger 2010, p. 20

The Milgram experiment is at least ethically questionable, because the subjects are exposed to a potentially traumatising situation. Regardless of which research type they may choose: scientists must follow ethical principles. They must ensure that they do not harm anyone with their research or accept such harm, as critics accused Milgram of doing. Furthermore, scientists must work 'neatly', meaning in a transparent and comprehensible manner. In general, participatory research projects adhere to the same ethical standards that apply to social research. However, other challenges may arise when co-researchers are involved – especially if they are particularly jeopardised or belong to *vulnerable groups*.

Vulnerable groups are not clearly defined. In the funding guidelines for research of the European Union, however, the following groups are explicitly named as vulnerable: children, patients persons belonging to minorities (for example Roma and Sinti, homosexual, bisexual or transsexual people), people incapable of giving consent, people with deviant attitudes, migrants and sex workers.¹¹ Health and social scientists, among others, work with the concept of vulnerability. They assume that people can be vulnerable for two reasons. Firstly, they base vulnerability on individual characteristics. This applies to children, for example: their individual characteristic is that they find it difficult to assess complex situations. This makes them vulnerable. Secondly, vulnerability is caused by external factors. Members of minorities are vulnerable if they are structurally disadvantaged or insufficiently protected. However, the concept of vulnerability must also be viewed critically. Because if we focus primarily on people's vulnerability, at some point we will only perceive their supposed weaknesses.¹²

In social research, there are certain ethical principles to ensure two things: protecting the individuals that participate in the research and assuring that scientists work neatly.

In the following, we present four particularly important principles of research ethics.¹³



Research ethics of social research

Research ethics characterises neat and harmless scientific work. This includes:

- striving for scientific integrity and objectivity
- the principle of non-maleficence
- confidentiality and anonymity
- voluntariness and informed consent

cf. von Unger & Narimani 2012, p. 7

¹¹ cf. European Commission 2014, p. 11

¹² cf. Aldridge 2016, p. 12 et seq.

¹³ cf. von Unger & Narimani 2012

a. Scientific integrity and objectivity

We describe the *integrity* of scientists in their work with the nowadays somewhat unusual term *candid*: scientists should show probity, work honestly, thus, be righteous, sincere, truthful and reliable. At the same time they should assume responsibility for their own research results.¹⁴ Scientific *integrity* thus means having a comprehensive ethical awareness.

Besides, scientists need to be *objective*. They will produce their results as objectively as possible, if they proceed without prejudging the outcome. They must not have an expectation of what results they want to get and then steer those in the desired direction. All results must be unbiased – even if they contradict the personal view of the scientists. Outsiders must be able to understand how the results were achieved. Scientists follow the principle of *objectivity* when their own opinion plays no part in their research process.

Some scientists, however, doubt that an objective approach is even possible.¹⁵ They suggest that, on the contrary, scientists focus *too much* on objectivity. As a result, they lose sight of how they themselves relate to their research.¹⁶ Scientists who criticise objectivity therefore demand something else: all scientists should be aware of how they are personally related to their research topic. At the same time, they should critically question how they proceed in research and how they deal with the research participants. Social scientists describe this conscious and critical questioning with the term *reflective subjectivity*.¹⁷

b. Principle of non-maleficence

People who participate in research must not be harmed as a result of their participation. Researchers must ensure that all individuals are protected. The

protection applies, above all, to particularly vulnerable groups of people.

The Milgram experiment impressively shows the damage that can result from medical or psychological experiments. In comparison, it is less obvious how research in the social sciences can harm individuals. Yet, such damage is also real and must be taken into account in advance. It can be traumatic for research participants, for example, to talk about negative experiences.

Particularly in participatory research, there is also the risk of raising false hopes among research participants. Although one goal of participatory research is to tackle social problems, there is still the possibility that a change cannot be achieved. Research participants need to know that their personal situation may remain unchanged after completion of the research.

Example:

Based on the research results, the registered association *Stadt im Übergang e. V.* wants to demand that immediate changes occur in the city. However, the members of the association must bear in mind that unforeseen difficulties may arise. It is also still unclear whether their proposal will actually be implemented.

c. Confidentiality and anonymity

When scientists conduct research, they collect data. For example, they conduct interviews or develop questionnaires. It is compulsory that scientists keep all data *confidential*, meaning in secret. This applies in particular to very personal data such as religious affil-

14 cf. Wissenschaftsrat 2015, p. 7

15 cf. Finke 2018, p. 8

16 cf. Russo 2012, n. p.

17 cf. Steinke 2005, 330 et seq.

iation, political convictions or sexual orientation. The scientists must also *anonymise* the data because no one should be able to deduce the identity of a person from the data. This involves deleting personal details, such as a person's name and place of residence. In some cases, such information is also pseudonymised, thus replaced by a pseudonym, some kind of *alias*. For example, *Inge* from *Cologne* would become *Hannelore* from *a city in North Rhine-Westphalia*. Scientists store the original, non-anonymised data in order to prevent other people from having access to it. Depending on the type of data, they use a lockable storage cabinet or a password-protected hard drive, for example. In some participatory research projects, however, research participants make a conscious decision to publish their names because they experience the publication as em-powerment.¹⁸ It should be carefully clarified whether real names of research participants can be provided. Research participants and scientists must ensure that no disadvantages arise from the research – neither for the research participants themselves nor for unin- volved third parties.

Example:

Johanna Arndt conducts two interviews. She has to clarify with the interviewees whether she should use their real names or a pseudonym. In the latter case, she needs to ensure that no one but her has access to the data that reveals the interviewee's name.

d. Voluntariness and Informed Consent

Research participants need to know about the re- search project before they decide to do it. Scientists must ensure that they are sufficiently *informed*: what are the goals of the research project? What will your own data be used for? What personal consequences can the participation have? The decision for a partici- pation must be *voluntarily*.

Example:

Johanna Arndt must inform her interview partners about the purpose of conducting these interviews and about how she will further use the results – because this may cause problems for the inter- viewees under certain circumstances. They must agree to participate voluntarily, knowing exactly what the project is about.

In certain cases, informed and voluntary consent may not be freely given.¹⁹ People with learning difficulties, for example, may need more support to understand how their data is used. Consent is also not freely given, if people are forced or coerced to participate: for example, if they have to take part in a trial for pharma- ceuticals in order to receive medical treatment.

1.3 Opportunities and challenges for participatory projects

If you are planning a participatory research project, you may have a special interest in this chapter. You now know what we mean by participatory research and you have read about the ethical principles of social research. Nevertheless, you are left with the following question: what are the advantages of a participatory project and what should you pay special attention to? Before starting a participatory project, you should think about at least three challenges. Firstly, you have to make many arrangements with the different project participants. These agreements increase the **time re- quired** for conducting a research project. This applies to you as a researcher but also to you as a participating organisation or individual. Secondly, you should find a **common language** with all stakeholders in order to communicate well. By common language, we mean, metaphorically speaking, that you talk to each other at

¹⁸ a good example is the project 'VOICES – Collectively Exploring Self-Determination': <https://ercvoices.com/> (accessed: 9 August 2022)

¹⁹ cf. European Commission 2010, 33 et seq.

eye level. In addition, you should have the same ideas about the project. This way you guarantee that you all share the same goals and have similar project expectations. Thirdly, you must comply with the **standards of good scientific practice** – also in participatory projects.

The standards require that you conduct research *according to the state of the art* (Latin: 'lege artis'). This means that you incorporate the latest scientific findings into your work and choose appropriate research methods. In addition, you indicate when you adopt or refer to thoughts from others – by using in-text citation. You are also critical of your results. More importantly: you also allow others to critically question your results.²⁰ You must pay particular attention to the standards of good scientific practice if people who are not scientists participate in your project. In participatory projects, you need a scientific approach, but first find a common working methodology.

Example:

Johanna Arndt does not write her Master's thesis 'behind closed doors': She has a lot of contact with the SoWiLa and especially with Barbara Grün. The joint work on the interview guide also takes some time, as well as the discussion of the results. The methods must meet the requirements of social research, even if many of the participating association members are not scientists themselves.

Having considered these challenges, you can now focus on the opportunities of a participatory project. There are three standout advantages in particular. Firstly, remember from *Chapter 1.1* that the research participants become *co-researchers*. Therefore, you can take an active role as a co-researcher. You contribute your **own questions and ideas**. Your active role is particularly important when your views would otherwise remain rather invisible – for example, if you belong to a minority and your demands are rarely heard. By getting involved as a co-researcher and by involving everyone as a researcher, you ensure the following: instead of just researching *about* people, you are now researching *with* people. Secondly, your research has a **concrete benefit**. The research topic ideally has its origin in practical life and is therefore connected to the lives of the co-researchers. Therefore, as co-researchers you can immediately use the research results. As a researcher, you know that your results may end up in a drawer somewhere – but beyond that, the results may lead at least to a small change of society. Thirdly, par-

ticipatory projects give rise to the exchange of experiences and ideas. In participatory projects, people who would rather not exchange ideas start working together: **people from science, practice and/ or advocacy groups**. This contact and exchange is a benefit for all involved parties. As participants, you develop a better understanding of each other and can bring together different knowledge. In summary, you can consider it an opportunity that your project contributes to the following: you strengthen the views of co-researchers and promote the exchange between science and practice. This makes your results also useful for professional practice.

Example:

The members of the association can determine what should be investigated. They help decide which questions should be asked in the interview. Thereby, the perspective of people who would otherwise remain less heard is of particular importance, for example that of people receiving social benefits. The members of the association use the results for the association's work.

You need to consider both opportunities and challenges when planning a participatory project. It is also important that you communicate openly about this with everyone involved. You will learn more about this in the following chapter. There, we will characterise the SoWiLa and link theory to our practical work. To this end, you will find, among other things, a detailed overview of what you can expect from a participatory project and what you need to keep in mind (*see Chapter 2.1*).



2. In practice: co-researching with the *Sozial*-Wissenschaftsladen

In the first part of this manual, you have read about the ideas that underlie participatory research. You have dealt with ethical issues and developed an initial understanding of the opportunities and challenges that a participatory project involves.

In the second part, we will look at how you implement a participatory project in practice. Thereby, we will refer directly to the practical work of the SoWiLa. You will get to know everything about the SoWiLa – and at the same time receive valuable input about how to plan and implement a participatory research project yourself.

What are Science Shops?

You may ask yourself what a *Science Shop* is all about. Science Shops²¹ are internationally recognised under the English term of the same name: *Science Shops* (a combination of the concepts *science* and *shop*). The first Science Shops were established in the Netherlands in the 1970s.²² The basic idea of a Science Shop is to **mediate between science and civil society**. On the one hand, Science Shops aim at using scientific results for tackling civil society matters.

Example:

Johanna Arndt has researched the latest findings on sustainable urban planning and has summarised them in her Master's thesis. The members of the registered association *Stadt im Übergang e. V.* now use these scientific results for their further work.



In order to ensure that people around the world have a future worth living, it is necessary to develop solutions for social, ecological, political and societal problems – on a global, regional and local level. (...) Science Shops (...) support these efforts through scientific knowledge and methods. They are based locally, which makes them easily accessible and useful for people who need scientific help or have suggestions for science.”*

<https://www.wissnet.de/wissenschaftsladen/>

* **Translator's note:** please note that the German source was translated into English for better understanding.

21 There is a network of German-speaking (<https://www.wissnet.de/>) and international Science Shops (<http://www.livingknowledge.org/>). On the corresponding websites, you will find information on the Science Shops' working methods and the basic ideas underlying their concept.

22 cf. Leydesdorff & Ward 2005, p. 354

On the other hand, Science Shops help to bring issues arising from civil society into science. Any person can direct his or her scientific issue towards a Science Shop and ask for support. Science shops usually focus on a specific topic and deal with social, environmental, ethical or technical research questions. Other Science Shops, however, combine several subject areas because in professional practice, social problems are often linked to ecological problems.

Example:

The project of the registered association *Stadt im Übergang e. V.* combines ecological issues (climate change and sustainability) with social and ethical issues (e. g. considering all people in urban planning) as well as technical issues (barrier-free local transport).

The aspiration of Science Shops is to answer these questions and to develop solutions. Often, people without an academic background are directly involved in the research process. By allowing people to participate, the concept of Science Shops is closely linked to the ideas underlying participatory research. Similarly, both concepts advocate for social change. Science should also be accessible to people outside of the scientific world and thus, for example, pursue practical questions from everyday life.

Science shops exist, for example, as non-profit associations outside universities, but also at universities. **Science shops at universities address research questions from civil society and transfer them to the university.**²³ To achieve this, Science Shops reach out to students for the most part. However, the teaching staff (professors and lecturers) may also be involved in such projects, because they accompany the students professionally. At some higher education institutions, however, professors may also conduct their own research for the Science Shop.

The SoWiLa in Cologne and Bochum

Following on what was said earlier, the SoWiLa is a Science Shop at universities. It has two locations: one at the Catholic University of Applied Sciences (katho) in Cologne and another one at the Protestant University of Applied Sciences (EvH RWL) in Bochum. At both universities, the SoWiLa is a contact point for the professional practice and the broader civil society. **This means that citizens can contact us if they have questions or ideas for research projects. In the same way, we welcome interest groups, advocacy groups or professionals from relevant practical fields.**

Both universities offer degree programmes in the fields of **Social Care, Education and Health Care** – for example, Social Work, Elementary Education or Nursing Science. For this reason, the focus of the SoWiLa lies in these subject areas. We are quite experienced in addressing requests that are related to the mentioned areas. Above all, this includes the following topics:

- social participation,
- the situation of socially disadvantaged populations,
- social exclusion,
- risks of exclusion²⁴ – thus, conditions in which people are particularly at risk of social exclusion,
- interests of weaker stakeholders – thus, interests that have few resources, that are difficult to organise politically and that therefore have little chance of exerting influence.²⁵

Example:

The registered association *Stadt im Übergang e. V.* is committed to ensuring that all people can live a good life in the city and be mobile. In doing so, the association pays particular attention to those individuals who have little impact – for example, people with disabilities, people with low incomes or people with a different language proficiency. The research request of the association thus fits well into the profile of the SoWiLa.

23 cf. Mulder & De Bok 2006, 3 et seq.

24 You can find more information in our working concept (only available in German): https://www.s-inn.net/fileadmin/redaktion/bilder/SOWILA/Konzept_Sozial-Wissenschaftsladen.pdf

25 cf. Toens & Benz 2019, p. 11

When receiving your enquiry, we place particular importance on **your participation in the research process** – because you are **experts acting on your own behalf** and have valuable knowledge. Even if you have had little access to science, you can initiate research and help shaping it. Our projects are therefore designed to be participatory. **We pass on the research requests to you as teachers or students** and thereby enable you to work on a project within the scope of degree theses or practice-oriented research projects, for example.

What to expect in this chapter

In the SoWiLa we support and accompany projects that arise from research requests. In *Chapter 2.1.*, we describe how such accompaniment can look like and what you can expect from a participatory project. The different types of projects – for example, degree theses and practice-oriented research projects – are presented in *Chapter 2.2.* In *Chapter 2.3.*, we name the criteria according to which we select research requests. Finally, in *Chapter 2.4* you will find some examples of research projects that we have already carried out at the SoWiLa. The examples also give you an idea of the kind of requests that we are able to deal with in the scope of the university's subject areas.

2.1 Making research more participatory

As soon as you contact the SoWiLa with a research request, we look out for people within the university who would like to deal with the submitted enquiry.

Example:

At the university, a staff member of the SoWiLa promotes the research request submitted by the registered association *Stadt im Übergang e. V.* The student Johanna Arndt then comes forward.

We take on the role of a mediator and accompany the agreements between all involved parties from the very beginning. Together with all participants, we clarify what you all expect from the research project.

Example:

The staff member accompanies all arrangements between Johanna Arndt and the association member Barbara Grün. They also decide on the time frame of the project. Besides, they clarify what contribution they can expect from Johanna Arndt's Master's thesis.

In addition, we determine together to what extent you wish to participate. We are committed to enabling you, as co-researchers, to participate as much as possible.

Example:

The working group of the association would like to participate in creating the interview guideline. In addition, they would like to discuss the results before Johanna Arndt starts incorporating these into her Master's thesis.

You decide together how participatory you want your project to be. Once you have agreed on a research question, there are two options: either you can join the project as an enquirer and become a co-researcher – or you can work on the project independently as a student and inform the enquirers about the progress on a regular basis.



Example:

Johanna Arndt and the working group around Barbara Grün develop the research question together. The working group then gets actively involved in the project: they work on the interview guideline and select interview partners.

At the end of a project, we are committed to ensuring that you, as students, return the research results to the enquirers in a meaningful way – so that you, as enquirers, can continue to use the results.

Example:

Johanna Arndt and the working group discuss how to analyse and interpret the interview data. After finishing her Master's thesis, Johanna Arndt will hand over all research results to the association.

Participation in projects that are accompanied by the SoWiLa

In the projects we accompany, we differentiate between certain *degrees of participation* (see figure on page 20). Strictly speaking, this means that not all of our projects are fully participatory. However, two requirements must be met for us in order to accompany research projects:

- On the one hand, you develop the **research question** together. This also has to do with your interest in knowledge, meaning the intention behind your project.
- On the other hand, we ensure that you transfer the research results in a meaningful way or that you receive the **results**, respectively. For this purpose, there is usually a joint final meeting.

The decisive factor in our projects is that you, as co-researchers, *have a say* in the process. The extent to which you participate in the research process is agreed on an individual basis. Whether and how you can and want to participate also depends on different framework conditions:

- the deadlines set by the universities – these may not be convenient for you;
- the possibilities, interests and competences that you as a co-researcher can contribute;
- any considerations of research ethics and scientific criteria (see *Chapter 1.2*), which can influence the degree of participation to a greater or lesser extent.

How exactly research projects proceed depends on the respective (teaching) formats, in which they are carried out. In *Chapter 2.2*, we illustrate two ideal types of processes by the means of a comic strip. In that chapter, we also give examples of participation opportunities in the individual phases.

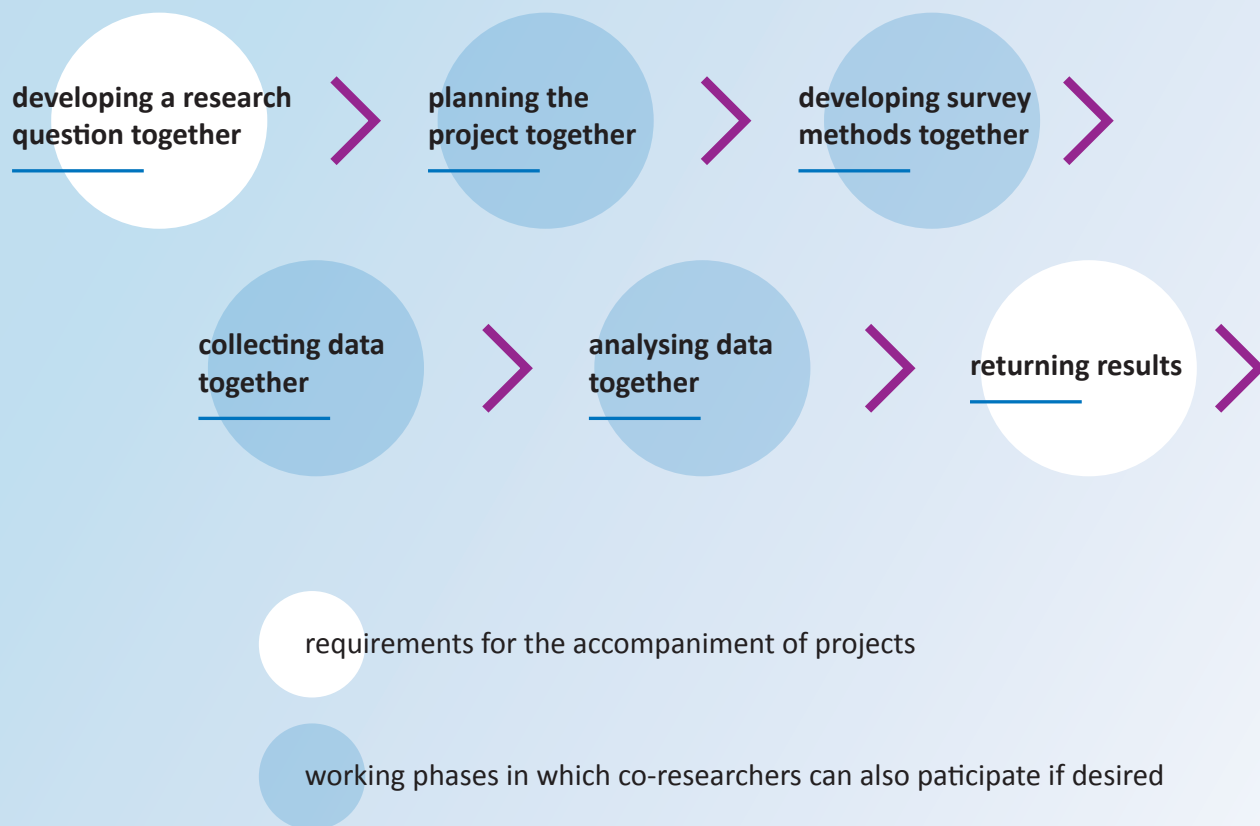
Opportunities and challenges for participatory research projects

A participatory approach involves opportunities but also challenges for research projects. In the first chapter, we have already indicated some of these. As promised, we will go into more detail at this point. We thereby specifically refer to research projects accompanied by the SoWiLa – yet, the relevant notes are also valid with regard to participatory social research in general.

In the column which is designated as **What to expect** we would like to emphasise what support you can expect when working with the SoWiLa. This also includes the opportunities that arise for you from a participatory project. In the column designated as **What to consider** we state, which aspects you have to keep in mind in order to conduct a participatory project successfully.

In the first part, the figure provides some general guidance. The remaining part distinguishes between **co-researchers** on the one hand and **students and teaching staff** on the other hand. While reading, you will notice that we give different advice to each of the two groups.

Figure: Participation in projects accompanied by the SoWiLa



Opportunities and challenges for participatory research projects

	WHAT TO EXPECT	WHAT TO CONSIDER
In general	▶ In the SoWiLa we support the exchange between university and civil society. Civil society also includes the professional practice of Social Care, Education and Health Care. We accompany the meetings of the involved parties, help them planning their projects together and are the point of contact when problems arise. We also advocate that from the very beginning the involved parties start thinking about how the research results will be returned. ▶ Through our participatory approach, we try to involve those people in the research process that are affected by the very research topic. Thereby we ensure that your views are being expressed. You should be able to use the research results to strengthen social participation and thus to promote social change. ▶ The SoWiLa advocates an empowerment approach: we work to ensure that enquirers become co-researchers, as far as possible. Research should not be conducted solely <i>about</i> people, but <i>for</i> people and, in the best case, <i>with</i> them.	▶ Joint research is time-consuming for all participants. It requires time because participants have to consult with several stakeholders and often need to get feedback. However, especially in participatory research projects, this aspect of <i>more time</i> enables (you as) co-researchers to participate. An important prerequisite for participatory research is that all participants communicate with each other openly and at eye level. Agreements take time and only succeed if you find a common language. All participants should have the same understanding and the same ideas about the project steps and goals.
Co-researchers	▶ You have the opportunity to initiate research and integrate your own perspectives into the research process. This is especially important if you have few financial resources at your disposal or if you represent so-called <i>politically weak interests</i>. The SoWiLa serves as a contact point and supports you in the further research process. ▶ You can already get involved during the research process – with feedback, ideas and objections regarding the research content or approach. ▶ If you participate in a research project, you can develop your knowledge and possibly gain scientific competencies.	▶ When working with a university, you have to take into account the deadlines and rhythms set by the semester schedule. Besides, at the beginning of the process, it is still unclear whether and when we will find interested students for your project. Therefore, as a rule, you need to be patient when contacting us with a research request. ▶ As co-researchers, you also follow the rules of good scientific practice (see <i>Chapter 1.2</i>). The principle of openness of results also applies in participatory research projects: you have to be aware of the possibility that research results may contradict your expectations.

	WHAT TO EXPECT	WHAT TO CONSIDER
Co-researchers	▶ You should be able to use the research results in order to work on the challenges and questions that you have brought in: for example, to adjust your own advocacy work, to raise awareness on current social issues or to develop support services. ▶ Through your research, you can better reflect and thus criticise power structures. Ideally (but not necessarily), you can bring about structural changes or directly improve your own living conditions. At the beginning of the project, we consider together how you can best use the research results.	▶ Students may only work on one aspect of your question instead of the whole research question. Realise that even few findings help to answer a question. ▶ You should be prepared to commit yourself and to work more intensively on the research topic. You should plan enough time for this. How intensively you participate in the research process also depends on your own time resources. ▶ The research topic has a special and often personal relevance for you. Although research results are no guarantee for actual changes, you can definitely develop <i>ideas for change</i> from the results.
Students and teaching staff	▶ Representatives from civil society and professional practice initiate and accompany your research. This makes your research particularly relevant to practice. ▶ You gain and strengthen important contacts outside the university, which will raise your awareness for the living conditions of your co-researchers. As a student, you will also learn about possible professional fields of action. ▶ The co-researchers bring in new perspectives, which can lead to a critical and constructive knowledge exchange. This gives you exciting opportunities to collect data. As a student, you expand your scientific methodological skills while working on the research projects. ▶ In joint research projects, you train your own attitude with regard to research ethics and communication at eye level.	▶ If you want to conduct participatory research, you have to expect a much greater time commitment. Therefore, and together with all participants, we consider in advance how you can adapt your project to the respective teaching format. ▶ You are asked to reflect on power structures in science and professional practice and to always put yourself in the position of those who are affected by a particular research topic. ▶ You must ensure that you follow the rules of good scientific practice throughout the research process. The first step is often to formulate a research question based on the enquiry that was submitted in everyday language. Then you have to develop a research design that also meets scientific criteria.

2.2 Types of project work

University students have to prove that they are able to work according to scientific standards. They demonstrate this ability in different ways. For example, at the end of every degree programme there is a **final thesis**. Depending on the degree programme, this is either a Bachelor's or a Master's thesis. A Bachelor's thesis concludes a Bachelor's degree programme, a so-called *undergraduate degree programme*. A Master's or *postgraduate degree* is completed with a Master's thesis. The latter is more extensive, as students now have to meet higher requirements.

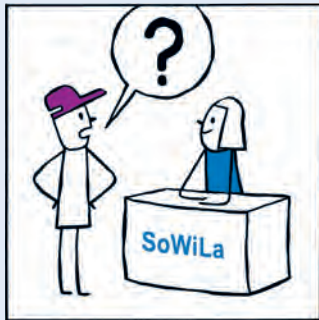
In addition, there are so-called **teaching research projects or practice-oriented research projects** at our collaborating universities. These projects are usually carried out as a group work. This can take a few weeks or even one or two semesters. A semester lasts six months, at our universities from March to August and from September to February. The extent of the research enquiry itself and the time made available to the students determines on which requests the students can actually work on within their teaching research projects or practice-oriented research projects. In the case of very complex requests, it is possible for different student groups to work on smaller parts of the research question over several semesters.

The teaching staff may also deal with requests within seminars. Seminars are teaching units that take place on a regular or one-off basis. For seminars, we make individual arrangements with the involved participants.

At the SoWiLa we adapt our work to different circumstances. The following comic illustrates how projects in final theses differ from projects in practice-oriented research projects or teaching research projects.



Practice-oriented research projects or teaching research projects



Every project starts with an request: **representatives from professional social work practice and the wider civil society can contact us**, if f they have a research question on the topics of participation and social exclusion.



Together we consider whether and how the university can deal with the request. Among other things, we examine, whether the request matches thematically and professionally with our collaborating universities. We place particular emphasis on ensuring that the enquirers can participate in the research process as much as possible.



Rather extensive requests we promote as practice-oriented research projects or teaching research projects. We either pass the research request on to teachers who are familiar with the respective topic or present it directly to the students.



Teaching staff and students develop together with the enquirers the research question. Then, they establish a *research design*: they determine which scientific methods are suitable for the question and how they will proceed. If interested, the enquirers can also participate in this.

The teaching staff ensures that the project meets the requirements for scientific work and that the students can realise the project in the time frame given. The actual time frame depends on the individual case and can range from one to three semesters.

→ *If required, we support you at this step of the process.*



Then the survey or field phase begins for the student.

In this phase, they collect data and/or gather information. The methods can be very different:

- The students work on the question within the framework of a literature research, meaning that they research in specialist books or journals.
- The students collect their own data, for example through interviews, group discussions or surveys, using a questionnaire, for instance.

Depending on the agreement and interest, co-researchers can also participate in the survey. For example, they can conduct interviews themselves or establish contact with possible interview partners.

→ *If required, we support you at this step of the process.*



After completion of the survey phase, the students evaluate the findings, possibly with the support of the respective teaching staff. Here, depending on the availability and interest, co-researchers can also participate.

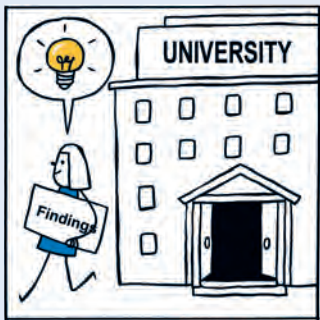
→ *If required, we support you at this step of the process.*



The students hand over the research findings to the enquirers and discuss them together.

We accompany this phase of the process in any case.

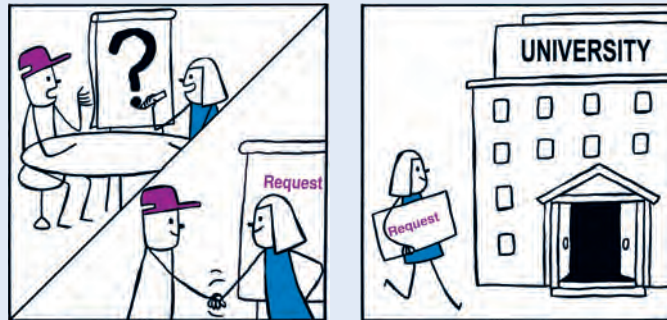
We consider with you, for example, what conclusions can be drawn from the findings for professional practice and science.



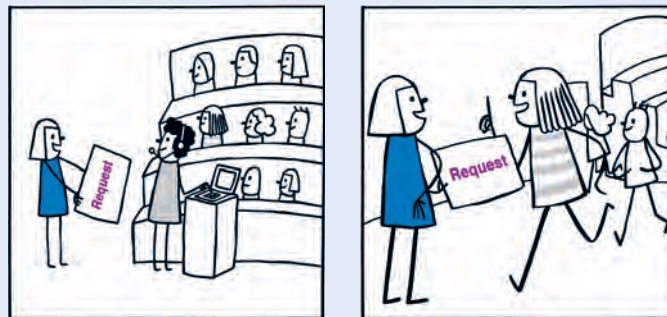
We discuss with you, the enquirer, how and where you would like to publish the research findings. Our homepage is one possible way of publishing, but there are also other options. Thereby, you may be able to raise public interest in the topic. In any case, science is nurtured by the public exchange of findings, and the public has in our case, after all, also (co-)financed the research.

Often, further research questions arise from one project and can be considered and worked on in another project.

Final theses



Students can deal with less extensive requests in the context of their final thesis. In comparison with practice-oriented research projects and teaching research projects, final theses are more limited in time and are usually written in a period of three to four months.



We inform and approach interested students. The students, for their part, have to find a tutor willing to take on the professional supervision of the final thesis.



The students develop the research question together with the teaching staff and the enquirers.

→ If required, we support you at this step of the process.



Once the research question has been determined, the students take on the further research work.

In addition to a basic literature review, the research work also includes embedding the research topic into the scientific-theoretical framework, collecting and analysing data and discussing the research findings critically. The students draw their own conclusions from the research findings.

The time frame for final theses is tighter than in practice-oriented research projects or teaching research projects.

Therefore, it is more difficult to involve the enquirers in the research process – with good communication however, it is possible.

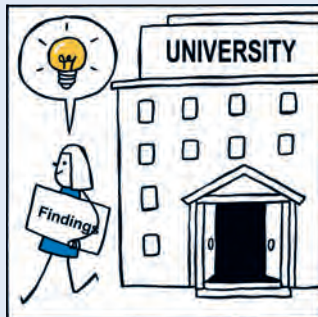
Examples of participation in final theses:

- Co-researchers conduct interviews and, as peers, may have special access to the interviewees. Peers in this case are people that have a similar life situation as the co-researchers.
- Students and co-researchers discuss the interim findings together. The perspective of the co-researchers leads to new interesting insights.

→ If required, we support you at this step of the process.



Specific deadlines apply to final theses. **We keep this time frame** in mind so that you, the enquirer, know when you can expect an answer to your request.



Every project needs a good closure. We organise the project closure in an exchange meeting.

At the meeting, the students and enquirers discuss together what possible conclusions they can draw from the findings for their own everyday life and professional practice. Usually, we publish the project and the results on our homepage.

2.3 Selection of research requests

At the SoWiLa, we receive requests from the professional practice of Social Care, Education and Health Care, but also from the wider civil society. We have to decide, whether the requests can be processed at the university. We make a selection based on the following five criteria:

1. **Theme:** The research enquiry must be directly related to social participation and exclusion processes, meaning it must fit into the above-mentioned subject areas. We would like to support you as an enquirer, especially if you have little or no money (e.g. in the form of your own personal resources or third party funding) to initiate research.
2. **Dialogue:** As the enquirer, you get actively involved. You help to develop the research question and finally to discuss the findings with all participants. The actual extent of your participation also depends on your interests and possibilities and is agreed with you individually.
3. **Specialists:** At the universities, we need to find teaching staff that is willing to work on or accompany the specific enquiry. In doing so, they must ensure good scientific practice and research ethics.
4. **Ethics:** Requests must respect the dignity of all people. They must not promote or be based on group-related misanthropy. Group-related misanthropy means that people are devalued or excluded because they supposedly belong to a certain social group.²⁶
4. **Pragmatics:** The projects must be carried out within the limits of the available resources. The time frame as well as a regional or local reference must be taken into account. In our case, projects outside of North Rhine-Westphalia, the (travel) expense must be reasonable for the involved students.

A cooperation with the SoWiLa requires that you, as the enquirer, are interested in helping to shape the project. This applies at least to the project initiation phase and its completion. In addition, we will jointly examine which financial resources you yourself can

contribute to the research project. Persons and organisations that do not have financial resources for these purposes shall remain unburdened. At the same time, however, the SoWiLa does not offer a free alternative for resource-intensive, long-term impact or evaluation research.

Example:

The registered association *Stadt im Übergang e. V.* is a small non-profit association that has no financial resources for contract research. The members have a great interest in helping to shape the research process. The SoWiLa enables participation by covering travel expenses that arise from meetings.

2.4 Sample projects

In addition to the fictional example in the beginning, we would like to present you some projects of our previous work. This will give you real insight into possible participatory research projects of the SoWiLa. Please note that these are only examples. Each project is individual and will be adapted accordingly. Our support is also based on the needs of the involved parties. However, in any case it is necessary that an employee of the SoWiLa accompanies the preliminary meeting.

²⁶ Küpper & Zick 2015, n. p.

Example 1: Master's thesis on psychosocial support services for refugees

Co-researching organisation:

Psychosoziales Zentrum (PSZ) für Flüchtlinge Düsseldorf e.V. (which literally translates as registered association 'Düsseldorf Psychosocial Centre for Refugees' and is abbreviated to PSZ)

Background and research question

The PSZ in Düsseldorf is a counselling and therapy facility for traumatised and psychologically stressed refugees as well as for survivors of torture and human rights violations.²⁷ In addition, the association also advises professionals and volunteers who want to establish a new psychological counselling service for refugees. Thus, a lot of knowledge and all kinds of experience have been gathered at the PSZ over the last years: knowledge about the content-related, legal and structural framework conditions, but also about other things that need to be taken into account in a founding process. However, employees do not have the time to collect and organise this complex knowledge.

Procedure and research process

The PSZ approached the SoWiLa. A student decided to deal with the topic as part of her Master's thesis. She conducted interviews with staff members who work professionally or voluntarily in newly founded counselling services: What experiences have they had in setting up a new counselling service? What knowledge can they share? In addition, the student researched how the knowledge can be transferred to interested people. A staff member of the PSZ was involved in the development of the research question. The employee reviewed the interview guideline that contained the questions for the interviews. The employee also arranged contact with possible interview partners.

Exchange of results and project completion

Based on the project results, the PSZ drafted a guideline. Interested persons from the refugee aid sector can now use this guideline as orientation if they want to found a new counselling service themselves. The student and the PSZ staff member jointly presented the draft of that guideline at a workshop held at the 13th Congress of Transcultural Psychiatry, Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics. They took into account the participants' comments and questions in order to finalise the guideline.

Further information

Homepage of the PSZ (only available in German): <https://psz-duesseldorf.de>

Project archive of the SoWiLa (only available in German): www.sozial-wissenschaftsladen.net

²⁷ <https://psz-duesseldorf.de/>

Example 2: teaching research project on self-advocacy for homeless people

Co-researching organisation: Selbstvertretung wohnungsloser Menschen (which literally translates as 'Self-Advocacy of Homeless People')

Background and research question

Since 2016, annual meetings of (formerly) homeless people have been held mostly in the town of Freistatt in Lower Saxony. This gave rise to the so-called *Selbstvertretung wohnungsloser Menschen*, which aims at overcoming poverty, exclusion, abuse, deprivation of rights and homelessness.²⁸ There are two questions that arise for further work: which groups of (formerly) homeless people are already involved in the self-advocacy? What are similarities and differences among the participating individuals?

Procedure and research process

Four Master's students dealt with the two above-mentioned questions within a teaching research project. First, they had a group discussion: members of the self-advocacy group compile what they themselves perceive as similarities and differences. The preliminary results were to be presented and discussed at a meeting of the self-advocacy group in July 2019. In addition, the students interviewed the participants with a written questionnaire.

Exchange of results and project completion

At the university, every year students present all their teaching research projects at a small event. At the end of the presented project, the students and the SoWiLa invited some members of the self-advocacy to this event. The students and the members of the self-advocacy group presented the results together. At the same time, they used this occasion for an exchange meeting: the members of the self-advocacy group consulted with professionals from North Rhine-Westphalia and staff of the SoWiLa on how they can establish and ex-pand self-advocacy at a regional level as well.

Further information

Homepage of the self-advocacy of homeless people (only available in German):

<http://www.wohnungslosentreffen.de>

Project archive of the SoWiLa (only available in German): **www.sozial-wissenschaftsladen.net**

²⁸ <http://www.wohnungslosentreffen.de/>

Example 3: seminar on socio-spatial orientation

Enquiring organisation: Alte Feuerwache Köln (AG Partizipation) (which literally translates as 'Old Fire Station Cologne, Working Group Participation')

Background and research question

The so-called Ebertplatz in Cologne has been in the focus of the media and city politics for quite some time due to its reputation as a scene of crime and drug dealing. Since around 2015, the problematic situation has escalated: the structural condition of the Ebertplatz is visibly desolate and drug-related crime has increased. Given these circumstances, local residents and other activists in the designated social space took the initiative of revitalising the Ebertplatz. The City of Cologne provides significant support for the initiative and coordinates it to certain extent. In addition to the city authorities, the working group *AG Partizipation* of the *Alte Feuerwache* also coordinates the activities. The *Alte Feuerwache* is a socio-cultural centre in Cologne located near the Ebertplatz. The mentioned working group deals with the following questions: What opportunities and problems do residents see with regard to the Ebertplatz? What forms of participation do they want?

Exchange of results and project completion

The students presented the results of the survey to the members of the working group *AG Partizipation* at the *Alte Feuerwache* in early December 2019. Together they discussed the results and their significance for the revitalisation of the Ebertplatz. The students summarised the results in a report that was sent to all stakeholders. The results were intended to be considered in a report written by the city administration.

Further information

Project archive of the SoWiLa (only available in German): **www.sozial-wissenschaftsladen.net**

Procedure and research process

In autumn 2019, students of the seminar 'Socio-spatial Orientation' in the Social Work degree programme conducted an activating survey around the Ebertplatz. An activating survey aims at supporting residents of a neighbourhood in organising, advocating and showing solidarity for their own interests. In total, the students interviewed 112 people around the Ebertplatz.

3. Helpful templates

You have learnt what participatory research is and gained understanding of how a cooperation with the SoWiLa may look like. Furthermore, you know that you can also use our advice for your own participatory projects. To conclude, we would like to provide you with further material in order to keep supporting you in your participatory project.

To this end, we have first compiled a **checklist** for the individual steps in the research process. With this checklist, you can review whether you have considered all the important aspects.

We also provide templates for a **cooperation agreement** and a **privacy statement**. Links to our **working concept** and the **project flyer** can also be found in this chapter. The **bibliography** includes all references that we have used in this manual. In addition, we recommend further literature on the topics of participation and participatory research.

3.1 Checklist for participatory research projects

The following table provides suggestions for planning each step of the research process. The recommendations address all stakeholders and are an invite to self-reflection for students, teaching staff and co-researchers. In the checklist, we focus on two aspects: How do teachers, students and co-researchers organise their collaboration? How do they deal with people whose data they collect during the research process?



Checklist for a participatory research project

STEPS OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS	WHAT TO DO?
Determining the research demand	▶ When starting your project, talk about the goals und limitations of your research project. Make sure that everyone involved agrees on this. ▶ Talk openly about risks and benefits that may come with your project. Go through these risks and benefits with everyone involved. ▶ Be aware of the personal connection with the research topic. Because this connection influences the way you approach the topic of the research project.
Planning the project developing a research question determining the methodological approach	▶ Agree on a research question together. The research question should comply with the original enquiry and at the same time meet the requirements of scientific work. This may mean that you have to translate a question that was submitted in <i>everyday language</i> into a scientific research question. ▶ Clarify among yourselves, who participates in which phases and who takes on which role throughout the research process. Would you like to participate as a co-researcher? ▶ Regardless of whether you let others participate as co-researchers or you participate as a co-researcher yourself: you make decisions about further proceedings in a way that they are comprehensible and transparent for all parties involved.
Conducting the project Designing survey instruments Analysing data	<i>In general</i> ▶ Ensure that the research participants are informed and do participate voluntarily in the research project. Inform them that they can also withdraw this consent. ▶ Check if you are collecting sensitive data. For any collected data, you must ensure confidentiality, data protection and anonymity. ▶ Make sure you can justify why you use which survey and evaluation methods. ▶ The uncertainty of outcome is a quality criterion of scientific work that you follow throughout the research process. <i>Collaboration</i> ▶ Review together whether (you as) co-researchers can and would like to participate in the survey phase. Participation can take place in different project phases, for example, when developing the survey instruments or when evaluating data. ▶ If there is no participation: make sure that you inform all stakeholders at all times about the further proceedings.
Transferring and publishing the findings	▶ Talk openly from the beginning about how you will transfer and use the findings. ▶ Explain the context of your research interest: for this purpose, make clear how the research question emerged and what goal you are pursuing with your project. ▶ Present your research methods in a transparent and comprehensible way. ▶ Make sure that you present and justify the research findings in a way, which is transparent and comprehensible for everyone. ▶ Ensure that everyone – especially co-researchers – can access and use the research findings.

3.2 Further material

We would like to facilitate the implementation of your participatory project. Therefore, you will find further helpful templates on our homepage via the following links:*

a) Cooperation agreement

A cooperation needs to be planned well; our cooperation agreement facilitates this planning. Together you can use the template to agree on different aspects of the research process: for example, on a specific research question, on your respective expectations and on dates for future meetings.

www.sozial-wissenschaftsladen.net
(see: *Nehmen Sie mit uns Kontakt auf*)

b) Privacy statement and declaration of consent

If you interview, observe or otherwise involve people in your research project, you must obtain their voluntary and informed consent in advance. You must adapt our templates to your specific project. However, the templates already comply with the data protection requirements set by our collaborating universities.

www.sozial-wissenschaftsladen.net
(see: *Nehmen Sie mit uns Kontakt auf*)

c) Short concept paper of the SoWiLa

In our concept paper, you will find detailed information about the basic ideas and goals of the SoWiLa.

www.sozial-wissenschaftsladen.net
(see: *Weitere Informationen zum Download*)

d) Project Flyer

This flyer provides basic information on our project. If interested, we would be happy to send you printed copies.

www.sozial-wissenschaftsladen.net
(see: *Weitere Informationen zum Download*)

Last but not least

We hope that with this manual we are able to support you on your way to participatory research. We look forward to receiving any feedback that may contribute to the further development of this manual!

For this purpose, you can reach us at the EvH RWL in Bochum via

sozial-wissenschaftsladen@evh-bochum.de

or at the katho in Cologne via

sozial-wissenschaftsladen@katho-nrw.de

We would like to wish you joy and success in your co-creative research!

Sincerely,
the team of the *Sozial-Wissenschaftsladen*

* **Translator's note:** please note that the mentioned online sources are only available in German.

3.3 Bibliography

Including further literature on participatory research



Scientific Writing

In this manual, we use a **scientific writing style** for source citation, i.e. when we refer to or quote from scientific literature.

Example: cf. Rohrmann et al. 2015, p. 15 et seq.

Here, the last names of the authors, the year of publication of the text and the corresponding page(s) are stated.

Indirect, non-literal quotations are preceded by a cf. ('compare'). If there are several pages, the page number is followed by an **et seq.** ('and the following pages').

If more than three authors have contributed or if not all are listed, the abbreviation **et al.** ('and others') is used.

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Co-creating research

A manual for participatory research

Co-creative research is usually referred to as participatory research. Often, the co-researchers themselves determine the research topics. They can thus integrate their questions but also their valuable perspectives and experiences into science. In many projects, the co-researchers actively participate in shaping the research process.

Scientists, on the other hand, learn which topics are important to their co-researchers. At the same time, they can draw on the knowledge and experience of the co-researchers. Moreover, the research findings can be of very practical use.

In this manual, we would like to explain how you can design a participatory project successfully and what you should pay attention to when being involved in a co-creative research process.



Bochum

Protestant University of Applied Sciences
of Rhineland-Westphalia-Lippe

Immanuel-Kant-Str. 18-20
44803 Bochum

Cologne

Catholic University of Applied Sciences
of North Rhine-Westphalia

Wörthstr. 10
50668 Cologne

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Förderer

