

# Ditch widening participation in favour of 'better-informed career choices' says Growing Ambitions social entrepreneur

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University is not the answer for everyone. Yesterday's National Audit Office report (<http://www.nao.org.uk/whatsnew.asp>) bemoans the low numbers of 'white working class' children going to university despite the £392m recently spent on widening participation.

The NAO report states that people from a lower socio-economic background make up one half of the population of England. It says there is an incomplete picture on which initiatives to widen participation work. Some believe the biggest concern is the inadequate advice and guidance for people who have the ability to progress to higher education but think university is not for them.

"Whilst many consider 'widening participation' laudable in principle, I advocate ditching the concept of 'widening participation' in favour of enabling all young people to make 'better-informed career choices, make the best choice for them. To start with they need to know what career choices are available, what jobs there really are out there – from drain surgery to brain surgery," says Sally Davis, MD of Growing Ambitions (<http://www.growingambitions.org>)

Growing Ambitions (<http://www.growingambitions.org>) helps young people make informed choices about their lives. It does this by providing a matchmaking service between business, employees and young people.

"People are individuals and have different talents, skills and aspirations that is what we need to cater for. Not everyone is academic nor wants to go to university and therefore this should not be a benchmark of success. There needs to be more funds put into helping young people make 'informed choices'", says Sally Davis.

Growing Ambitions (<http://www.growingambitions.org>) is a non-profit making organisation that provides a service introducing career speakers from every workplace into schools, colleges and universities UK-wide to talk about their jobs and help young people make good choices for them. People keen to volunteer a half-hour talk can sign up on the website – with no long-term commitment.

For more information see the Growing Ambitions (<http://www.growingambitions.org>) website or contact Sally Davis, MD Growing Ambitions [sallyd@growingambitions.org](mailto:sallyd@growingambitions.org) or ring 023 9266 1600.

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