WELCOME TO CIRCY ACTIVITIES 2022!

Dear CIRCY members and friends

We do hope you have had some time for rest and relaxation over the winter break. In this newsletter we’ll let you know what some of our members got up to during the autumn, and set out the programme of events for spring term 2022.

We have included some brief information at the end of this newsletter about what CIRCY involves and we 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.

Hopefully by now you will have seen CIRCY’s annual report 2021. If you haven’t, take a look! It’s also downloadable from the CIRCY website. The report filled with inspiring and fascinating stories of research by CIRCY members, as well as beautiful artwork by children and young people.

In case you haven’t had a chance to see them all, we also wanted to remind you about the online gallery on the CIRCY website which showcases the art submissions from all CIRCY’s community art projects since 2017. This public space enables children and young people, families and our members and colleagues to view and admire children and young people’s meaningful visual creations any time.

WELCOMING OUR NEW POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT

We would like to welcome Brontë McDonald who takes over from Loreto Rodriguez as CIRCY’s new Postgraduate Research Assistant.

Brontë was previously a primary school teacher and is now a doctoral researcher in the School of Psychology under the supervision of Dr Kathryn Lester (CIRCY Steering Group) and Dr Daniel Michelson. Her PhD research is working towards developing and evaluating a community-based intervention with primary school-aged children who experienced school attendance problems during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Brontë will work alongside Loreto this term to learn from her expertise.

We’re delighted to have you on board, Brontë!
**SPRING TERM EVENTS**

Most activities and events will either be online or 'hybrid' (both remote and in-person) this term. We will share additional details - plus relevant Zoom/Eventbrite links and/or room numbers - directly via the CIRCY mailing list and the CIRCY website.

Contact Brontë [bm333@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:bm333@sussex.ac.uk) to be added to the mailing list if you're not already on it.

• **CIRCY READING GROUP**

**STOP PRESS: Date postponed due to industrial action**

*'The Outsiders' by S.E. Hinton*

This 'coming of age' novel about rival gangs, published in 1967, transformed the genre by presenting adolescent characters that were the opposite of everything a teenager (through an adult lens) was supposed to be. The novel is narrated from the perspective of 14-year-old Ponyboy Curtis, a teenage member of a gang of "greasers".

Hinton was only 16 herself when she wrote this 'gritty, honest and authentic' novel.

In 2019, BBC News included the book in its list of 100 most influential novels.

This Group will be led by Michelle Lefevre (CIRCY Director).

Chapter 1 will be circulated for participants to read in advance, so contact Brontë if you intend to come. We also recommend the following paper as background reading:


If you missed Ephrat Huss’s seminar, ‘Using arts-based methods to access vulnerable children’s experiences: The case of children in the Lesbos refugee camp and Bedouin youth in unrecognized villages’ on 18 January (via Zoom) you can view the recording of the event on the CIRCY Events web page. In this seminar - hosted jointly with the Centre for Social Work Innovation & Research - Professor Huss, from the Charlotte B. & Jack J. Spitzer Department of Social Work, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Beer-Sheva, Israel, discussed how a qualitative arts-based methodology can be used to understand and evaluate marginalized children’s lived experience of their social realities.

• **CIRCY IDEAS IN ACTION**

This is a regular event at which CIRCY colleagues present new ideas for interdisciplinary feedback and suggestions, eg. a new or reworked bid, book proposals, or plans for knowledge exchange/impact generation.

Let us know if you would like to present your work this term, or if you would like one of the CIRCY team to review a bid or advise on a work in progress.

We are happy to respond at short notice if necessary!

• **CIRCY COFFEE & COLLABORATION**

**Wednesday 9 March 2022 / 3-4pm**

This will be a hybrid session held in the Ground Floor Meeting Room, Essex House + Zoom.

Link circulated nearer the time.

In this term’s CCC session, Lisa Holmes (Social Work & Social Care), Perpetua Kirby (Education), and Brontë McDonald (CIRCY doctoral researcher) will each make a short presentation on an aspect of their research relating to children, childhood and youth.

There will be plenty of time for questions and discussion. Drop by with your cuppa - either face to face or on screen!

• **CIRCY OPEN SEMINAR**

**Monday 14 March 2022 / 4pm (tbc) / Hybrid**

*Intergenerational Child-led Activism*

with Professor Jessica K. Taft

Professor in Latin American and Latino Studies, University of California, Santa Cruz

An Eventbrite invitation will be circulated in advance.

All welcome!
CIRCY made two submissions in November to the Commission on Young Lives Consultation chaired by Anne Longfield, the former Children’s Commissioner for England. This independent year-long commissioning explores possibilities for a new national system of support, focused on preventing crisis and improving the life chances of vulnerable young people at risk of getting into trouble with the law. The first submission was made by Rebecca Webb (Education), Claire Durrant (Social Work & Social Care PhD) and Julia Winstone (Law PhD). They reflected on the ways in which education settings might enhance inclusivity, support progress, and identify and respond positively and proactively to young people who are at risk - including those with poor communication skills and/or special educational needs. The second submission was from Michelle Lefevre, Gillian Ruch and Kristi Hickle (all Social Work & Social Care) on behalf of their collaborative ESRC-funded study, the Innovate Project, which is exploring services for young people experiencing risks beyond the family home - such as sexual and criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, and peer abuse. The CIRCY submission responded to the Commission’s questions about what young people at risk need, who should be protecting them from exploitation and violence, and how responses can be delivered at scale.

Michelle Lefevre, Nathalie Huegler and Jeri Damman (all Social Work & Social Care) presented ‘Transitional Safeguarding: Addressing the gap between child and adult safeguarding to address risks beyond the family home’ to leaders and practitioners from social care, health, education and the police, at the virtual conference ‘Safeguarding Adolescents and Young Adults’ on 3 November 2021.

In January, María Moscati (Law) - along with other activists and academics - hosted a webinar with young people from the African Movement of Working Children and Youth, Act2gether - Bolivia and Apocalypse Now - US. The event looked at several human rights issues and explored how adults and adult-led organisations can better support children and young activists. The video recording of the webinar has been edited, with the help of the young activists, into two short videos that provide insights and advice.

- Generations Together: Children and Youth Working with Adults
- Generations Together: Advice for Adults
AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Hannah Field’s (English) book ‘Playing with the Book: Victorian Movable Picture Books and the Child Reader’ has won the 2022 Justin G. Schiller Prize from the Bibliographical Society of America. The triennial prize, named for the noted dealer in antiquarian books, recognizes bibliographical work on pre-twentieth-century children’s books.

PRESENTING OUR WORK

In September, Maria Moscati – along with Craig Lind and Philip Bremner (all Law) – presented a law reform proposal on birth registration at the Family Law Reform Conference in Birmingham. Their proposal was then submitted to the Law Commission’s consultation on their latest programme of law reform.

CIRCY IN THE MEDIA

A project entitled ‘Hope in the Present’, located in the Global South, funded by the SSRP/IDCF and led by Rebecca Webb and Perpetua Kirby (both Education), was featured in Schools Week in November in a feature headlined: ‘How to tackle climate uncertainty without the anxiety’.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Kristi Hickle and Michelle Lefevre (both Social Work & Social Care) have contributed a chapter on ‘Learning to Love and Trust Again: A Relational Approach to Developmental Trauma’ in Safeguarding Young People: Risk, Rights, Relationships and Resilience. This collection, edited by Dez Holmes from Research in Practice, explores the complexity of contemporary adolescent safeguarding, highlighting evidence-informed practice and innovation for working with and supporting young people facing risk and harm.


Nicola Yuill (Psychology, ChatLab) recently published a new book entitled Technology to Support Children’s Collaborative Interactions: Close Encounters of the Shared Kind. The book examines how technology can support and foster interaction between children and their peers, teachers, and other adults. It covers in particular how technology can support children to collaborate, so helping them to learn and engage positively with the world in both work and play. The book will be of interest to psychologists, educators, those involved in Human–Computer Interaction (HCI), and other practitioners working with children.

KEEP ON BLOGGING!

Check out our latest blog posts!

We are keen to hear from CIRCY members keen to blog about their research at any stage. The blog can be as short as you wish. We welcome blogs on any subject matter from any disciplinary background that take seriously how we listen to, hear, and engage with children and young people.

If you are interested in writing a blog, contact Brontë to discuss further.
DOCTORAL CELEBRATIONS!

CIRCY is delighted to announce two successful PhD passes!

Roma Thomas’ (Social Work & Social Care PhD) thesis, ‘Being and Doing Boy: Marginalised Young Masculinities and Professional Practice’, was examined by Professor Ann Phoenix, University College London, and **Louise Gazeley** (Education) on 7 October. The examiners described the thesis as “a pleasure to read” and “a powerful combination of thought-provoking, rich and important for its commitment to understanding boys’ lived experiences of a Pupil Referral Unit”. The Viva was chaired by **Tish Marrable** (Social Work & Social Care) and Roma was supervised by **Gillian Ruch** and **Rachel Thomson** (both Social Work & Social Care). Roma is a Principal Lecturer in the School of Applied Social Science at the University of Bedfordshire.

**Roma Thomas**  **Claire Durrant**

Claire Durrant (Education PhD)) passed her viva on 20 December for her thesis: ‘I didn’t want to face another day of failing’ - The emotional wellbeing of young people with severe dyslexic difficulties in state mainstream education: social and discursive constructions’. The Viva was chaired by **Julia Sutherland** (Education) and examined by **Liam Berriman** (Social Work & Social Care) and Professor Chrissie Rogers (University of Kent). Claire’s supervisors, **Rachel Thomson** and **Tish Marrable** (both Social Work & Social Care), were both in attendance. Examiners were enthusiastic about Claire’s child-centred approach to her research saying that “it was a really strong viva – it helped to hear so much about the way you see the thesis and the work that’s gone into it”.

WANT TO BECOME A CIRCY MEMBER?

**WHAT IS 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. 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 MEMBERSHIP INVOLVE?**

CIRCY holds lots of events through 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.

GET 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 about CIRCY, contact Brontë McDonald: bm333@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 bids, or other research-related activities, such as networking events or conference attendance.
CIRCY Steering Group

Our Steering Group meets termly to guide and facilitate the work of CIRCY.
This term, we are delighted to welcome Hannah Field (English) to our Steering Group.

Current Steering Group members are:

- Robin Banerjee (Psychology)
- Liam Berriman (Childhood and Youth/Social Work and Social Care)
- Janet Boddy (Education)
- Fiona Courage (Mass Observation Archive/Library)
- Nuno Ferreira (Law)
- Hannah Field (English)
- Kathryn Lester (Psychology)
- Jo Moran-Ellis (Sociology)
- Dorte Thorsen (Geography)
- Pam Thurschwell (English)
- Rebecca Webb (Education)

If your research has the rights, concerns and/or perspective of children and young people at its heart, and you are interested in joining our Steering Group, please contact Michelle. The minimum commitment is to attend a termly Steering Group meeting, and to attend or help facilitate at least one CIRCY event per term.