

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

CIRCY

CENTRE FOR INNOVATION AND RESEARCH
IN CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

US

UNIVERSITY
OF SUSSEX



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Welcome

WELCOME TO CIRCY

The Centre for Innovation and Research in Childhood and Youth (CIRCY) is a pan-university research centre at the University of Sussex, with a membership that spans social sciences, arts, humanities and professional fields including social work, law, education and health. Established in 2012, CIRCY's research is interdisciplinary and international in scope. Our diverse research and scholarship are united by a critical engagement with children and young people's lives in time, and a focus on the rights, voice and welfare of the child or young person at the centre of inquiry.

Over this academic year, 2018-19, the Centre has continued to grow – increasing our membership across disciplines, establishing several major new projects, and building academic and public engagement locally, nationally and internationally. Considered together, the critical and multidisciplinary perspectives offered by CIRCY projects enrich understandings of childhood and youth within the fields of research, policy and practice. In this report, we do not seek to document the whole of CIRCY's work, but rather to highlight examples that help to convey the richness and variety of our activity, in seeking to understand – and make a difference to – the lives of children, young people and families. We also present some 'spotlight' examples of our activity, including research projects, knowledge exchange activities, and doctoral research, as well as reflecting on the growing influence of CIRCY's work.

Building from our visual projects in 2017 on 'Picturing the Future' and 2018 on 'Picturing Kindness', this year we invited children and young people to share their images of

what nature and the environment mean to them for which we accepted photographs, drawings and other art work depicting their interactions with nature. These images have illustrated this Annual Report and we want to thank the following for making this possible: Katie Eberstein from the Sussex Wildlife Trust; the young people at the Sussex woodcraft group; Loreto Rodriguez and Kathleen Bailey, Doctoral Researchers at Sussex; and the staff and children at Saffrons' Nursery in Eastbourne. We were inspired to choose this focus by recent activism on climate change by Greta Thunberg and other young people this year, which echoes CIRCY's longstanding interest in children's agency and childhood publics – understanding children as political subjects and active members of their communities.

CIRCY LEADERSHIP

With the growth in membership and scope for CIRCY, we have expanded our leadership this year. Through much of 2018-19 **Janet Boddy** (Education) continued as Director, and **Michelle Lefevre** (Social Work and Social Care) as Co-Director was joined by **Jo Moran-Ellis** (Sociology). In May, Michelle took over as Director, and Jo was joined by **Rebecca Webb** (Education) as Co-Director. We are delighted that Janet will stay on the CIRCY Steering Group so that the Centre continues to benefit from her experience and expertise. In December we said goodbye to CIRCY's research fellow, **Esther McMahon**, and welcomed **Loreto Rodriguez** as Postgraduate Research Assistant to support CIRCY.

Cover image: 'Relax, peace, calm, magical' by a young person at the Sussex woodcraft group

Contents page image: 'Trees', by a young person at the Sussex woodcraft group

CIRCY members: Top row: Janet Boddy, Michelle Lefevre, Jo Moran-Ellis, Bottom row: Rebecca Webb, Esther McMahon, Loreto Rodriguez



CIRCY'S INVOLVEMENT IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

CIRCY continues in its mission to provide a supportive and creative 'space to think with' for the academic community – building methodological capacity, opening up new interdisciplinary possibilities and supporting the work of colleagues at all career stages. We have an active social media presence, with a Twitter feed and a blog, and our taught courses (Childhood and Youth: Theory and Practice BA; Childhood and Youth Studies MA) continue to flourish, each with a change in leadership.

Rachel Burr (Social Work and Social Care) has now taken over leadership of the Childhood and Youth: Theory and Practice BA from Jacqui Shepherd (Education). This year, the CIRCY Dissertation Prize for Outstanding Undergraduate Research on this course was awarded to Liliana Stocker for her thesis *'The Class-room: Educational professionals' perspectives on equality, social class and social mobility in secondary education'*.

The Childhood and Youth Studies MA is now led by **Liam Berriman** (Social Work and Social Care) and has a permanent feature on the CIRCY journal blog (<https://circyatsussex.wordpress.com/circy-journal/>). Prize winning dissertations are available to view and download there, including last year's winners:

- **Shannon Payne** – *'Through the Rose-Tinted Lens: Young people's perspectives on romantic love in England'*
- **Nuri Baabafika** – awarded the Cathy Urwin Prize for Work with Greatest Impact on Practice for her research – *'The Effect of Boko Haram Insurgency on Child Education in North-Eastern Nigeria'*.

This year was the first that students could register for a Childhood and Youth Studies PhD. Our first two doctoral researchers are:

- **Jimena Rojas Bernal**, conducting an ethnography of the musicality of children's interactions with each other and with adults in an infants' school. Jimena is supervised by CIRCY Co-Director **Rebecca Webb** (Education) and CIRCY Steering Group member **Robin Banerjee** (Psychology);
- **Loreto Rodriguez**, researching young children's experiences of psychotherapy following sexual abuse in Chile. Loreto is supervised by CIRCY Directors **Janet Boddy** (Education) and **Michelle Lefevre** (Social Work and Social Care).



'Painting around Woodlice', made at a nature and environment workshop held by CIRCY at Saffrons nursery, Eastbourne

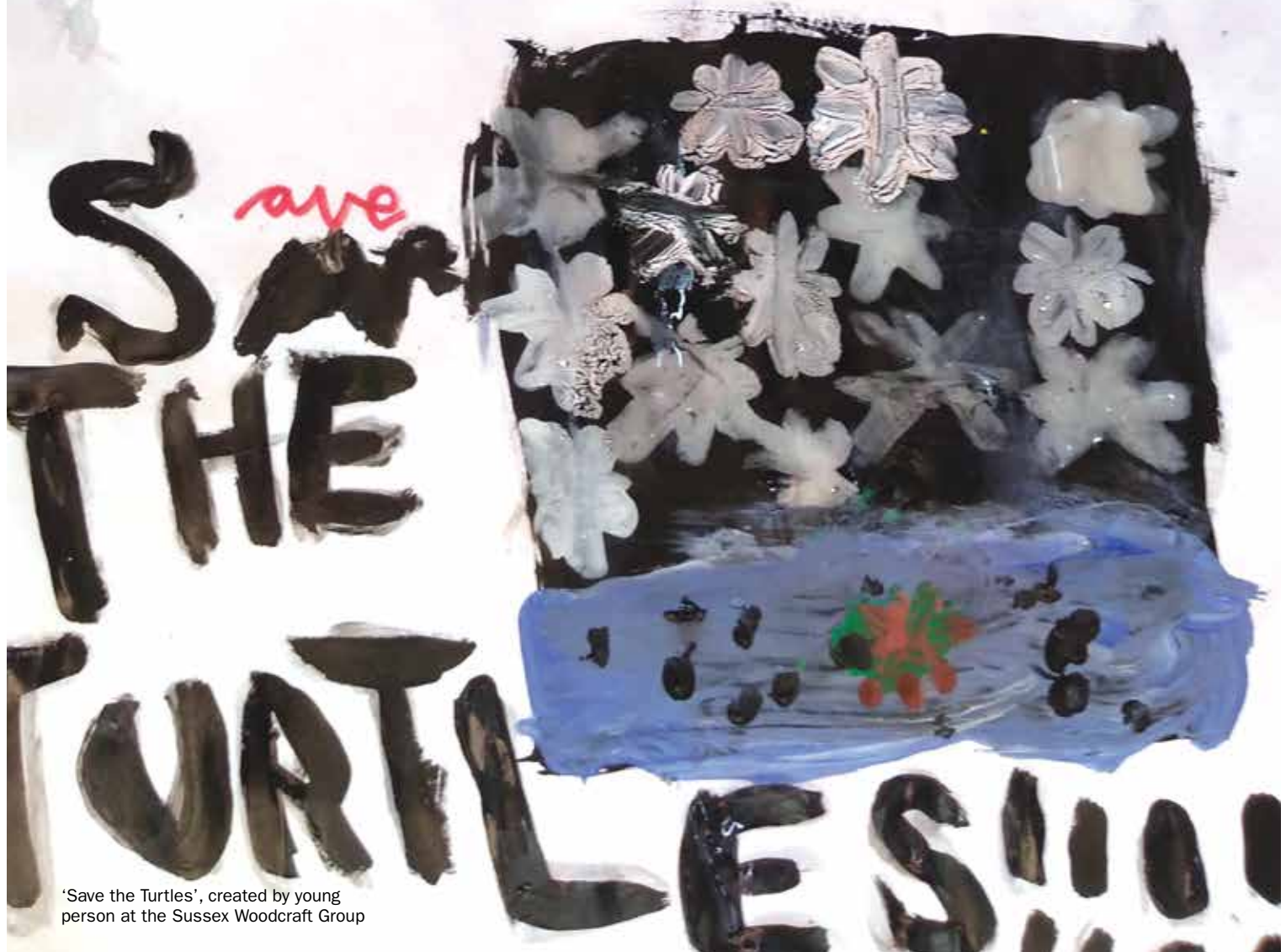
What The Environment Means to Me!

Annie Morrison

I ♥ The Environment

Because I don't want to KILL
the ROOR Animals:

- Turtles!
- Penguins!
- Sea Birds!
- Fish!
- Baby Animals!



'Save the Turtles', created by young person at the Sussex Woodcraft Group

Our approach to research

OUR RESEARCH THEMES

In this section, we set out the underpinning conceptual concerns that link CIRCY's work across projects and disciplines, before going on to provide an indication of the variety of projects that characterise our approach. Our research themes were established to inform and inspire our work – and build synergies rather than categorise or set boundaries between studies or thematic areas. We conceive of our themes as three underpinning concerns that intersect to inform the conceptualisation of childhood and youth across space and time:

- 'Good' childhoods? Everyday and (extra)ordinary lives
- Childhood Publics/Public Childhoods
- Emotional Lives

Of course, not all projects engage with all of these concerns. But as they span substantive topics and disciplinary boundaries, they generate transdisciplinary space in which our work, collectively, builds critical understandings of childhood and youth.

'GOOD' CHILDHOODS? EVERYDAY AND (EXTRA)ORDINARY LIVES

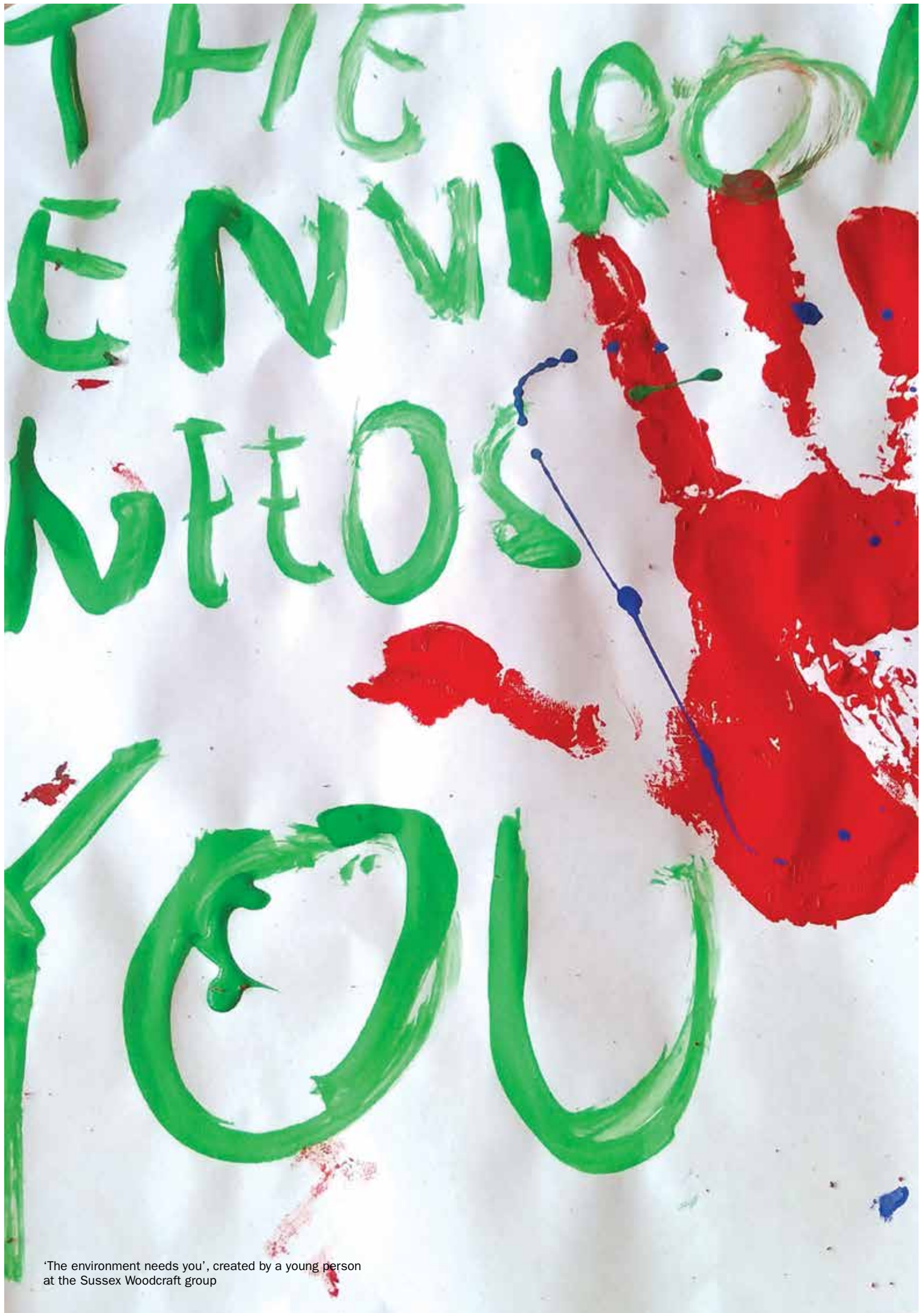
This conceptual area encourages us to engage critically with normative assumptions about 'good' childhoods, and 'ordinary' (and conversely, 'extraordinary') lives. It reminds us to recognise the diverse and contingent meanings of childhood, as well as the ways in which global processes may cut across these in the expression of powerful ideas of what a 'good childhood' or an 'ordinary childhood' should or could be. Some research within this theme also considers categories of children and young people whose circumstances are 'extraordinary', placing them outside of normative ideals. Other areas of critical inquiry prompt us to consider the ways in which categorisations of vulnerability or difference may function as a dividing practice, neglecting the 'ordinary' aspects of 'extraordinary' lives, practices and relationships, and potentially adding to the stigmatisation and disadvantage that young people face.

CHILDHOOD PUBLICS/PUBLIC CHILDHOODS

In some contemporary work that focuses on childhood, children may be defined in ways that can seem individualised, isolating, or abstracting: the child at risk, the child at play, the sexual child. The phrase 'childhood publics' reminds us that children are never confined to the family, or even to the family and school; they are never outside of politics and history. They experience versions of public life that may be distinctive, in comparison to adults' experiences, not least in the ways they are shaped and controlled by adults. But public life is no less relevant – no less intense or formative – for children and young people than for adults. Now especially, in our digital age, children have access to a multitude of mediated public spheres; the child alone in their bedroom is, more often than not, participating in a childhood public. With these considerations in mind, our Childhood Publics/Public Childhoods theme acts to emphasize work that foregrounds and theorizes children's interaction with public life, reminding us to stay attuned to the rich range of questions that emerge from the formulation of childhood as always 'public' and publicly constructed.

EMOTIONAL LIVES

The theme of Emotional Lives takes account of historical and cultural contingencies, reminding us to take account of the ways in which emotion expresses and confirms the materiality, relationality and sensuality of social lives. This theme is also concerned with the need to build practice and policy approaches that are emotionally engaged and which seek to build insight into emotional dynamics and development among children and young people and those working with and for them. As a whole, the theme of Emotional Lives aids the building of critical thinking about established and taken-for-granted issues in childhood and youth – whether studying young people, policy or professional practice – by thinking through the lens of emotion and affective practice.



'The environment needs you', created by a young person at the Sussex Woodcraft group

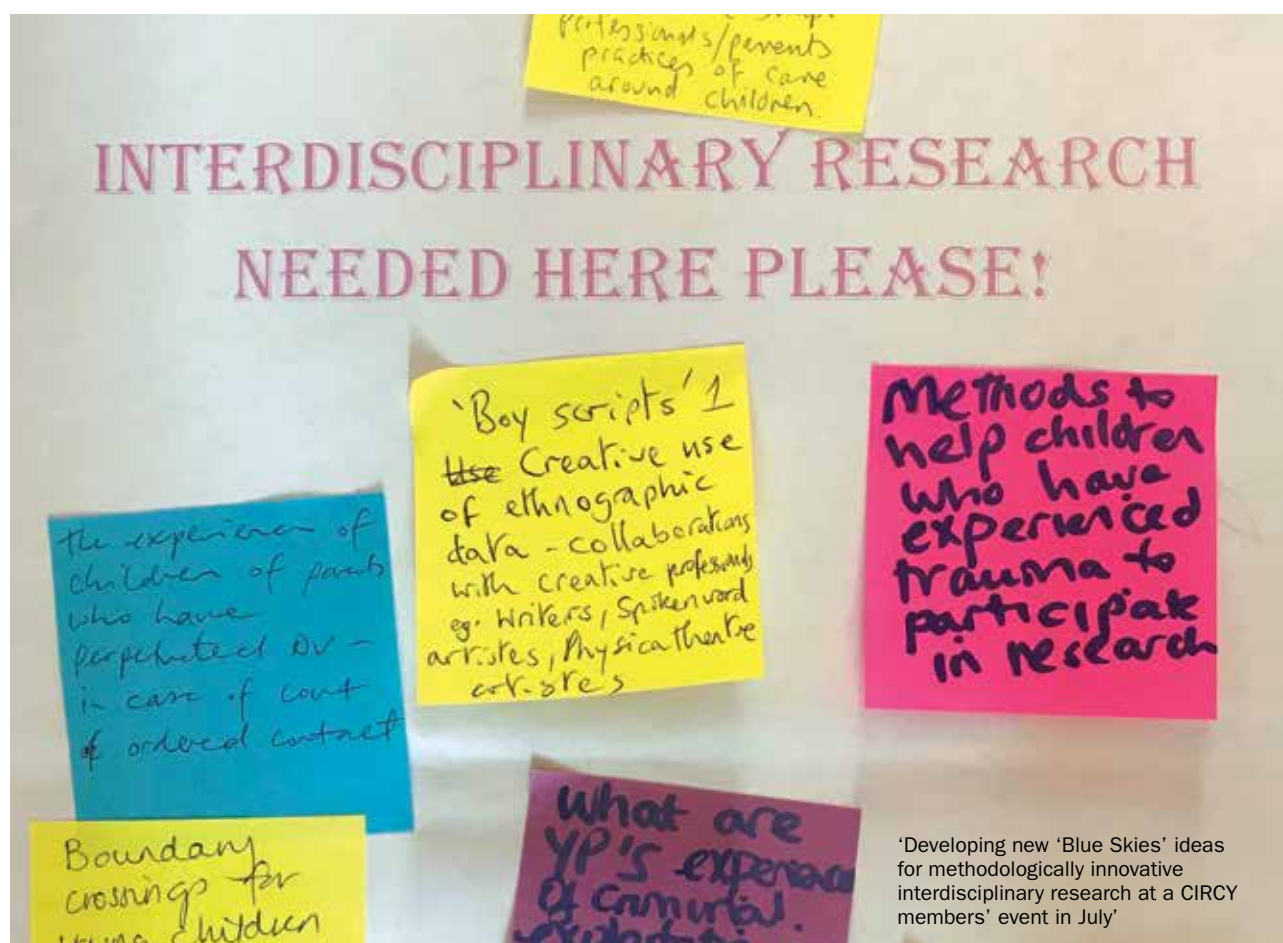
OUR APPROACH TO RESEARCH

EXAMPLES OF OUR RESEARCH

IMAGINATIVE METHODOLOGIES

Over the last five years, CIRCY has built an international reputation for methodological excellence, engaging in international advisory work and collaborations. CIRCY has also provided a critical space in which to interrogate the meanings of methodological innovation across disciplines. Central to our work is the pursuit of imaginative methodologies – sometimes the search for new, innovative approaches, sometimes the reimagining and repurposing of traditional methods – which underpins our fundamental concern with keeping the child or young person at the centre of our thinking.

Regardless of discipline, our methodological approach depends on how we conceive of the child, and we challenge CIRCY researchers to imagine alternatives to reductive, static or objectifying lenses on childhood and youth. In this way, our emphasis on imaginative methodologies provides a distinctive conceptual space that connects our expertise in temporal research methods, in participatory approaches, in research ethics, in cross-national methodology, and in creative, digital, sensual and psychosocial approaches.





SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH: THE RE-ANIMATING DATA PROJECT

Rachel Thomson (Social Work and Social Care) and Ester McGeeney (Childhood and Youth Studies), Sharon Webb (History), the Sussex Humanities Lab, and Niamh Moore (University of Edinburgh)

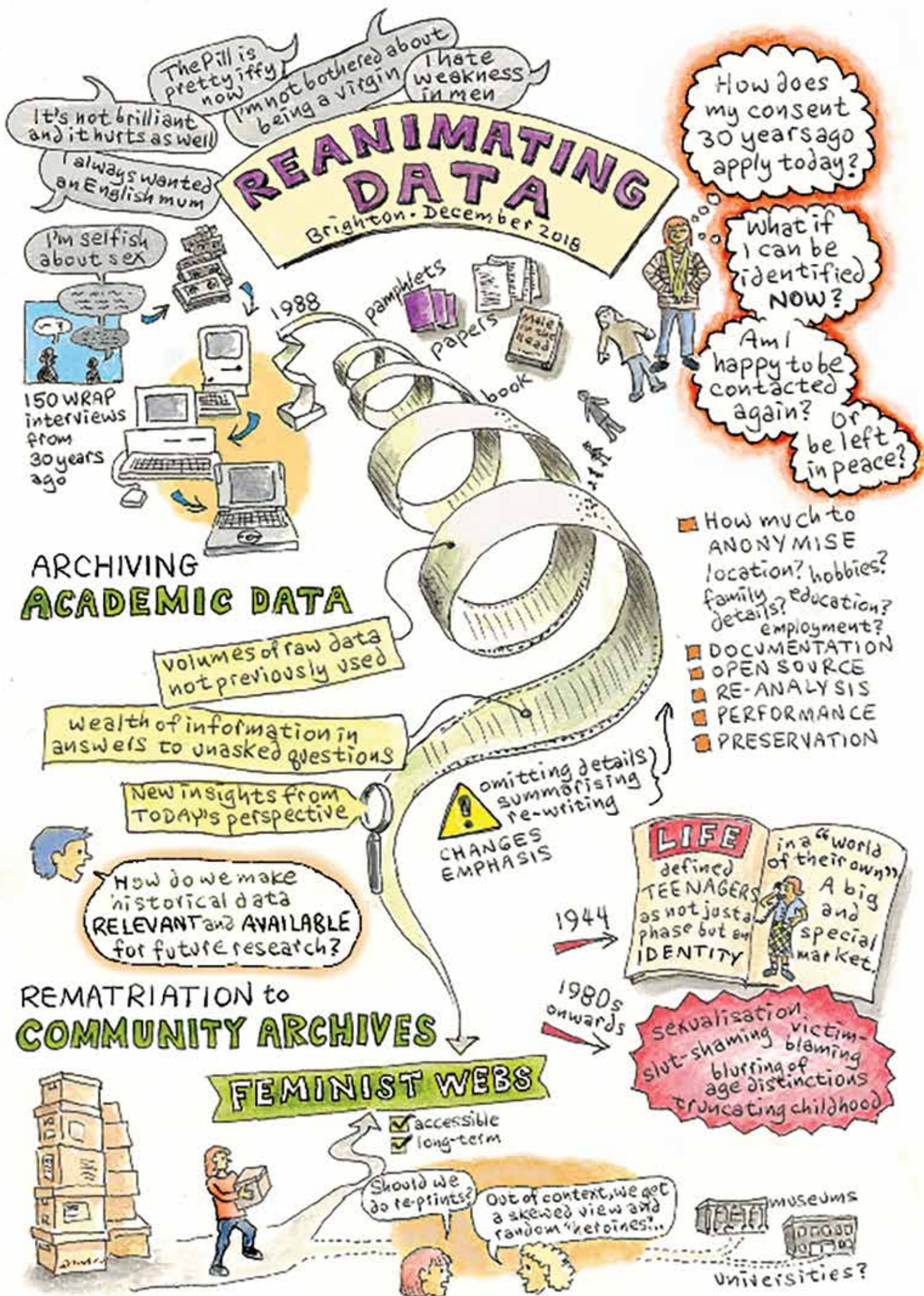
Childhood and youth studies are interdisciplinary fields, which means that we are often involved in conversations and collaborations that challenge our assumptions about the right way to research – or even what counts as a research. The ‘Reanimating Data’ project, funded by the ESRC’s Transforming Social Science initiative, is born of the culture of CIRCY and the Sussex Humanities Lab and involved the team working across disciplinary divides to shape a new kind of investigation. Starting with the archive – a collection of in-depth interviews conducted with young women in the late 1980’s, focusing on questions of sexuality and risk when private lives and troubles were turning into public health problems, shaped by the threat of HIV and AIDS but also a popular feminism and activism that saw young women making gender trouble. Inspired by traditions of community archiving and the potential of new kinds of open access platforms for archiving, curating and sharing material – the project engages in a series of experiments with people, places and archives. At the heart of the project is a willingness to take ‘careful risks’ in order to question and expand ethical research practice.

The first stage of work involves finding, securing, digitising and organising the original study materials. This means working with the original WRAP (Women, Risk and AIDS Project) team and going back to the places and people that shaped the original research. The team’s energies are focused on the Manchester research site where, through a partnership with Feminist Webs (a feminist youth work collective interested in history), the team is, with the help of Ali Ronan (Feminist Webs), working with youth and community groups to bring the materials to life. Drawing on methods of ‘reanimation’ forged by Ester McGeeney and Rachel Thomson in previous collaborations, the team

is using drama, performance and creative practice as the starting point for new conversations about why and how young people’s sexual cultures have changed over time.

The team sees itself as building a community around the archive. This might be youth workers, students and young people interested in investigating their own histories, but also includes researchers from a range of disciplines who see these interviews as a valuable part of bigger stories about social change, technology and sexual politics. Working with notions of ‘rematriation’ – the return of value to the communities it has been extracted from – the team is exploring what it might mean to return the anonymous accounts of young women to a city and a community 30 years later. Co-researchers Niamh Moore (University of Edinburgh) and Sharon Webb (History/ Sussex Humanities Lab) bring the theories and practices of preservation and archiving to the study, helping create a collection that is ethical, stable, accessible, adaptable and exciting. Rosie Gahnstrom (Social Work and Social Care) is helping with the work of digitising, redacting and cataloguing. The project has a fantastic group of critical friends who are helping the team conceptualise and curate the archive, joining in ethical experiments with the materials. The team’s experiments take many forms: over the last few weeks workshops have been carried out with young women in Levenshulme and pensioners in Harpurhey while also using psycho-social methods to revisit thirty year old field notes and collaborating with a sound artist to find new ways of hearing old interviews. The project has a blog to communicate the work. The team also plans to present their work in progress at the Brighton Digital Festival in the autumn and at Manchester Central Reference Library in the spring.

www.reanimatingdata.co.uk





Leah painting with Clay at a nature and environment workshop held by CIRCY at Saffrons nursery, Eastbourne

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

A defining feature of many CIRCY projects is foregrounding of children and young people's views and perspectives, particularly in respect of topics and issues of central concern to young people but poorly understood by adults.

An important and innovative project this year is “‘We exist too’: *Young trans perspectives on legal gender recognition laws in England and Wales*’ conducted by **Maria Moscati** (Law) with Peter Dunner from the University of Bristol. The pair are seeking to listen to, document and disseminate the voices of trans young people (aged 13-17 years old) in relation to legal gender recognition laws in England. In particular, the project is pursuing four main objectives: (i) to investigate the extent to which trans children and adolescents are aware of gender recognition; (ii) to consider how (and whether) legal exclusion impacts young trans lives; (iii) to ask how (and whether) trans youth believe that children should be incorporated into the Gender Recognition Act 2004 (GRA); and (iv) to disseminate the results among young people, policy-makers and academics. Drawing upon a child rights perspective which emphasises the voice of children, this project will provide original data on how trans young people in England experience legal invisibility. The project adopts a participative methodology which employs four main methods: semi-structured interviews, focus groups, diary writing and artistic expression. It has been developed in collaboration with Gendered Intelligence, a Community Interest Company whose object is to deliver arts programmes and creative workshops to trans youth across the UK. Relatedly, in May, Maria gave a presentation during Pride in Italy, on ‘Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Children’s Rights’.

Kristi Hickie (Social Work and Social Care) has conducted a small exploratory project in partnership with Brighton and Hove Children’s Services and funded by the Centre for Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse, entitled ‘*Ambivalence, uncertainty, and possibility: Learning from young people’s experiences with secure and residential care when at risk of child sexual exploitation*’. The project looked at the experiences of six young people who met criteria for secure accommodation due to ongoing risk of child sexual exploitation. The project foregrounded the experiences of young people and included interviews with young people, adults of their choosing, and in-depth case file reviews.



'Blueberry Plop' by Alex

REPRESENTING CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

Many CIRCY projects seek to find new ways of understanding and representing children and young people. This might include new theorisations by the research team, creative and participative methodologies with young people, and/or researching innovative services or systems. One area of development has been around young people's attitudes, views and experiences of sex, sexual consent, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. CIRCY members have sought to trouble taken-for granted notions, stereotypes and practices in this field, so that services, interventions and public discourses are better informed by young people's varied experiences, views and preferences.



'Risky Play – low ropes challenge 1',
© Miles Davies / Sussex Wildlife Trust.

Since the 1950s, opportunities for children to play outdoors – where risky, adventurous play most often occurs – have dramatically declined. Across the same time period, there has been a rise in rates of mental health problems, including anxiety disorders in children. One possibility is that denying children the opportunity to experience age-appropriate challenge, adventure, and risk through play may, in part, be contributing to this rise in emotional problems. In a pilot study funded by the Research Development Fund and in collaboration with Sussex Wildlife Trust, **Kathryn Lester** (Psychology) and **Alison Lacey** (Research Associate, Psychology) investigated

the potential of a forest school type environment in conjunction with audio and video technologies to study individual differences in children's propensity for adventurous play and to investigate associations between 'fear-based' caregiving practices (e.g. overprotectiveness) and children's play experiences.



'Risky Play – low ropes challenge 2',
© Miles Davies / Sussex Wildlife Trust.

This year, **Michelle Lefevre**, **Kristi Hickie** and **Barry Luckock** (all Social Work and Social Care) reanalysed their earlier research to explore how and why practitioners working in the field of child sexual exploitation struggled with how to conceptualise, name and position young service users. The team had noted that there was often an unhelpful polarisation of young people being seen either as dependent children, in need of protection and constraint, or as agentic, troublesome and culpable youth. Their paper, *'Both/and' not 'either/or': Reconciling rights to protection and participation in working with child sexual exploitation'*, sought to find a new, integrative conceptualisation, whereby young people in such situations might need to be recognised and responded to as both vulnerable and agentic, competent and struggling, autonomous and exploited. Michelle presented this paper to a group of child care lawyers and social workers at a meeting of the Sussex Family Justice Circle on 20 March as a way of sparking debate about the troubling dilemmas which professionals find themselves facing when young people's views on their own safety, autonomy and privacy differ from adults.



SPOTLIGHT ON DOCTORAL RESEARCH: "WHO DO YOU SEE?" HOW DO UNACCOMPANIED YOUNG WOMEN AND UK SOCIAL WORKERS CONSTRUCT AND UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER IN PRACTICE ENCOUNTERS?

Rachel Larkin, Doctor of Social Work

In early 2019, CIRCY member Rachel Larkin completed her Social Work Professional Doctorate. Her qualitative research concerned social work practice with young women who had come to England as unaccompanied minors (not in the care of a parent or other guardian and claiming asylum in their own right). The voices of unaccompanied and/or trafficked girls and young women are rarely heard in the literature and they form a minority of unaccompanied young people in host countries, where services have developed largely around the needs of young men. This leaves the social workers who encounter them within processes such as age assessment, claiming asylum and the provision of care placements, unsure of how to best make sense of their needs, experiences and perspectives, and to communicate and intervene effectively with them.

In her research, Rachel used a psychosocial and creative methodology to explore how practitioners and young women construct and experience each other when meeting in practice spaces, such as borders, local authority offices and foster homes. This included encouraging the young women and the social workers during the interviews to create images and metaphors of how they saw and understood each other. This facilitated rich reflections and conversations, bringing to the surface complex and nuanced impressions, thoughts and feelings about their relationships and interactions.

Drawing on the work of Doreen Massey and Margaret Wetherell, Rachel found that both spatial-gendered relations and individual affective practices can work to shape the ways practitioners and young women experience

each other. She argued that, at a time of polarising and excluding discourses about migrants, social work needs to pay more critical attention to the ways in which migrant young women are constructed and consider the implications for their inclusion and exclusion within social work services.

Rachel is herself a registered social worker with many years' experience in practice and management. She undertook her doctorate part-time whilst working as a reviewing officer for children in care in West Sussex. Rachel has presented her findings to local and international practitioners, including at the international CESSMIR Migration Conference and the European Social Work Research conference in Belgium. Rachel is the co-editor of a book for students and practitioners: *Social Work with Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants* (Jessica Kingsley, forthcoming), and is currently co-writing a paper *Unaccompanied Young Women and Social Workers: Meaning-Making in the Practice Space* with **Michelle Lefevre** (Social Work and Social Care) who supervised her thesis.



'Hearts' This drawing was created by one of the unaccompanied young women, Salam, who took part in Rachel's research. Whilst drawing, Salam said: "First time when I came my heart was broke, broke heart in half... With my social worker I feel like, I just draw half-way, they gave me hope... In my life trusting is hard to me, so the way how they trust me, the way how they treat me, they make me like to have a big heart, because they give me value. Now I have a big heart and I have hope...".

UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING EMOTIONAL LIVES

Paul Dugmore (Doctor of Social Work researcher, Social Work and Social Care) is awaiting examination for his doctoral research, *'Acknowledging and Bearing Emotions: A study into child and family social work practice'*. Paul had found from his practice background as a social worker and educator that practitioners and students often felt ill equipped to understand and engage with the emotional dimensions of children's lives. Paul's psychosocial study looked closely at whether and how social workers were able to attend to children's emotional needs and experiences and what factors promoted or inhibited this from taking place. He found that, whilst social workers could engage with children's emotional lives to some extent, they often seemed to overlook, ignore or distance themselves from some of the emotional experiences shared and communicated by the children and young people they met. Using examples from his ethnographic observations, interviews and case records, he surfaced how complex emotional dynamics are mobilised – perhaps consciously and unconsciously – by social workers, to protect themselves from the complex emotional pain and anguish of the families they work with, as a way of managing the realities of the role. He also uncovered some of the organisational defences that serve to distant practitioners from full engagement with the emotional experiences they are faced with. Paul is supervised by **Gillian Ruch** and **Michelle Lefevre** (both Social Work and Social Care).

DEVELOPING POLICY AND SERVICES FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

CIRCY members continue to work on a range of interdisciplinary projects funded by the government and large NGOs to research services involved with children and young people.

The University of Sussex was successful in March 2019 in being appointed to the Panel of Evaluators for the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care (WWC CSC). The bid was led by **Elaine Sharland** (Social Work and Social Care), with CIRCY and Rudd Centre researchers **Robin Bannerjee** (Psychology), **Michelle Lefevre** (Social Work and Social Care), **Janet Boddy** (Education) and **Gordon Harold** (Psychology), and in collaboration with a wider group of Sussex and external colleagues. The WWC CSC is part of Nesta, the UK's innovation foundation. It seeks better outcomes for children, young people and families by bringing the best available evidence to practitioners and other decision makers across the children's social care sector, and to support practice leaders in promoting evidence-informed practice in their organisations. The Centre plans on supporting research into a wide range of interventions in children's social care, using a variety of research methodologies. As a member of the Panel of Evaluators, Sussex will be among a diverse range of organisations eligible to undertake these evaluations.

Michelle Lefevre (Social Work and Social Care) leads a DfE-funded evaluation of Contextual Safeguarding in Hackney – a new approach to address complex extra-familial risks facing young people such as criminal and sexual exploitation, gang-involvement and serious youth violence www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/en/in-practice/hackney-project. The team includes **Robin Banerjee** and **Helen Drew** (both Psychology), **Michael Barrow** (Economics), **Kristi Hickie** and **Tam Cane** (both Social Work and Social Care) and three colleagues from Research in Practice – **Oli Preston**, **Rachel Horan** and **Susannah Bowyer** (who is also a member of CIRCY's Advisory Group).

Janet Boddy (Education) is leading an evaluation of Pause (www.pause.org.uk), a national service for women who have experienced recurrent removals of children into care, and who have often experienced significant trauma and disadvantage through their own childhoods. Janet is working in collaboration with **Bella Wheeler** (Education), and with researchers from Research in Practice and Ipsos Mori (who are leading on economic elements of the evaluation).

OUR APPROACH TO RESEARCH

Andy Field and doctoral researcher **Danielle Evans** (both Psychology) are conducting a secondary analysis of the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC) cohort study, looking at the role of psychological, biological and social factors in maths achievement over the primary-secondary school transition. They have published a review of the academic and psychological impact of the transition to secondary education (Evans, Boriello & Field, 2018) and have completed phase one of the project, which looks at pre-transition predictors of the trajectory of mathematical performance across the transition to secondary education. The findings have been presented to various forums and they are about to submit them. They will then begin phase two, looking at factors at the time of transition that may impact children's performance in maths. Alongside this, they are about to submit a paper evaluating the contribution of wellbeing and maths performance across the transition to secondary education to maths anxiety at age 18. These findings were presented at a conference in March and are also about to be submitted.

Nicola Yuill (Psychology) and Samantha Holt (Chatlab) were successful in gaining £46,000 from the Baily Thomas Charitable Fund to develop a computerised early social skills intervention for children with autism. They will trial a tablet app they developed to support communication between autistic children who are minimally or non-verbal and their support staff. The aim is to support it becoming freely available for schools.



'Ballerina and a heart and a daddy', by Page



SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH: TECHNOLOGY AND DESIGN FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

Emeline Brulé, Engineering and Design

Emeline Brulé, a Lecturer in Product Design, is currently wrapping up a five-year research project as part of the Accessimap project, funded by the French National Research Agency. Her research project sought to understand the experiences of visually impaired school children in France to guide the development of new assistive and inclusive educational technologies. It is often assumed that assistive technologies have lessened barriers to inclusion in schools and that they improve both children's learning outcomes and their experience. In fact, there is very little research data from France about schooling trajectories of disabled children in general. Moreover, views had not been sought from visually impaired children on this matter.

Emeline's project was participatory and involved visually impaired youth and the many adults in their lives (educators, health and social care professionals, rehabilitation specialists, special education teachers, document adapters) through all the stages of the project via Cherchons pour Voir – a research laboratory in Toulouse supporting collaboration between professionals and scholars of visual impairment and Human-Computer Interaction. The project followed two main methods of inquiry: An ethnography of visually impaired children's schooling has been able to highlight enduring difficulties in making schools inclusive. A series of prototypes and interventions has been developed - first to better understand dynamics of exclusion in mainstream classroom, then to explore how schools could utilise emancipatory pedagogies towards a more inclusive classroom. The research is aiming for national impact, in particular through collaboration with the French network of special education teachers to share the didactics and pedagogical practices developed.

The next step for this project is the publication of smaller reports highlighting policy implications for the provision of assistive technologies and the organisation of special and inclusive education, and all the modalities in between.



Using toys and images to teach
geography – from Emeline Brulé's research

Breaking the
barriers of
certainty...



Knowledge exchange and partnerships

CIRCY's work is fundamentally concerned with making a difference to children and young people's lives, a principle that applies across diverse disciplines through our efforts to build 'real world' understandings of lives in time and place. We aim to think beyond the academy, making our research visible and accessible, and engaging with research users – including researched groups – throughout the research process and beyond the lifetime of specific projects.

In this section, we highlight some examples of the range of work we do with knowledge exchange, public engagement and partnerships with stakeholders beyond the academy. Alongside 'traditional' academic activities, such as dissemination and expert advisory work, we are strongly committed to building opportunities for mutual learning between researchers and others who have a stake in research process and outcomes (whether practitioners, policy makers, other academics, or children, young people and families). This strategy, of connecting research, knowledge exchange and public engagement through embedded partnership working, is illustrated by our 'spotlights'.

DEVELOPING RESEARCH AND PRACTICE LINKS

Kristi Hickie (Social Work and Social Care) has continued to work with local authorities and charities to develop impact from her research on trauma-informed practice, child sexual exploitation, and trafficking. She facilitated the workshop '*Complex Safeguarding: Exploring peer, environmental, and extra-familial risks*' for senior leadership in East Sussex Local Safeguarding Children's Board on 27 March. She also co-facilitated several day-long trainings in February and March on trauma-informed practice for the Local Safeguarding Children Boards in Brighton and Hove and East Sussex, involving approximately 200 professionals throughout the last year. Examples of feedback from attendees included:

"I have taken away a wealth of ideas and tips to practically apply to my practice. I have actually made a 'to do' list in relation to the things I wish to have a go at using with particular children/families. I have also put together a calm box. I am also thinking of ways to apply a trauma informed practice to my [team], thinking about how we help others and share the load. I also just have a trauma informed lens in mind when considering cases in supervision".



In February, **Gillian Ruch** (Social Work and Social Care) launched the Kitbag Campaign to ensure that all social workers across the country have interactive materials that can assist them in their daily work. The campaign follows

on from Gillian's Talking and Listening to Children research which found that fewer than 20% of social work practitioners currently use play resources during their work with children. The collaborative project between the University of Sussex, Cardiff University, Queen's University in Belfast and the University of Edinburgh, also indicated that of the social workers who do use play materials to engage with children, most buy toys or arts and crafts materials out of their own pockets rather than have bespoke child-centred resources supplied to them by their employers. The new campaign is named after Kitbag, a resource for children and families designed by Scotland-based educational charity International Futures Forum. The Kitbag, which contains finger puppets, feelings and emotions cards, a Talking Stick and calming oil, is an invaluable multi-sensory communication tool which 'meets' the child where he or she is, encouraging open-ness and quickly building confidence, trust and resilience in children and their families.

Elaine Sharland (Social Work and Social Care) completed her two-year role as Chair of the European Social Work Research Association (ESWRA) in April. Elaine was one of the founders of ESWRA in 2014, and previously of the European Conference for Social Work Research from which the Association emerged. ESWRA (eswra.org) is the only Association of its kind in Europe. It has already become the go-to arena for social work researchers across Europe, offering resources, events and networking opportunities, and raising the profile of social work research internationally. The last two years have been exciting and hugely productive. Under Elaine's leadership, ESWRA membership (700+) and country coverage (42) have doubled, and its annual conference – most recently in Leuven, Belgium – has continued to grow and thrive. There are now 22 Special Interest Groups fostering collaboration and exchange among researchers around themes ranging from Mental Health Social Work and Social Work with Children and Families, to Transnational Social Work, Social Work Research Ethics, and Social Work in Film, Television and the Media. Elaine has found it a pleasure and a privilege to lead this initiative. She will continue to be a member of the Board for one more year, and ESWRA will certainly continue to flourish.

OUR PLANET





SPOTLIGHT ON KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE: TRANSFORM-IN EDUCATION PROJECT

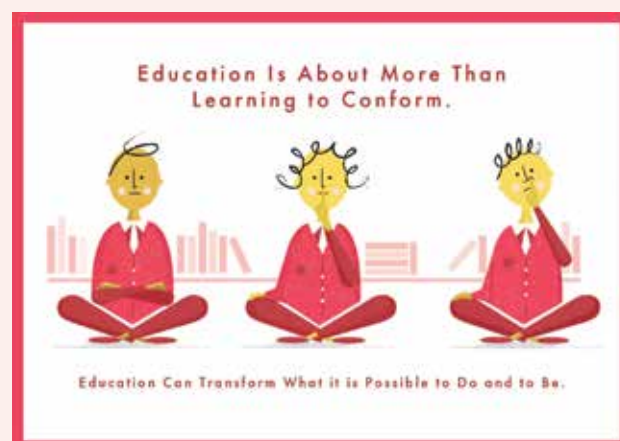
Perpetua Kirby and Rebecca Webb (both Education)

TRANSFORM-IN EDUCATION is a joint initiative by CIRCY members, **Perpetua Kirby** and **Rebecca Webb** (both Education) that has grown out of their doctoral research. It aims to foster conversations about ways of creating possibilities for uncertainty within educational spaces. TRANSFORM-IN EDUCATION was launched in December 2018 with the support and backing of CIRCY. **Saul Becker** (Provost), who spoke at the event, warned against the dangers for democracy of too much certainty and celebrated universities for encouraging disruptive thinking.

The TRANSFORM-IN EDUCATION website (www.transformineducation.org) documents Perpetua and Rebecca's journey over the course of this year through a series of blog posts and outlines the importance for schools of increasing opportunities for staff and students to work with ideas of uncertainty where they do more than simply come up with a right answer. They spoke about the importance of this work, in an interview on BBC Radio 4 'Woman's Hour', for addressing girls' conformity at school.

Perpetua and Rebecca were initially inspired by a CIRCY event to begin speaking about how their individual research could be brought into the conversation. Since then, they have written and presented together on a number of occasions. For example, their thinking about the way in which uncertainty can fit into modern conceptualisations of education is captured in a paper, 'Modelling Transformative Education', in Volume 61 of the journal, 'FORUM'. They explored these ideas with teachers at the National Education Union annual conference in March 2019. They are currently involved in running workshops to open up spaces in which schoolteachers are able to express and explore their own uncertainties. This included a workshop on 'Broadening the curriculum

to engage with uncertainty – where children are not simply working out the correct answer', at the National Education Union, Celebrating Education conference, on 30 March 2019 at UCL Institute of Education (IoE), London. Most recently they held a workshop with Education colleagues **Sean Higgins**, and **Fawzia Mazanderani**, supported by a Sussex impact grant, to create a space of 'uncertainty' for secondary and primary heads/school leaders to think through aspects of the PREVENT Duty that require some further deliberation. Work with teachers is planned to continue. The next step is to seek further research funding to take the work forward.



Dr Rebecca Webb and Dr Perpetua Kirby are working on how to balance children's conformity in schools with possibilities for transformation



SPOTLIGHT ON IMPACT GENERATION: THE TRUST IS THE WORK: USING PRACTICAL WISDOM TO INFLUENCE SCHOOL COUNSELLING SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE

Tracey Fuller (Teaching Fellow in Education and doctoral researcher)

Tracey Fuller, a Teaching Fellow in Education, was awarded her PhD unconditionally on 11th July for her thesis which explored how school counsellors maintain alliances with young people when sharing information related to safeguarding concerns. The research followed a phronetic methodology; based on the work of Flyvbjerg, this approach seeks to learn from the ‘practical wisdom of the participants. Tracey partnered with the Place2Be, the largest school counselling agency in the UK, to hear from the young people and the professionals working with them in an iterative, recursive process where they were able to reflect and comment on what each other thought were central issues in helpful or problematic information sharing.

An important aspect of phronesis is to have an impact on ‘*real people*’ so phronetic research sets out not just to explore practice, but to ‘transform’ it (Flyvbjerg, 2012: 287). This requires action beyond the development of theoretical knowledge and the publication of academic papers. Tracey’s research process has therefore concentrated on influencing professional practice to improve safeguarding decisions and approaches when concerns arise in the context of the counselling relationship with a young person.

Tracey has shared her findings directly with managers and counsellors at the Place2Be and this is already influencing their practices with young people. Tracey has presented her research at national counselling and psychotherapy conferences including the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and the UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) Research conferences.

Her prize for the Counselling and Psychotherapy Central Awarding Body Research Award in 2017 was funding and support to produce a film about the research, with the aim of disseminating its findings and developing professional practice. Film screenings at The Cambridge Forum for Children’s Emotional Well-being at the University of Cambridge, and in CIRCY at University of Sussex have been attended by academics, researchers and stakeholders, such as local school counsellors, school counselling agency managers, other therapists working with young people and therapeutic trainers/educators. Feedback from participants is indicating that the findings are influencing organisational and individual practices. One manager of a school counselling agency advised that she would be rethinking the reporting procedures within her agency and providing training for staff.

The film is hosted on a national online platform on the main research page on the BACP website and on the CPCAB website and can be found at www.cpcab.co.uk/researchaward/.

Tracey is supervised by **Janet Boddy** (Education) and **Michelle Lefevre** (Social Work and Social Care)



Tracey Fuller celebrating her viva with her supervisors, Janet Boddy (Education) and Michelle Lefevre (Social Work and Social Care).



TALKING METHODOLOGY

As noted earlier, we continue to extend and consolidate our reputation as an international centre of excellence in methodologies for researching childhood and youth. For example:

- **Liam Berriman** (Social Work and Social Care/Sussex Humanities Lab) provided an invited talk at the NCRM Summer School on digital methods and participatory approaches with children and young people on the 4th July 2019.
- **Andy Field** (Psychology) was a panel member on *'Teaching statistics to non-specialists'* and *'The future of teaching statistics'* at a symposium on teaching statistics in higher education at the Royal Statistical Society, London on 3 April.
- **Andy Field** (Psychology) presented *'Implementing principles and practices of open science in peer relations research'* at the Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Meeting in Baltimore, Maryland, 21-23 March.



The doctoral workshop on sensitivity within qualitative inquiry.

INTERNATIONAL LINKS

CIRCY continues to serve as an international hub for researchers and we have been pleased to build our international partnerships in the last year.

Dorte Thorsen (Global Studies) met with co-researchers in Marseille in June as part of an application under the Horizon2020 framework Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions H2020-MSCA-RISE-2018 with the research platform CoPREFAS, initiated at Laboratoire Population, Environnement et Développement (LPED) at IRD-Aix Marseille Université. If the bid is successful, the Schools of Global Studies and Education and Social Work will be potential hosts of researchers from West Africa and Madagascar.

The Sussex Humanities Lab and CIRCY/the School of Education and Social Work hosted visiting PhD researcher Hamide Elif Üzümcü from the University of Padova, Italy, who spent time sharing her research on children, privacy and technology in Turkey.

Feylyn Williams (Social Work and Social Care) linked with a number of groups internationally as an advisory member, including the Care4Dem Online Dementia Carer Support Group Program in Brussels, Belgium. As a member of the National Alliance for Caregiving Advisory Committee in Washington D.C., she contributed to the Caregivers in the US 2020 Report and the Sandwich Generation Caregiver Report.



'I've used it all up', by Ciara



SPOTLIGHT ON INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH: PUTTING PARTICIPATORY METHODS TO THE TEST IN WEST AFRICA: THE ATEMIS PROJECT

Dorte Thorsen (Global Studies – Migrating out of Poverty Research Consortium & UMR 151 LPED) and Mélanie Jacquemin (Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, UMR 151 LPED, IRD/Aix Marseille Université)

Much of the research with working children, especially with labour migrants in West Africa, is commissioned by local and national NGOs who set very ambitious goals for child participation and the use of innovative methods. However, often the time to pilot and tweak the chosen methods is insufficient, calling into question the quality of the evidence they produce. The ATEMIS (Activités et Trajectoires des Enfants Migrant.e.s aux Sénégal) project¹ was designed to explore the suitability of selected participatory and visual qualitative methods in research with adolescents, while also exploring the contours and specificities of the dynamics of their migratory trajectories.

Given the limited time available for fieldwork, the challenge for the team was to find ways of establishing some level of trust with the adolescents and the people around them, and to produce material that would help elaborate the finer details of their stories to go beyond snapshot representations. The limitations were further compounded by the fact that the team did not speak the languages common in the area (Wolof, Mandinka, Fula and Jola) and in most cases repeat interactions over a period of time were impossible. As the majority of ‘child’ labour migrants are in their teens and could equally be labelled as ‘youth’ – except that their situation is very different from that of youths in their late twenties or early thirties, which is the upper delineation of ‘youth’ in Africa – the team opted to work with mapping, role play and photovoice.

The use of mapping and role play as activities in focus groups revealed that careful sampling along languages was crucial when working with a mixed group of migrants. At first we composed groups of young migrants in similar

occupations, but saw discussion stall because we had to translate between three or four languages. Ethical issues also emerged relating to literacy- and arts-based methods involving pen, paper and/or blackboard for adolescents with fragmented educational trajectories. Performance-based methods, which can be immensely productive in societies with oral traditions, prompted other ethical issues – for example, when we asked our participants to perform sketches of their experiences as migrants, without having in-depth knowledge of themes that might normally be kept secret. In the ATEMIS project, photovoice elicitations worked better than the other participatory projects. An important reason was the appreciation, that most of the adolescent migrants and the adults around them shared, of the trust we demonstrated when lending them a digital camera. It was also the method which offered our participants most say in representing themselves and setting the agenda for what they shared with us, even though the in-depth interviews detailing the photographs gave us many opportunities to ask questions around our key research themes.

In the coming year the team is planning to communicate both their methodological reflections based on this work and the new insights it has produced on adolescents’ migration for work and education. Regular blogs have been published on the research over the past year by Dorte and her colleagues on the Migrating Out of Poverty Blog, which can be found at <http://migratingoutofpoverty.blogspot.com/>, for example Dorte’s blog on 2nd January on the choices adolescent migrants make about work, which reverses the fuzziness of the category “child labour migrant”.

¹The fieldwork was co-funded by the LMI MOVIDA (Mixed International Laboratory: Mobilités Voyages Innovations et Dynamiques dans les Afrique méditerranéenne et subsaharienne) and the Migrating out of Poverty Research Consortium in 2017 and 2018.



Two migrant boys from Senegal and Guinea Bissau working together at the fish market in Ziguinchor, Lower Cassamance, Senegal (Photovoice, © Dorte Thorsen & Mélanie Jacquemin).

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Lefevre, M., Hickie, K., Luckock, B. & Ruch, G. (2017): 'Building trust with children and young people at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation: The professional challenge', *British Journal of Social Work*, 47(8), pp. 2456–2473.

In January, this paper was awarded the British Journal of Social Work's BASW/Kay McDougall Prize for 2018. The article discussed findings from a study (funded by the Office of the Children's Commissioner) of how local authorities might develop more child-centred services for children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation. The award is based on: breadth of scholarship; sophistication of theory; rigour of research; relevance to practice; and international appeal.



The Kay McDougall Prize

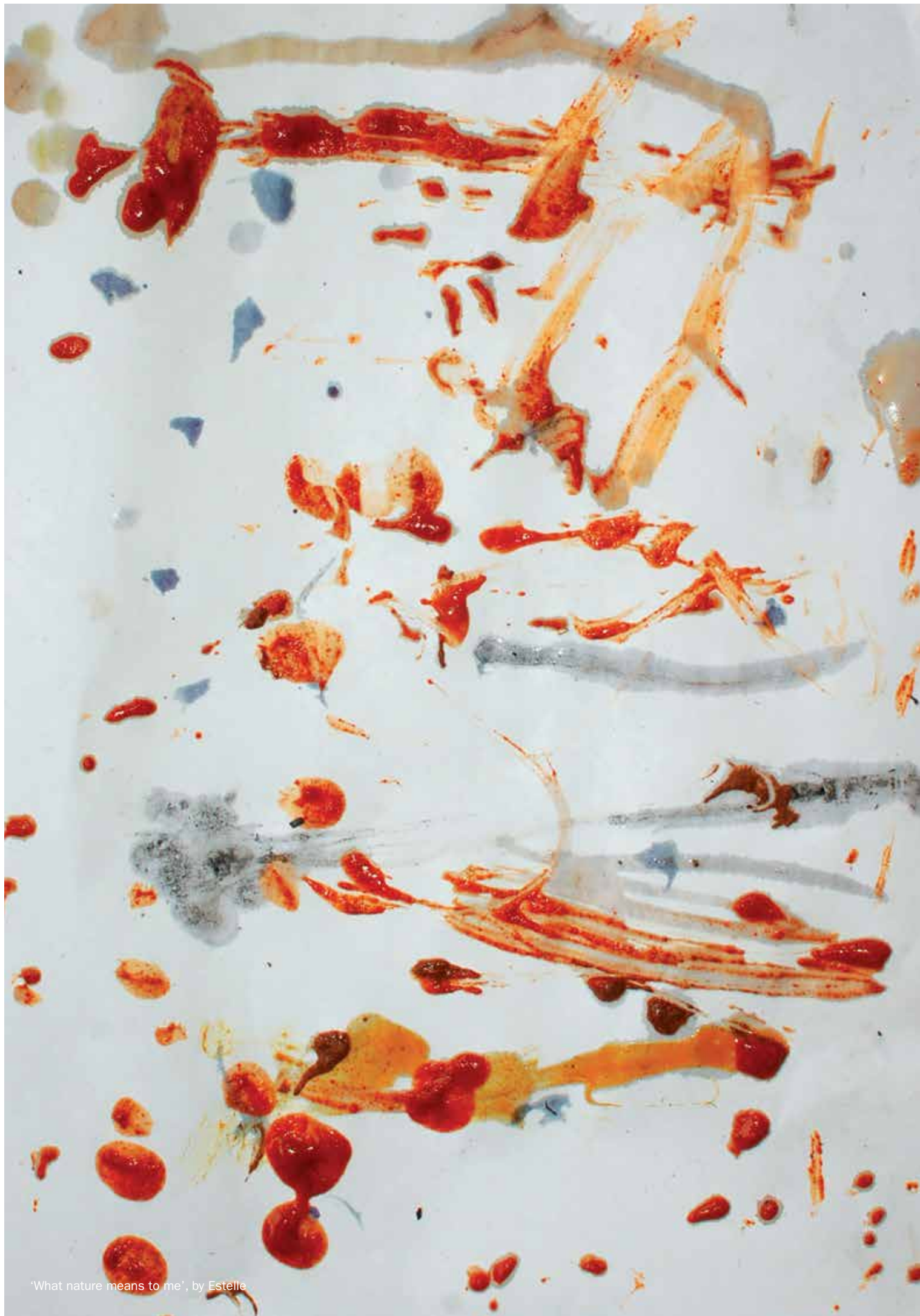


Saul Becker presenting his research at a CIRCY Seminar

Saul Becker (Provost) was named as one of the nation's 100 Lifesavers by UUK Made at Uni campaign which identifies the top 100 individuals or groups based in universities whose work is saving lives and making a life-changing difference to health and wellbeing. Saul's research was the first to establish the extent and nature of caring by children for parents and other family members who are ill or disabled, or have mental health or addiction problems, and that many of these children themselves face significant mental health and other impacts on their education, development and wellbeing. Over nearly 30 years, Saul has researched these impacts, attracting funding for 50 research projects and writing hundreds of articles, papers, reports and books on the topic. He has advised governments, policy makers and practitioners in the UK and internationally on young carers issues and his work has informed the development of policy, law and professional practice in a number of countries. A carer himself as a child and an adult, and a registered social worker, Saul draws on his personal and professional experiences to inform his research, public engagement and policy recommendations. His drive and focus on placing young carers themselves at the centre of debates and policy decisions has given voice and hope to hundreds of thousands of young carers in the UK and internationally.



Zachery making marks in the clay at a nature workshop at Saffrons' Nursery, Eastbourne



'What nature means to me', by Estelle

Seminars and events

CIRCY hosts exciting and inclusive events throughout the year, including members' workshops, seminars, a reading group, and conferences. This year, we were delighted to host events in conjunction with other research centres across the University, in addition to solely CIRCY-hosted events.

The autumn term began on 29 October with a seminar from Professor Pamela Cox from the University of Essex on *'Adult Outcomes of Care in Britain: A historical view of 'what worked' and 'what mattered'*. She spoke about the research that underpinned her recent book with Barry Godfrey, Heather Shore and Zoe Alker: *'Young Criminal Lives: Life Courses and Life Chances from 1850'* based on the first cradle-to-grave study of the experiences of 400 adults who passed through the early youth justice and care systems as children in the northwest of England.

CIRCY's second event on 28 November was co-hosted with the Sussex Centre for Human Rights Research and brought Emma Nottingham from the University of Winchester to share her research conducted with Helen Ryan, Senior Lecturer in Law; and Marion Oswald, Senior Fellow, University of Winchester, on critically ill children in the age of social media, posing the challenge "How can we protect 'generation tagged'?".

Building on our underpinning concern with childhood publics and public childhoods, our third event on 3 December brought together CIRCY Steering Group member **Pam Thurschwell** (English) with Sevasti-Melissa Nolas (now at Goldsmiths but formerly within the Department of Social Work and Social Care at Sussex and a CIRCY member). Drawing on Melissa's European Research Council Connectors study, and Pam's research on Ann Frank's diary for her forthcoming book on adolescence, they discussed childhood publics, exploring cross-disciplinary perspectives on idioms and genres in listening to children and young people.

On 10 December 2018, CIRCY celebrated the launch of TRANSFORM-iN EDUCATION, a new initiative led by **Rebecca Webb** (Education / CIRCY Steering Group member) and **Perpetua Kirby** (see spotlight on page ??). We were delighted that Sussex Provost, **Saul Becker**, was able to join the celebrations which were jointly hosted

with the Centre for Teaching and Learning Research (CTLR) and at which he highlighted the synergies between the TRANSFORM-iN initiative and the University's 2025 Strategic Framework, valuing a long tradition of developing experimental work that is disruptive by design.



A packed room (and playdough at the ready) for the launch of TRANSFORM-iN EDUCATION, with Perpetua Kirby and Rebecca Webb

In January, **Janet Boddy** and **Rebecca Webb** (both Education) hosted a writing workshop for CIRCY researchers to provide a CIRCY 'space to think with' about 'quality' in academic writing. Ten researchers took part, representing four academic departments and a variety of research interests. The group listened, read each other's work and used an appreciative inquiry approach to think through questions of 'quality' in our work – and what it means for how and why we write – to consider strategies to take forward into new writing. Two participants spoke about their experience of the workshop:

'I enjoyed the opportunity to slow down and think about the writing process with CIRCY colleagues from across the University. The workshop was future-oriented and collegiate. I came away with concrete plans for writing projects'.

Louise Sims

‘I particularly enjoyed the discussion of my writing with another trusted colleague in a paired activity of trust. It felt affirming to focus in some depth on the craft of conveying meaning clearly through text. There never feels enough time to do this justice ordinarily. My reading/listening partner commented sensitively and insightfully on what I had written and I enjoyed trying to emulate this as I read and her work too. Focusing on what ‘quality’ looked like within our writing was challenging and yet immensely rewarding.’

Rebecca Webb

A further two-day Writing Retreat is planned for 22-23 July.

Three events were held in February 2019:

On 11 February, **Hannah Field** (English) co-presented a seminar with Kiera Vaclavik, Professor of Children’s Literature and Childhood Culture, Queen Mary, University of London, entitled ‘*Not Only Dressed but Dressing: New approaches to children’s clothing*’.

On 25 February, **Saul Becker** (Provost / CIRCY Steering Group Member) and **Feylyn Lewis**, Research Fellow (Social Work and Social Care) presented their project, ‘*Children Who Care: Young carers research policy and practice*’.

On 27 February, Professor Jacqui Gabb from the Open University presented a seminar in celebration of LGBT History Month entitled ‘*Paradoxical Family Practices: LGBTQ+ youth, mental health and wellbeing*’.



Feylyn Lewis and the young carers project

Visiting from the Department of Human Development and Women’s Studies at California State University, Dr Rachael Stryker presented a seminar on 18 March on ‘*Emotional Suspicion and Emerging Pediatric Psychologies in Palestine’s West Bank*’. The event was co-hosted with the Centre for International Education (CIE) whose Director, **Mario Novelli**, provided a response to Dr Stryker’s presentation.

On 29 April, CIRCY’s outgoing Research Fellow, **Esther McMahon**, presented the seminar ‘*Research Ethics in International and Comparative Education*’ on the diverse ethical challenges that international and comparative education researchers face. Drawing on research conducted for the British Association for International and Comparative Education (BAICE), Esther explored the significant gaps that can exist between ethics presented in Western ethical guidelines and the realities of international fieldwork. She proposed the Axis of Universality as a departure from ethical ‘guidelines’ towards a novel, dialogic approach which makes the case for universal values.

Maria Moscati (Law) presented CIRCY’s final seminar of the year on 17 June. In her presentation, ‘*Hey-ho Let’s Go! Are you Sure I am Happy?” Children, Law and Happiness*’ Maria shared some preliminary findings from a research project which analysed the manner in which law and local policies in England and Italy consider children’s happiness (if at all), and whether the meaning of happiness that

SEMINARS AND EVENTS

the law and local policies embrace mirrors what children themselves perceive to be happiness. Maria's presentation drew on empirical data collected through participatory methodology involving 400 children and adolescents attending two primary schools in England and two primary schools in Italy. The seminar was hosted jointly with the Centre for Cultures of Reproduction, Technologies and Health (CORTH).

A Blue Skies research planning workshop was held on 1 July, providing an opportunity for CIRCY members to come together and share emergent ideas so that synergies could be developed which might form the kernels for new bids.



Robbie Gilligan



Shirley Ben Shlomo

READING GROUP

Two reading groups were held this year, each hosted by a visitor to CIRCY.

In the first, Professor **Robbie Gilligan** from Trinity College, Dublin, introduced a paper by Hanne Warming (2015) on 'The life of children in care in Denmark: A struggle over recognition'. The paper drew on Honneth's theory of recognition to consider how children in care experience a continuous struggle over recognition, with negative consequences for their wellbeing. The ensuing discussion enabled participants to consider the everyday emotional lives of children in extra-ordinary circumstances. In the second, Dr **Shirley Ben Shlomo** from Bar Ilan University, Tel Aviv, introduced the psychoanalytic concept of Turning a Blind Eye (Steiner, 1985) to lead a discussion on how society struggles to recognise and act on child abuse. Participants discussed how society sometimes distances itself from children's experiences rather than placing children, their rights and their perspective centre stage.



Blueberry Fountain 1, by Grace

The CIRCY Doctoral community

CIRCY's postgraduate research community continues to go from strength to strength. We remain strongly committed to building a thriving doctoral community and continue to offer the *Writing Into Meaning* group highlighted in last year's report, along with workshops and masterclasses from visiting scholars. Regular work-in-progress seminars are held by CIRCY doctoral researchers to enable them to get feedback from other CIRCY researchers and students. On 13 December 2018, **Esi Fenyiwa Amonoo-Kuofi** (Education) presented '*Two Sides of the Coin: Merging the findings of a mixed methods study on teacher leadership*', while **Sushri Sangita Puhan** (Social Work and Social Care) spoke about '*Illuminating the Experiences of People with Adoption in India: An analysis from the perspective of policy, practice and personal narratives*'.

In March 2019, **Liam Berriman** (Social Work and Social Care / Sussex Humanities Lab), Martin Bitner (visiting ethnographer from Flensburg University, Germany) and **Rebecca Webb** (Education) hosted the workshop for doctoral researchers '*Can you see the tangent in your research? A workshop on sensitivity within qualitative inquiry*'. The event focused on sensitivity in qualitative research with youth, children and pedagogical institutions. Participants shared data from research on issues considered to be 'sensitive' where sensitivity was seen as something that plays on our senses as we gather and interpret data whilst being situated beyond the sociological and historical divide between intimacy/privacy and the public sphere. The goal of the workshop was shared understandings and mappings of 'sensitivity' and the provision of a confidential and non-judgemental space for discussion of data and emerging ideas.

CIRCY also regularly supports its doctoral researchers to engage in both national and international training opportunities. This year, CIRCY enabled **Rachel Larkin** (Social Work and Social Care) to go to the European Social Work Research Conference in Leuven, Belgium, to present her research on how unaccompanied young women and their social workers engage and make sense of each other. **Loreto Rodriguez** was supported in her attendance of the XIV International Conference of Maltreated Childhood in

Barcelona, Spain (22-24 November, 2018), where she co-presented '*Innovative methodologies for research and clinical practice with children and young people victims of violence: Visual analysis*'.

As part of the ESRC's South East Network for Social Sciences (SeNSS) scheme, CIRCY has also been able to support two new fully-funded students for the 2019-20 academic year. The scheme is a competitive and lengthy process designed to attract the best and brightest new researchers in the country. CIRCY's new researchers are:

Anna Hutchins, an experienced social worker who provides occasional teaching on our qualifying and continual professional development courses. Her proposed research topic is 'Let's Talk about Sex': Conversations with Female Social Workers and Young Male Clients'. Anna will be supervised by **Michelle Lefevre** and **Kristi Hickie** (both Social Work and Social Care).

Amy Lynch is currently employed as a Research Fellow at the Tilda Goldberg Centre for Social Work and Social Care and plans to examine the role of empathy in child and family social work. Amy will be supervised by **Gillian Ruch** and **Michelle Lefevre** (both Social Work and Social Care).



DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES IN CHILD PLACEMENT (ADOPTION, GUARDIANSHIP, FOSTER FAMILY, ORPHANAGE) IN KAZAKHSTAN: LESSONS FROM ENGLAND AND WALES

Aigerim Mussabalinova, Law PhD

Aigerim Mussabalinova is a doctoral researcher in the Sussex Law School with a research interest in the rights of children in care in Kazakhstan and in England and Wales. Her research was conducted in the context of Kazakhstan which has reduced the number of residential institutions for children not able to live with their parents without the resources to develop new preventive services or recruit foster and adoptive carers.

Aigerim conducted semi-structured interviews with 20 professionals in Kazakhstan, including social workers, case managers, staff within departments of guardianship and representatives of relevant non-governmental organisations, as well as three social workers in England and Wales. Alongside scrutiny of the legislation, policy and practice systems in Kazakhstan, she analysed some of the reasons (historical, cultural, and social) behind the decisions made to place children in residential or other types of care in Kazakhstan. Interviews conducted with social workers in England and Wales enabled Aigerim to identify differences in the ways that these issues were understood and worked with in different countries and subsequently what Kazakhstan could learn from this.

Aigerim is now writing up her thesis and has been able to identify particular areas of law and policy that require revision. She proposes that particular principles of the UN CRC should drive such revision. Throughout, Aigerim has drawn on her knowledge and experience as a lawyer in Kazakhstan and a member of a Kazakh movement lobbying for legal changes that will recognise the right of a child in care to be raised in a family. In addition to her research, Aigerim provides advice and legal expertise to government and other social and charitable agencies with an interest in the rights of children in care. She has worked with UNICEF in Kazakhstan to develop alternative social services as part of the transformation of the child care system. In that work, Aigerim reviewed national and international experience of child care in order to develop standards and procedures for the provision of better child care and child and family support services in her home country. She also developed the standard operational procedures for child protection (based on training for child protection specialists developed by other experts in the field). Since being at Sussex, Aigerim has met professionals working in the field of child protection locally so that her work could benefit from their experience. Aigerim has also presented papers at conferences in the Central Asian Forum at Loughborough University (18 March, 2019) in which she discussed both her research and the other work that she has done in relation to Children's Rights in Kazakhstan.



Aigerim Mussabalinova at the Second Central Asian Research Forum on Sustainable Development and Innovation at Loughborough University on 18 March 2019

CURRENT DOCTORAL RESEARCHERS

Leethen Bartholomew (Social Work and Social Care)

Working title: *Accusations of child spirit possession and witchcraft: Experiences and outcomes for non-accused children within the same family network*

Supervisors: Elaine Sharland, Russell Whiting (both Social Work and Social Care)

Jimena Rojas Bernall (Psychology)

Working title: *The musicality of children's interactions with each other and with adults.*

Supervisor: Robin Banerjee (Psychology)

Marie Claire Burt (Institute of Development Studies)

Working title: *Mentorship in poverty alleviation programs: Evidence from Paraguay*

Supervisors: Keetie Roelen (IDS) and Janet Boddy (Education)

Paul Dugmore (Social Work and Social Care)

Title: *Acknowledging and bearing emotions: A study into child and family social work practice*

Supervisors: Gillian Ruch and Michelle Lefevre (both Social Work and Social Care)

Claire Durrant (Social Work and Social Care)

Working title: *An exploration of the identity construction and emotional well-being of young people with severe dyslexic difficulties*

Supervisors: Tish Marrable, Rachel Thomson (both Social Work and Social Care)

Owen Emmerson (History)

Working title: *Childhood and the emotion of corporal punishment 1938-1986*

Supervisors: Claire Langhamer and Lucy Robinson (both History)

Tracey Fuller (Education)

Working title: *'Can I trust you?' Ethics considerations for secondary school counsellors in information sharing and multi-professional working*

Supervisors: Janet Boddy (Education), Michelle Lefevre (Social Work and Social Care)

Fawzia Haeri Mazanderani (Education)

Working title: *'A map without direction?' The experiences, perceptions and practices of previously disadvantaged youth navigating post-school opportunities in South Africa*

Supervisors: Barbara Crossouard, John Pryor (both Education)

Jenny Hewitt (Social Work and Social Care)

Working title: *How do UK young adults' experience civic and political engagement in their everyday lives?*

Supervisors: Janet Boddy (Education), Liam Berriman (Social Work and Social Care)

Katherine Kruger (English)

Working title: *Child's play, toys and pure games: Revising the romantic child in Henry James, Elizabeth Bowen and Don DeLillo*

Supervisor: Pam Thurschwell (English)

Manuel Cruz Martinez (Education/Sussex Humanities Lab)

Working title: *The capabilities of video games to explore history*

Supervisors: Liam Berriman (Social Work and Social Care/Digital Humanities), Kate Howland (Informatics), Simon Thompson (Education)

Sushri Sangita Puhan (Social Work and Social Care)

Working title: *Sense of self and belongingness of Indian born adopted adolescents in India*

Supervisors: Barry Luckcock (Social Work and Social Care)

Loreto Rodriguez (Childhood and Youth)

Working title: *Narratives and understandings from psychotherapy for young children in Chile who have experienced sexual abuse*

Supervisors: Janet Boddy (Education), Michelle Lefevre (Social Work and Social Care)

Paul Shuttleworth (Social Work and Social Care)

Working title: *A critical analysis of kinship care for policy and practice (SENSS funding 3 years?)*

Supervisors: Barry Luckock, Russell Whiting (both Social Work and Social Care)

Roma Thomas (Social Work and Social Care)

Working title: *Doing Boy Work? Young masculine subjectivities and professional practice*

Supervisors: Kristi Hickle, Gillian Ruch (both Social Work and Social Care)

Elle Whitcroft (English)

Working title: *How race, childhood, and dreams are visually performed in children's early comics in early twentieth century newspapers.*

Supervisors: Hannah Field and Pam Thurschwell (both English)

COMPLETED THIS YEAR

Rachel Larkin (Social Work and Social Care)

Working title: *Who Do You See? How Do Unaccompanied Young Women and UK Social Workers Construct and Understand Each Other in Practice Encounters?*

Supervisors: Michelle Lefevre, Charles Watters (both Social Work and Social Care)

Sandra Lyndon (Education)

Working title: *An exploration of early years practitioners' narratives of child poverty in England*

Supervisors: Janet Boddy, Louise Gazeley (both Education)

Alberto Poletti (Social Work and Social Care)

Working title: *The relationship between emotions and the working environment in two child protection teams in Italy and England: a psychosocial exploration.*

Supervisors: Michelle Lefevre, Tish Marrable (both Social Work and Social Care)

Louise Sims (Social Work and Social Care)

Working title: *What can be learned from the practice encounter in adoption support social work?*

Supervisors: Barry Luckock, Gillian Ruch (both Social Work and Social Care)

Elsie Whittington (Social Work and Social Care)

Working title: *Participatory processes with young people: exploring sexual consent*

Supervisors: Ben Fincham (Sociology), Rachel Thomson (Social Work and Social Care)



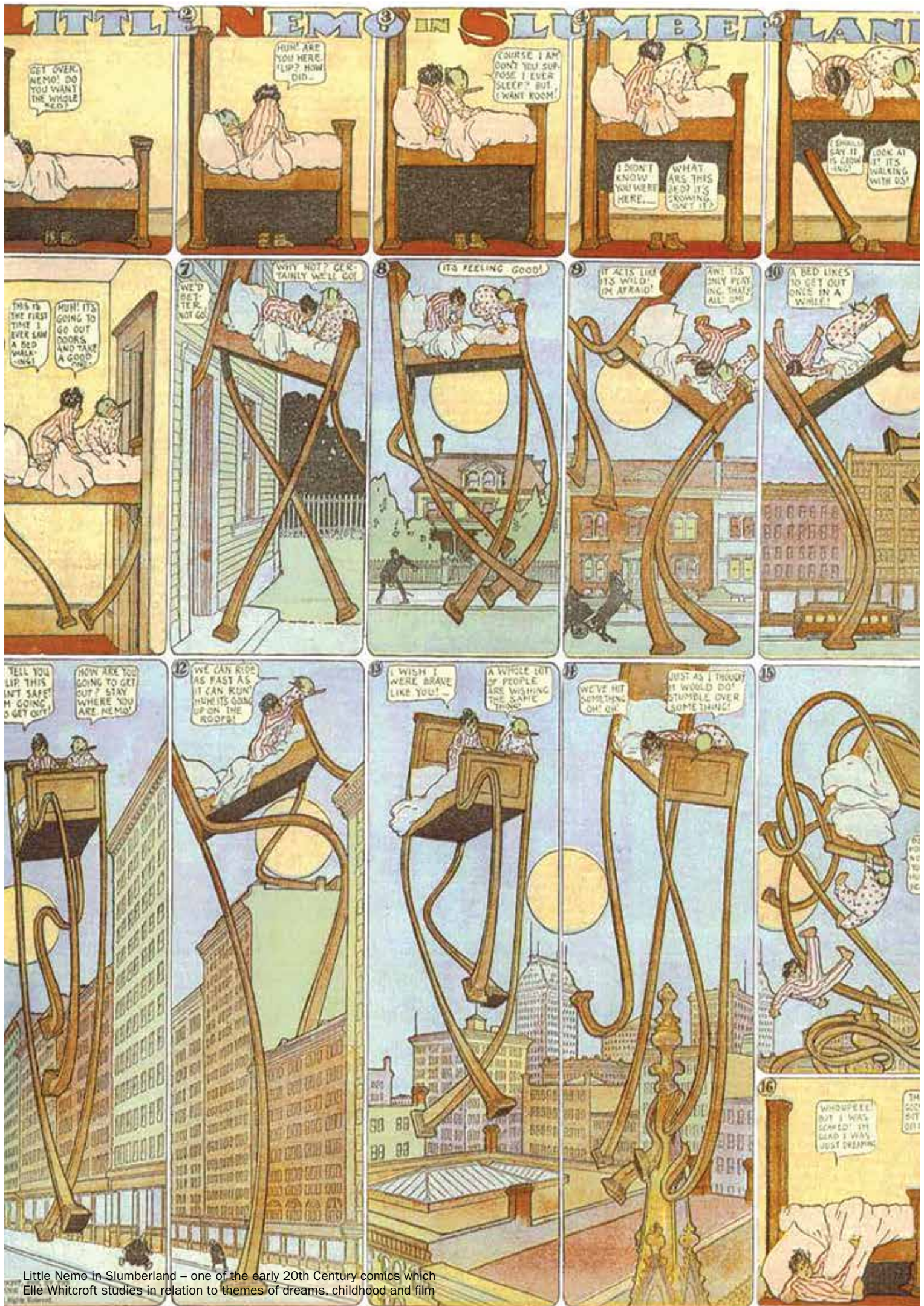
**SPOTLIGHT ON DOCTORAL
RESEARCH: HOW RACE,
CHILDHOOD, AND DREAMS ARE
VISUALLY PERFORMED**

Elle Whitcroft, English PhD

Elle Whitcroft is in the second year of her PhD and is supervised by Hannah Field and Pam Thurschwell (both English). Working between Literature, American Studies, and Word-Image theory, Elle's research looks at children's early comics in early twentieth century newspapers. Her thesis investigates how race, childhood, and dreams are visually performed. Like many others, Elle read comics since childhood, and describes herself as being 'lucky enough' to take interdisciplinary Literature and Media courses which used comics and texts. It was here that Elle realised how much she loved working with visual narratives, and she took this research into SEN and mainstream Primary and Secondary schools, where I often used comics to assist learning. Elle is keen to keep thinking about how her research can eventually be brought back to schools. Last year she learnt code to build a visual narrative game: <https://ellejane-x23.github.io/code-first-project/>

Elle recently won a research grant to attend the New York Public Library, where she will be looking for correlations between children's comic strips and surrounding newspaper articles and advertisements in New York City (1905-1915). She expects to find narratives around immigration and race which are mimicked in children's comics, suggesting that visual narratives echo newspaper stories during this time. She intends to use digital search software during this research, marking her interest in making connections between childhood studies and digital humanities.

The main comic Elle works with is Winsor McCay's comic strip Little Nemo in Slumberland (1905-1926), which follows the adventures of little Nemo and his companions: Flip, the Irish immigrant and Impy, a slave from the imaginary 'Candy Isles'. Little Nemo – a comic strip intended for children – visualises childhood tensions such as anxiety, loneliness, navigating power structures, understanding race, and observing new cultures. In the iconic sequence published on July 26, 1908, little Nemo and his companion Flip are taken for a ride on an out-of-control bed, which gallops from the safe suburbs to New York City. Narratives such as this were presented to child readers in the coloured New York Herald Sunday newspaper, echoing a growing interest in dreams, childhood, and film in the early twentieth-century.



Little Nemo in Slumberland – one of the early 20th Century comics which Elle Whitcroft studies in relation to themes of dreams, childhood and film

Talking about our work

The following are selected highlights from CIRCY researchers' presentations and workshops from the last year – national and international. These examples include peer-reviewed conference presentations and invited and keynote lectures and seminars.

Robin Banerjee (Psychology) has been speaking widely about his work on children's social and emotional wellbeing. He gave a keynote presentation at an all-Wales conference on wellbeing in January and was a member of the Nesta Education Conference panel on measurement of social and emotional skills in London in February. In March, he gave keynotes at an EmpathyLab event for schools on empathy and reading in Birmingham, at a West Sussex conference for SENCOs in Arundel and at the Carnegie UK Trust Kindness Innovation Network meeting in Glasgow. On 11 June, he was in conversation with novelist Malorie Blackman and poet Paulo Coelho at Waterstones Piccadilly, in celebration of Empathy Day.

The Carers Centre for Brighton and Hove displayed the 'Young Carers in Focus' photo exhibition in March of young carers engaged in the Young Carers' service. This included portraits of **Feylyn Lewis** (Social Work and Social Care) and **Saul Becker** (Provost and CIRCY Steering Group member); Feylyn is a Trustee and Saul is Patron of the Centre. 31 January 2019 was Young Carers' Awareness Day and, as Patron of the Centre, Saul gave the keynote address for the charity's event to celebrate this national day dedicated to recognizing the contributions of young people with caring responsibilities and originally started by the Carers Trust. In May, Saul gave the keynote speech at a conference in Iceland, speaking about Young Carers at the University Hospital in Reykjavík. The theme of the conference was supporting relatives – including children – of patients with a long term mental illness, providing support and improving communication. The event was attended by 200+ social workers and healthcare professionals from across Iceland. Feylyn attended a EuroCarers 'Care4Dem' training workshop in Carpi, Italy in February. Feylyn serves on the Care4Dem project's advisory committee. Feylyn also attended the inaugural meeting of the National Alliance for Caregiving advisory committee for the 'Caregiving in

the US 2020' research study in Washington D.C., USA. In March, she was the keynote speaker for the American Association of Caregiving Youth's annual conference in Boca Raton, Florida, USA.



Janet Boddy presenting her work in Iceland

Janet Boddy (Education) has been presenting her work in Iceland: In February she gave the opening keynote at the 'Icelandic Association of Social Workers Annual Conference' on '*Thinking Through Family*'. In January, Janet and colleagues from her Norwegian Research Council project 'Against All Odds?' held a one-day conference for policy makers and professionals in Oslo. Janet continues in her Adjunct Professor role at NOVA, OsloMet University.

Dominic Dean (Research Quality and Impact) presented at the third annual Queer Modernisms conference at the University of Oxford on 'Children, Queerness, and Flight in John Masfield's 1935 children's novel, *The Box of Delights*'. He will have a chapter on this topic in a Palgrave edited book, *Aviation in the Literature and Culture of Interwar Britain*, due out later in 2019. Dominic is also finalising a chapter on 'Young Men in Literary and Cultural Representations of Thatcherism' for a new Palgrave edited book, *The Social and Cultural Legacy of Thatcherism in the 21st Century*, also due out later in 2019.

Hester Barron (History) was keynote speaker for the History of Education Postgraduate Research Conference, University of Winchester, in May.

Rachel Thomson (Social Work and Social Care) and **Pam Thurschwell** (English) participated in a workshop in May on Adolescence, Chronicity, and Time as part of the Waiting Times project (<http://waitingtimes.exeter.ac.uk/team-time/>) run by Lisa Baraitser (Birkbeck, Psychosocial Studies) and Laura Salisbury (Medicine and English Literature, Exeter). The interdisciplinary seminar featured Elizabeth Freeman (University of California, Davis) talking about Melville's *Bartleby the Scrivener* as an example of extended, chronic adolescence, Rachel Thomson on child longitudinal studies and affect-imbued objects, Jocelyn Catty (Tavistock NHS Foundation Trust and Senior Research Fellow on Waiting Times) on the NHS and length of treatment for youth at risk for suicide, and Pam Thurschwell on The Pet Shop Boys' song "Being Boring," time travel, and seizing the adolescent moment.

Kristi Hickie (Social Work and Social Care) has been sharing learning from her work on trauma-informed practice and complex safeguarding needs of young people. She was keynote speaker at the 'East Sussex World Social Work Day' event in March, and in February she presented her work at Surrey's multidisciplinary 'Exploited and Missing Children Delivery Group'. She has also delivered workshops and training in that period for East Sussex County Council, and at Brighton and Hove Children's Services, including a workshop at their on new

research which sought the views of young people who had experienced secure and/or residential accommodation following risk of child sexual exploitation.

Michelle Lefevre (Social Work and Social Care) has spoken about her work on professional practice with children and child sexual exploitation in a number of forums. She gave a public lecture on child exploitation to an audience of academics, safeguarding professionals, students and policymakers in Dublin, when she was a Visiting Professor at Trinity College in April. Michelle was able to explore with participants the varied ways that child exploitation was manifesting in different kinds of locality, influenced by social, cultural, and geographical contexts, and how professional responses were being shaped by political, economic and juridical factors. Also in March, Michelle presented her research on child sexual exploitation to the Sussex Family Justice Board Quality Circle, discussing how young people's rights to both participation and protection need to be integrated in situations of child sexual exploitation. As part of her ongoing role in the British Association of Social Workers' Children and Families Policy Practice and Education Group, Michelle leads a workstream on child sexual exploitation and contributes to the 80/20 campaign on increasing the proportion of time social workers spend on direct work with families.

Gillian Ruch (Social Work and Social Care) has also been involved in the BASW 80/20 campaign. Her Talking and Listening to Children (TLC) research project and 'Kitbag' day conference was co-hosted with British Association of Social Workers (BASW England) under the auspices of the BASW 80/20 campaign focusing on increasing the percentage and quality of time social workers spend with children and families. The event kick-started the BASW campaign and was attended by 80 practitioners and managers.



Michelle Lefevre presenting at Trinity College

Nicola Yuill (Psychology) presented at a range of conferences on her work regarding disabled children. At the Interaction Design for Children Conference in Norway, she co-presented on the '*Benefits of Shared Technology for Social Motor Synchrony and Collaboration*'. At the BPS Cognitive and Developmental Section conference, she spoke about both '*Collaborative action, embodiment and autistic traits: the influence of technology design in social motor synchrony*' and '*Text comprehension and interactional synchrony between parents and autistic children in shared reading*'.

CIRCY ONLINE

The CIRCY blog [<https://circyatsussex.wordpress.com/>] and Twitter feed [[@SussexCIRCY](#)] continue to be active, highlighting our research and activities.

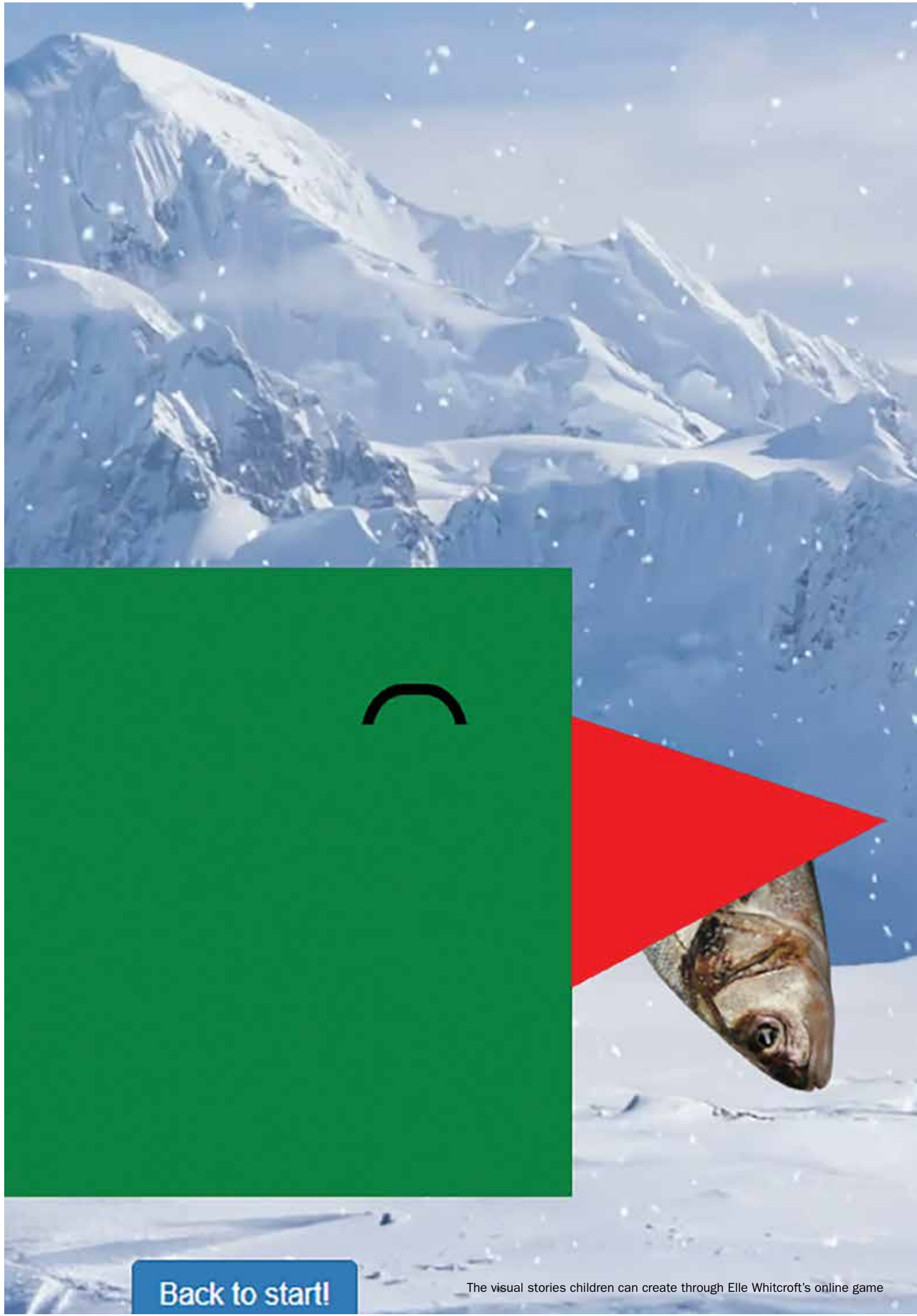
Specific projects also have their own blogs and social media activity, including: Everyday Childhoods (<http://blogs.sussex.ac.uk/everydaychildhoods/>); Lucy Robinson's history blog about her research (<https://proflrobinson.com/>); CIRCY Advisory Panel member, **David Buckingham**'s blog on issues relating to children, media and education (www.davidbuckingham.net); the TRANSFORM-iN EDUCATION blog, at <https://www.transformineducation.org/blog>.

Webinars are held regularly to publicise research activity. The British Association of Social Workers have asked two CIRCY colleagues to bring their research findings in accessible formats to practitioners. **Michelle Lefevre**'s (Social Work and Social Care) webinar in February 2019 on '*What can be learned from looking closely at practice*' was based on her research into social workers' communication and engagement with children and young people in home visits. The second, in August, helped practitioners to think about developing a rights- and relationship-based approach with children facing child sexual exploitation. **Gillian Ruch** (Social Work and Social Care) presented a webinar on her Kitbag for social workers, a resource for supporting direct work with children.

CIRCY IN THE MEDIA

On 21 January, Perpetua Kirby (Education) was interviewed by Jane Garvey on BBC Radio 4's 'Women's Hour' on girls' conformity in school.

Rebecca Webb and **Perpetua Kirby** (both Education) were interviewed on BBC Radio Sussex's Drivetime at 5 on 14 December 2018 about their TRANSFORM-iN EDUCATION project. TRANSFORM-iN EDUCATION project was also featured in *Education Today* magazine (12 December) through an article on '*Spaces to be uncertain: New initiative calls for conformity to be challenged in the classroom*'.



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Back to start!

The visual stories children can create through Elle Whitcroft's online game

CIRCY publications

2018-2019

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CIRCY people

Robin Banerjee (Psychology, CIRCY Steering Group)

Jamie Barnes (Sociology)

Hester Barron (History, CIRCY Steering Group)

Saul Becker (University of Sussex Provost, CIRCY Steering Group, Social Work and Social Care)

Liam Berriman (Social Work and Social Care)

Janet Boddy (Education, CIRCY Steering Group)

Philip Bremner (Law)

Jo Bridgeman (Law)

Rachel Burr (Social Work and Social Care, Education)

Marie Claire Burt Wolf (Development Studies)

Tam Cane (Social Work and Social Care)

Georgina Christou (Anthropology)

Jessica Louise Cotney (Psychology)

Fiona Clements (Law)

Gabrielle Daoust (International Relations)

Richard Dickens (Economics)

Helen Drew (Psychology)

Claire Durrant (Social Work and Social Care)

Owen Emmerson (History)

Bobbie Farsides (Brighton and Sussex Medical School)

Anne-Meike Fechter (Anthropology)

Nuno Ferreira (Law, CIRCY Steering Group)

Andy Field (Psychology)

Hannah Field (English)

Zoe Flack (Psychology)

Tracey Fuller (Education)

Darya Gaysina (Psychology)

Louise Gazeley (Education)

Kristi Hickle (Social Work and Social Care)

Ben Highmore (Media and Film)

Tamsin Hinton-Smith (Education)

Jessica Horst (Psychology)

Kate Howland (Informatics)

Iftikhar Hussain (Economics)

Malcolm James (Media and Film)

Pamela Kea (Anthropology)

Heather Keating (Law)

Russell King (Geography)

Perpetua Kirby (Social Work and Social Care)

Claire Langhamer (History)

Rachel Larkin (Social Work and Social Care)

Michael Lawrence (Media and Film)

Vicky Lebeau (English)

Michelle Lefevre (Social Work and Social Care, Director of CIRCY)

Kathryn Lester (Psychology)

Feylyn Lewis (Social Work and Social Care)

Karen Lowton (Sociology)

Sandra Lyndon (Education)

Craig Lind (Law)

Barry Luckock (Social Work and Social Care)

Aija Lulle (Geography)

Reima Ana Maglajlic (Social Work and Social Care)

Tish Marrable (Social Work and Social Care)

Fawzia Haeri Mazanderani (Education)

Manuel Cruz Martinez (Sussex Humanities Lab)

Paul McGuinness (Sociology)

Esther McMahon (Education)

Jo Moran-Ellis (Sociology, Co-Director of CIRCY)

CIRCY PEOPLE

Linda Morrice (Education)

Maria Moscati (Law)

Anneke Newman (Anthropology)

Jane Peek (Brighton and Sussex Medical School)

Keith Perera (Education)

Sushri Sangita Puhan (Social Work and Social Care)

Lucy Robinson (History)

Loreto Rodriguez (CIRCY Postgraduate Research Assistant)

Gillian Ruch (Social Work and Social Care)

David Sancho (Anthropology)

Elaine Sharland (Social Work and Social Care)

Jacqui Shepherd (Education)

Paul Shuttleworth (Social Work and Social Care)

Diane Simpson-Little (Engineering and Design)

Louise Sims (Social Work and Social Care)

Alice Skelton (Psychology)

Roma Thomas (Social Work and Social Care)

Rachel Thomson (Social Work and Social Care, CIRCY Steering Group)

Dorte Thorsen (Geography, CIRCY Steering Group)

Pam Thurschwell (English, CIRCY Steering Group)

Maya Unnithan (Anthropology)

Richard de Visser (Psychology)

Chris Warne (History)

Charles Watters (Social Work and Social Care)

Rebecca Webb (Education)

Catherine Will (Sociology)

Nicola Yuill (Psychology)

CIRCY INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Susi Arnott is a CIRCY Honorary Research Fellow, freelance film-maker, media professional and co-founder of Walking Pictures.

Susannah Bowyer is Research and Development Manager, Research in Practice.

Sara Bragg is a Principal Research Fellow, Education Research Centre, University of Brighton.

David Buckingham is Emeritus Professor of Media and Communications at Loughborough University, UK, and a Visiting Professor at the Norwegian Centre for Child Research.

Jenny Clifton is an independent consultant (formerly Office of the Children's Commissioner).

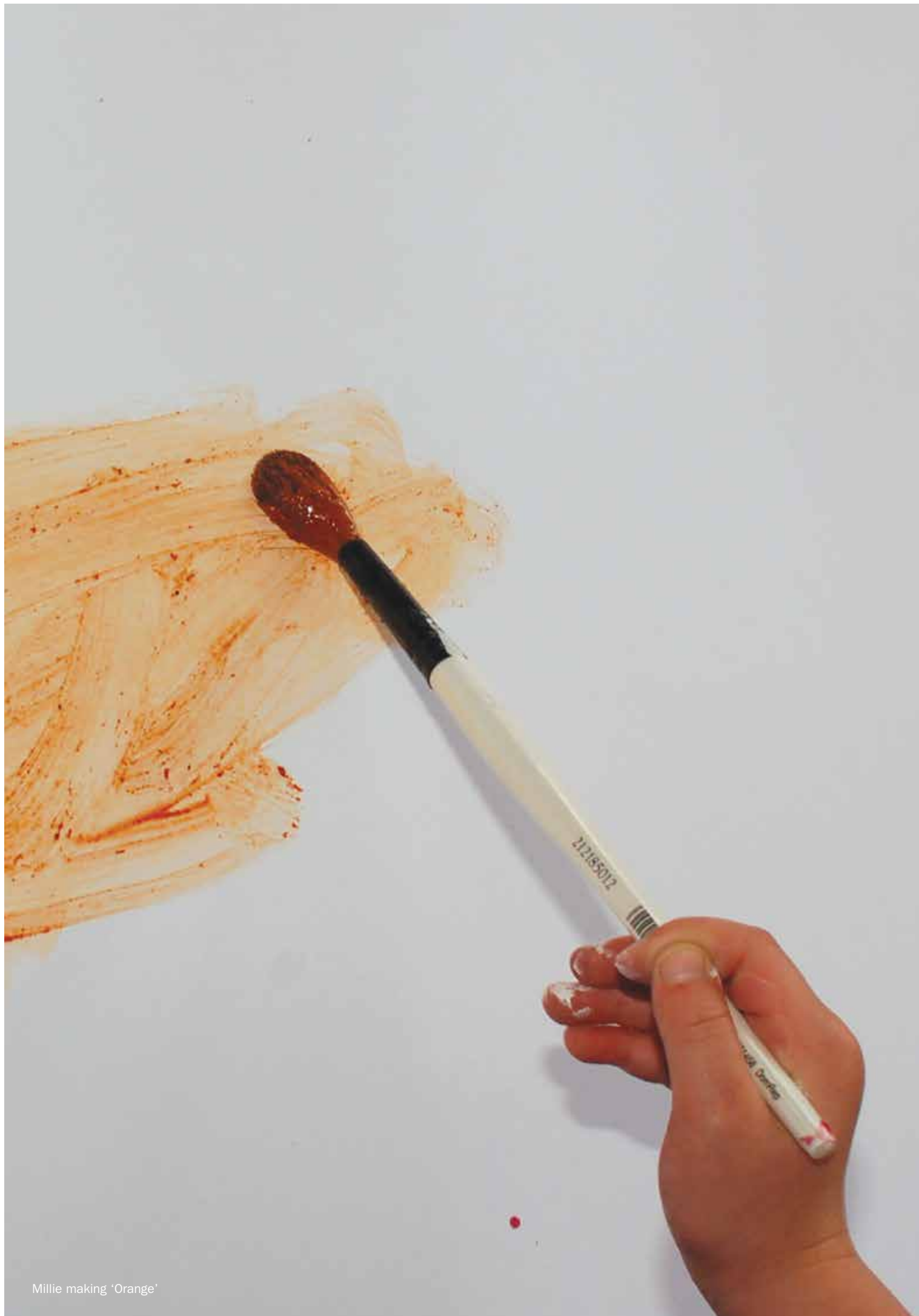
Ros Edwards is Professor of Sociology at the University of Southampton.

Ann Phoenix is Professor at the Department of Childhood, Families and Health at the Thomas Coram Research Unit, UCL Institute of Education.

June Statham is Emerita Professor of Education and Family Support at the UCL Institute of Education.

Heinz Sünker is Professor of Social Pedagogy at Begische Universität, Wuppertal, Germany.

Uma Vennam is Professor of Social Work at Sri Padmavathi Mahila Visvavidyalayam University in Turpati, India.



Millie making 'Orange'

LOCATION

The Centre for Innovation and Research in Childhood and Youth (CIRCY) is located within the School of Education and Social Work which is based in Essex House on the University of Sussex campus. The University is situated on a modern campus on the edge of the South Downs National Park near the lively seaside city of Brighton. London is one hour away by train, and there is easy access to Gatwick and Heathrow airports.

Centre for Innovation and Research in Childhood and Youth (CIRCY)

School of Education and Social Work
Essex House
University of Sussex
Falmer, Brighton
BN1 9QQ

For further information about CIRCY, visit:
www.sussex.ac.uk/esw/circy
circy@sussex.ac.uk

CIRCY DIRECTOR

Professor Michelle Lefevre:
m.lefevre@sussex.ac.uk

CIRCY CO-DIRECTORS

Professor Jo Moran-Ellis:
j.moran-ellis@sussex.ac.uk

Dr Rebecca Webb:
r.c.webb@sussex.ac.uk

CIRCY POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Loreto Rodriguez
l.rodriguez@sussex.ac.uk

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www.circyatsussex.wordpress.com/

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