WELCOME TO CIRCY’S ACTIVITIES IN 2020!

Happy new year to all our CIRCY members! In this newsletter we’ll let you know what some of our members got up to in the autumn term and set out the programme of events for the spring. We have included some brief information at the end about what CIRCY involves and who might join. We’d like to encourage you to share this newsletter with new members of staff, doctoral researchers, and any other colleagues or students who might be interested in CIRCY and our activities.

If you haven’t already, do take a look at our last annual report which is downloadable from our website.

CIRCY’s Programme of Events for the Spring Term

Monday 3 February, 2020
9-10am
Room 232, Bramber House
Coffee and Collaboration Breakfast Meeting
Fiona Courage (Mass Observation Archive – Library), May Nasrawy (doctoral researcher within the Department of Social Work and Social Care) and Dominic Dean (Research Quality and Impact) will deliver short presentations on an aspect of their work.
Please contact L.Rodriguez@sussex.ac.uk if you’d like to come along for coffee and pastries and to meet others.

Thursday 5 March, 2020
1-2pm
Ground Floor Meeting Room, Essex House
CIRCY Reading Group
Led by Rebecca Web, CIRCY co-director.
Continuing our reading group theme this year of representations of children and childhood in classic literary fiction, the reading will be the first three chapters of ‘The Shrimp and The Anemone’ by L.P. Hartley. This is a richly observed insight into an Edwardian, middle-class childhood seaside encounter. We will engage with the scene through the eyes of nine year old Eustace.
The CIRCY Reading Group offers its members the opportunity to engage with a childhood-related text in ways that speak to them, in a relaxed and informal space. We will email out a pdf of the reading a few weeks in advance.

Wednesday 25 March, 2020
2-3.30pm
Venue tbc
CIRCY Open Research Seminar
Led by Rachel Thomson (Social Work and Social Care) and Rebecca Webb (Education) who, with the support of three musician nursery practitioners, will explore their innovative pedagogical and methodologic approaches to researching ‘Noise in the Nursery’.
Please contact L.Rodriguez@sussex.ac.uk to book a place.

Thursday 20 February, 2020
9.15-10.45am
Room 108, Essex House
Ideas in Action Workshop
A space for colleagues to bring along some work or ideas which are at an early stage and on which they would like feedback, e.g. a very early idea for a bid, a research proposal in formation, or new ideas for papers or books. Two ‘ideas’ will be presented per session, each being allowed 20 mins presentation time and 20mins feedback/discussion time.
Please email L.Rodriguez@sussex.ac.uk if you have a research bid or other idea on which you would like to present and receive feedback on.

Follow us on twitter: @SussexCIRCY and on Wordpress: @circyatsussex
NEW RESEARCH FUNDING

A three year AHRC grant was awarded to Kristine Hickie (Social Work and Social Care) for her project, ‘Imagining Resistance through Participatory Photography: Exploring Resistance in Young People Victimized by Interpersonal and Sexual Violence’. Kristie, as the PI, will work with Camille Warrington, at the University of Bedfordshire, as Co-I.

Rebecca Webb (Education, CIRCY Co-director) and Perpetua Kirby (Education) were awarded an ESRC IAA grant to build on the research, impact and knowledge exchange work that they have been undertaking through Transform-in Education. In line with previous work they have undertaken with teachers through ‘Pathways To Impact’, Transform-in Education supports schools to think more broadly about the educational imperative of balancing uncertainty with conformity. The new project will engage teachers, children and young people with the idea of educational ‘uncertainty’ to explore the teaching of issues associated with climate change and global heating. It aims to create the educational conditions for children and young people to engage and act in response to personal, local and global challenges of the 21st century, many of which are inherently uncertain and where answers are unclear. It requires all those involved to respond to knowledge practices by questioning what is currently done, where the teacher does not assume to know the answer in advance and is open to the idea of not providing the solution.

Perpetua and Rebecca will be working with a range of experts and advisors: CIRCY/CTLR colleagues, including John Parry (Education) through the Lewes Environment Education Strategy and Gillian Ruch (Social Work and Social Care), to identify strategies for the integration of psychosocial practices into elements of what emerges. They will also share the project learning with an inter-disciplinary group of climate scientists/experts, including Dr Marie Claire Briscois from SPRU and Professor Ian Soones (IDS) from the ESRC STEPS to initiate conversations about how they

The ESRC-funded project on ‘Improving Social Care Systems and Practices for Young People at Complex Safeguarding Risk: What promotes and sustains innovation?’ began on 4 November. This four year collaborative project is led by Michelle Lefevre (Social Work and Social Care) with Co-investigators Kristine Hickie and Gillian Ruch, partnering with Carlene Firmin and a team from the University of Bedfordshire. The project focuses on the kind of extra-familial risks that young people encounter in their social worlds, such as peer-on-peer abuse, sexual exploitation, gang-affiliation and ‘county lines’ criminal exploitation. Two new Research Fellows have been appointed to work on the project – Carlie Goldsmith and Nathalie Huegler. Tammy McCann has been appointed as project coordinator. Other project partners include Research in Practice, Innovation Unit, the Rees Centre at the University of Oxford, and Become, a charity providing advice, support and opportunities for care-experienced children and young people.

Two undergraduate students participated in the Junior Research Associate (JRA) awards event for their work in the ChatLab during summer: Jess Marshall completed the first survey of parents about behaviour characteristics of children with Wiedemann-Steiner Syndrome, a chromosomal abnormality. She will present her work at a conference at University College London in January. Noemi Pataki continues her JRA summer work on using voice assistants to support children’s conversation in the ‘Finding Your Voice’ project.

NEW PUBLICATIONS


A TACTYC (Association for Professional Development in Early Years) ‘Occasional Paper’ summarised research conducted by Rebecca Webb (Education, CIRCY Co-director), Carla Solvason and Samantha Sutton-Tsang (University of Worcester) investigated the value and future of maintained state nurseries in two regions of England. The full research report has yet to be published.

Rachel Larkin and Michelle Lefevre (Social Work and Social Care) have had a paper accepted by the British Journal of Social Work on ‘Unaccompanied young females and social workers: Meaning-making in the practice space’. Contact Michelle for a pre-publication copy.

Loreto Rodriguez (doctoral researcher in Childhood and Youth) was one of 24 researchers from Spain, Chile, Argentina, Mexico and Colombia who contributed perspectives to Practical Guidelines for Ethical Research on Violence against Childhood and Youth, published on October 2019 by Dr Noemí Pereda (Research Group on Childhood and Youth Victimization (GREVIA), Universidad de Barcelona.

Kathleen Bailey (CIRCY doctoral researcher) was awarded £200 for her reflection paper “Nature as ‘good’ – an early childhood education and care product and practice” published on the TACTYC (Association for Professional Early Years Development) website. In the paper, Kathleen explores why ‘nature’ seems to be assumed as inherently and unproblematically ‘good’, especially in children’s education, and whether this conception of ‘good nature’ aligns with notions of environmental sustainability. Kathleen has also written a blog on the theme for CIRCY. Kathleen’s paper is based on her doctoral research ‘Wondering with children whilst constructing ‘nature’: A dissonance of global warming and the global economic market’, supervised by CIRCY members Rebecca Webb and Janet Boddy (both Education). Kathleen’s ethnographic fieldwork, using arts based methods with pre-school children, is planned to take place over a scholastic year from September 2020.

PRESENTING OUR WORK

Feylyn Lewis (Social Work and Social Care) gave the keynote speech ‘The State of Young Carers in the USA’ at the end of Project Conference on Young Carers hosted by Careum Research in Zurich in November. She also gave a keynote speech for the Eurocarers’ Interest Group on Carers at the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium in September.

Rebecca Webb (Education, CIRCY co-director) visited the University of Jyväskylä to link up with CIRCY-affiliated members there to contribute to a Department of Education project funded by the Finnish government. The aim of OVIK is to enhance the skills of education professionals and students for the promotion of the equality of children and parents within multi-professional settings of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in the city (an area in central, eastern Finland). Perpetua Kirby (Education) and Rebecca were invited to present to colleagues from the Centre for Child and Family Studies about the work of CIRCY. They also made two short films about the politics of children’s participation and Article 12 of the CRC (see CIRCY blog ‘Observations: Maternity Boxes and the Snow-filled Sound of Silence').
CIRCY at the Mass Observation Archive

by Rebecca Webb

A small but perfectly formed group of CIRCY members took the opportunity provided by generous colleagues and Mass Observation Archive experts, Fiona Courage and Kirsty Patricks, to take part in a morning of information sharing and activities at The Keep on 16 December. The purpose of the morning was to enable members to learn more about the archive in order to reflect on ways they might use it more - for research work or teaching.

Dr Fiona Courage, Associate Director of the University of Sussex Library and Curator of the Mass Observation Archive, introduced us to the archive, which comprises a myriad of forms of documentation about aspects of everyday life, including papers generated by the original Mass Observation Social Research Organisation (MO) from 1937 and the early 1950s, and newer material collected since 1981 which now form the Mass Observation Project (MOP).

MOP preserves papers and projects from national and social movements and projects. It was thanks to Asa Briggs, renowned historian and former Sussex VC, that the archive came to reside permanently at the University in 1970. The archive is open to the public and Kirsty Patricks, Mass Observation archive officer, was keen to give us a ‘taster’ of the wealth of materials that can be accessed. I was intrigued by the way Kirsty delicately opened one box of documents - observations of children playing in London streets in 1940 - and instantly put her nose to them and drew in a long breath. ‘You can learn just so much by smelling these documents’, she said.

MOP is a national life-writing project which captures experiences, opinions and reflections of the 21st century lives of ordinary people. Each year, it issues three Directives which take the form of engaging questionnaires on a specific theme and designed to capture the voices of those who would not constitute themselves ‘experts’. Themes range across a wide spectrum of everyday concerns, including ‘climate change’, ‘sex’, ‘the general election’ and – of course – ‘BREXIT’.

Importantly for CIRCY members, the Archive can be accessed via the carefully curated online databases of directives, or though commissioning a new directive (usually for research purposes). Their excellent website details what is offered and who to contact.

CIRCY thanks Fiona and Kirsty for sharing their expert knowledge with us, and we look forward to working with Kirsty on a possible CIRCY project in the near future - watch this space! We’d also like to offer a huge thank you to Dr Liam Berriman, CIRCY steering group member and avid and committed ‘user’ of Mass Observation, both for his own research through the Digital Humanities Lab, and as part of his teaching for both the Childhood and Youth BA and Childhood and Youth Studies MA courses. Liam certainly inspired me to think of ways in which I might incorporate the use of the archive within my own Early Years Education MA teaching in the future.

CIRCY Online

THE CIRCY BLOG

Check out CIRCY’s recent blog posts:
- ‘Oya, Maternity Boxes and the snow-falled Sound of Silence’ by Rebecca Webb, Education Lecturer and CIRCY co-director.
- ‘Socio-political Crisis in Chile: Childhood and Youth Agencies and Citizenships towards a New Constitution’ by Loreto Rodriguez, Doctoral Researcher in Childhood and Youth and CIRCY Research Assistant.
- ‘Nature as “good” – an ECC product and practice’ by Kathleen Bailey, Doctoral Researcher in Childhood and Youth.

This year aiming to publish two blogs per term, at least once from a doctoral researcher. They might be about a CIRCY event, a contemporary issue of relevance to children and young people, about an external event, a new concept or methodology that members might find interesting, or some real world impact generated through research. If you are interested in writing a blog for CIRCY, contact Rebecca Webb (R.C.Webb@sussex.ac.uk).

TWEET TIME!

Don’t forget to follow us on Twitter. When you tweet about your research, tag @SussexCIRCY and we’ll make sure we re-tweet you to enhance your visibility!

CIRCY Membership

What is CIRCY?
The Centre for Innovation and Research in Childhood and Youth (CIRCY) is a pan-university research centre located within the School of Education and Social Work at the University of Sussex with a membership that spans social sciences, arts, humanities and professional fields, including social work, law, education and health. CIRCY’s research is interdisciplinary and international in scope, 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.

Who can join CIRCY?
CIRCY encourages academics, doctoral researchers and others across the university who write and research in these fields to become members.

What does CIRCY membership involve?
CIRCY holds lots of events throughout the year which members can attend. These include seminars, reading groups, methodology workshops, writing retreats, and work in progress workshops where members can get feedback on research or writing ideas.

How can you join?
Email Loreto Rodriguez (L.Rodriguez@sussex.ac.uk) who will add your contact details to the CIRCY mailing list.

Our Doctoral Researchers

We’re starting to build a network of doctoral researchers across the University whose work has a connection with CIRCY. Might you want to join us? We’re planning to run events which will enable PhD researchers involved with CIRCY to get together in various ways and develop shared learning.

If you are a PhD researcher at Sussex and think your work falls within CIRCY’s research areas, email Nehaal Bajwa (N.Bajwa@sussex.ac.uk), one of CIRCY’s Research Assistants, to be added to our contacts list.

BUILDING RESEARCH LINKS

A joint CIRCY/PSWIR visit to VID University, Oslo in November provided an opportunity for Gillian Ruch, Michelle Lefevre, Liam Berriman and Jeri Daman (all Social Work and Social Care) to build research links with the Norwegian research group, PROBUF, which is developing critical, political and theoretical perspectives on welfare services with children, young people and families.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Feylyn Lewis (Social Work and Social Care) serves on the advisory board for the National Alliance for Caregiving’s Seattle Club Conference on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, University College London.

Who’s Who?

CIRCY Leadership Team

**Director:**
Michelle Lefevre  
(Social Work and Social Care)  
E: M.Lefevre@sussex.ac.uk

**Co-Directors:**
Rebecca Webb (Education)  
E: R.C.Webb@sussex.ac.uk  
Jo Moran-Ellis (Sociology)  
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**Postgraduate Research Assistants:**
Loreto Rodriguez  
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CIRCY Steering Group:

- Robin Banerjee (Psychology)
- Hester Barron (History)
- Saul Becker  
  (Social Work and Social Care)
- Liam Berriman  
  (Childhood and Youth/  
  Social Work and Social Care)
- Janet Boddy (Education)
- Fiona Courage  
  (Mass Observation Archive/Library)
- Nuno Ferreira (Law)
- Dorte Thorsen (Geography)
- Pam Thurschwell (English)

Keep In Touch!

If you’re interested in taking part in any of our upcoming members events or other activities, or just want to find out more, contact CIRCY Research Fellow, Loreto Rodriguez: L.Rodriguez@sussex.ac.uk

And please let us know if you have any ideas for members’ events or seminars, or need any support with developing research or writing - or with research-related activities, such as networking events or conference attendance.