WELCOME TO THE SUMMER

We do hope that CIRCY members and friends are keeping well and (depending on where you live) starting to enjoy some lovely sunshine.

In this newsletter, we’ll let you know what some of our members got up to during the first part of this year, and set out the programme of events for the summer term.

We have included some information at the end of the newsletter 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.

THIS YEAR’S COMMUNITY ARTS PROJECT

Regular readers of our newsletter will be aware that we conduct a yearly community arts project with children and young people on a specific theme - and then illustrate our annual report with the images. You can see last year’s report here on the theme of ‘Through my window’.

This year, we are asking those aged under 18 to send us their original artworks and poems (or other short writings) on the theme ‘Imagine if our world was ...’. This might be a drawing or painting, a collage or sculpture, a poem or short story, or any other original text (under 100 words please) or art form.

The text or art work can then be uploaded via our online form (for some artworks this may need to be a photograph of the original piece). As many as possible will subsequently be displayed in an online gallery on the CIRCY website.

Everyone whose image is used in CIRCY’s next Annual Report will receive a £10 voucher. The person who created the image which appears on the cover will receive a £20 voucher.

The closing date for image submission is Friday 25 June 2021.
SUMMER TERM EVENTS
We are delighted to invite you to the activities and events we are hosting this term! All will be online and Zoom invitations will be issued in advance.

• CIRCY & CTRL OPEN RESEARCH SEMINAR
  Tuesday 18 May 2021 / 4-5pm
  Income support in Sweden: Facilitating educational opportunities for young people in newly-arrived families from Syria
  Professor Anette Bolin, Department of Social Work & Social Pedagogy, University West, Sweden

In Sweden, many families with children and young people reliant on social assistance—assessed to be among the poorest in the country—have an immigrant background. This presentation is about 36 young people in newly arrived families from Syria and their perceptions about receiving social assistance.

• CIRCY COFFEE & COLLABORATION
  Thursday 27 May 2021 / 3-4pm
  Nathalie Huegler (Social Work and Social Care), Frances Smith (Media and Film) and Martin Spinelli (Media and Film) will each make a short presentation on an aspect of their work relating to children, childhood and youth. Followed by questions and discussion.

• CIRCY READING GROUP
  Wednesday 9 June 2021 / 4-5pm
  Led by Michelle Lefevre (CIRCY Director), Rebecca Webb (CIRCY Co-director) and Loreto Rodriguez (CIRCY PGRA).
  The reading will be “Windrush Child” by Benjamin Zephaniah

In ‘Windrush Child’, Benjamin Zephaniah brings to life an important moment in modern British history, giving voice to the Windrush generation. This novel is the fifth book in the Scholastic Voices series – highlighting the situation and stories behind the myriad of people who have arrived from all over the world to the UK. The book teaches about inclusivity and diversity, and gives voice to a generation of children whose stories had often been overlooked.

RESEARCH, PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Kristi Hickle (Social Work and Social Care) agreed a consultancy contract with Sussex and Surrey Police that will involve – over the next year – training delivery to each entire police force on trauma-informed policing practices. This includes:

1. A series of ten trainings to senior and strategic leads, follow-up focus groups with leadership.
2. The development of a train-the-trainer programme for in-house trauma-informed practice training delivery.
3. Consultation with the communications department and in the development of training materials for new officers.

The Innovate Project, an ESRC-funded collaboration, led by Michelle Lefevre (Social Work and Social Care, CIRCY Director), has now begun fieldwork (online/virtually at present) with six case study sites around the country. These social care organisations and safeguarding networks are innovating to address extra-familial risks and harms faced by young people, such as sexual and criminal exploitation, peer-on-peer abuse, and gang affiliation, using three promising frameworks. Devon Children’s Services and Partners and the charity Safer London are drawing on Contextual Safeguarding, which seeks to intervene directly with groups of young people, and in community spaces where risks have been identified. Brighter Futures for Children in Reading and North Lanarkshire Education and Families Service are implementing a Trauma-informed ethos which emphasises resilience and recovery, and prioritises safety, trust, collaboration, choice, and empowerment. The Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board and Sheffield Children and Families Services are piloting Transitional Safeguarding to support young people experiencing extra-familial risks, as they cross the threshold into adulthood.

The Innovate Project
Researching youth, risk and complexity

Rebecca Webb (Education, CIRCY Co-director) and Perpetua Kirby (Education) have been awarded a grant from the ESW KEF ‘Capacity Building Fund’ to develop their Transform-in Education website to share outputs from their research in the UK and Global South, and to engage site users in further dialogue and knowledge creation about alternative decolonising ‘uncertain’ approaches to sustainability/climate education. They have also been invited to run a workshop on ‘decolonising the climate change curriculum’ at this year’s Brighton & Hove school head teachers conference.
The ‘Our Stories Project’ – funded by ESRC with University of Southampton – led at Sussex by Nicola Yuill (Psychology, ChatLab and ACoRNS), is working with Brighton & Sussex Medical School’s ‘Time for Autism’ programme and the Brighton & Hove ‘Just Right’ emotion regulation programme in schools to co-create digital stories with autistic children and their families, using a strengths-based approach to support transitions in education and healthcare.

Michelle Lefevre is providing consultancy to the research organisation, OpCit, on two projects for the Home Office. The first is aiming to improve understanding of - and intervention work with - young people in high-risk social contexts, such as ‘gangs’ and gang-affected areas, who engage in abusive behaviour within their intimate relationships. The second explores the potential for involving perpetrators’ own parents in interventions to address domestic abuse and coercive control.

ACoRNS Sussex (Autism Community Research Network Sussex) ran an online event on 24 March on re-imagining healthcare in autism which included presentations from parents and practitioners. These were followed by discussion. An ACoRNS blog summarised the discussion. ACoRNS Sussex hosts a monthly Autism Reading Group online for the sharing of ideas on different topics related to autism. Email acorns@sussex.ac.uk to be added to the mailing list and/or follow them on twitter @ACoRNSussex.

Dorte Thorsen (IDS) was one of three presenters at a webinar on ‘Youth Mobility, Security and Livelihoods in West Africa and the Horn’ on 23 February 2021. Dorte spoke specifically about adolescent labour migrants and their entry into the urban labour market.

Loreto Rodriguez (Childhood and Youth) participated in the workshop ‘Researching With Children During Covid-19 Times’, a space of knowledge exchange for researchers in different career and research stages. The workshop was part of the study ‘Changing Research Practices II: Continuing Methods Responses and Research Strategy in Covid-19 Times’ funded by ESRC National Centre of Research Methods.

CIRCY IDEAS IN ACTION

Ideas in Action is a regular event in which colleagues can present new ideas for interdisciplinary feedback and suggestions, eg. a new or reworked bid, book proposals, or plans for knowledge exchange/impact generation. Please let us know if you would like to present your work this term - or if you would like one of the CIRCY team individually to review a bid or advise on work in progress.

MASS OBSERVATION RESEARCH UPDATE

Rebecca Webb (Education, CIRCY Co-Director) and Perpetua Kirby (Education) were delighted to be introduced, by a participant at their autumn CIRCY Ideas in Action seminar, to Dr Michela Villani (University of Fribourg) who has been collecting children’s lockdown letters globally. Together, they are now collaborating on a joint paper for a Children & Society special edition on ‘Children and Young People’s Perspectives on and Experiences of COVID-19 in Global Contexts’. The paper focuses on how children and young people engage in the uncertainty of Covid, drawing on the global letters, plus diaries submitted to the Mass Observation archive during May 2020.

Rebecca and Perpetua will also be presenting their work on the diaries as part of a seminar series on Using Mass Observation’s Covid-19 Collection (15 September 2021). This study informed an Op Ed (Financial Times, 8 March) that they wrote on the educational imperative of engaging with uncertainty, followed by an interview on the west-country local station, Greatest Hits Radio. This generated positive international feedback, including from Nick Robinson (Radio 4’s Today programme) who tweeted that it’s ‘vital’ to learn to deal with uncertainty; and the Governor of the Central Bank of Hungary, György Matolcsy, who wrote a supportive piece emphasising uncertainty for strengthening ‘curiosity, deep thinking, dreams and hopes’.
DOCTORAL RESEARCHERS’ NETWORK

The CIRCY Postgraduate Researchers’ Network meets approximately twice a term to share knowledge and support. Meetings have been co-facilitated by Michelle Lefevre (CIRCY Director), Rebecca Webb (CIRCY Co-director), the CIRCY PGRA, Loreto Rodriguez, and CIRCY doctoral researchers. Topics for discussion have included the important ethical and practical issues to bear in mind in participatory research with children and young people, data analysis, and researching in COVID-19 times.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 1 July at 2pm when the group will consider the different terminologies used to refer to and categorise children and young people - and what implications and impacts these may have.

More details and a Zoom link will be circulated by email to the CIRCY PGR mailing list.

If you are a PhD student at Sussex and you think your work falls under CIRCY’s research areas, please let us know by emailing L.Rodriguez@sussex.ac.uk.

WHO’S WHO?

CIRCY Leadership Team

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

Co-Director:
Rebecca Webb (Education)
E: R.C.Webb@sussex.ac.uk

Postgraduate Research Assistant:
Loreto Rodriguez
E: L.Rodriguez@sussex.ac.uk

CIRCY Steering Group

Our Steering Group meets termly to guide and facilitate the work of CIRCY. We are sad this term to lose Hester Barron due to her other commitments - and Saul Becker with his forthcoming retirement. We thank them for their support and guidance over the past few years. We are delighted, however, that Saul moves over to our external ‘critical friends’ advisory 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)
- Dorte Thorsen (Geography)
- Pam Thurschwell (English)

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.

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.
RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Dorte Thorsen (IDS) has published two open access publications:


The Innovate Project has also now had its first two journal articles accepted for publication, involving Carlie Goldsmith, Michelle Lefevre, Nathalie Huegler and Gillian Ruch (all Social Work and Social Care):


Michelle Lefevre (Social Work and Social Care, CIRCY Director) and Janet Boddy (Education) collaborated with colleagues at Research in Practice and the University of Bedfordshire to draw out the implications of their Department for Education-funded evaluations of Contextual Safeguarding and Pause for their new paper:


Rebecca Webb (Education, CIRCY Co-Director) and Perpetua Kirby (Education) had jointly published two new papers:


KEEP ON BLOGGING

We check out CIRCY’s recent blog posts!

We have published recently two fascinating blogs. The first reflects a CIRCY seminar, delivered in February by Georg Rißler and Martin Bittrner (Europa-Universität Flensburg, Germany), who shared educational research they are undertaking in the Covid-19 pandemic context in Germany. The blog is a vignette of reflective discussion, following on from the event. In it, Martin seeks to locate the broad relevance and applicability of his research more generally in relation to the governance of children’s lives in contexts of schooling practices and the purposes of education more widely.

Most recently, our new blog, ‘A type of forgetting’, from PhD researcher, Martin Brown, discusses academy teachers’ experiences of self-appraisal and some rhetorical questions this raises in relation to children and young people. Martin reflects on how the governance, and associated appraisal processes, of English academy schools might be ‘failing schools, teachers and students’ through a lack of governmental commitment to assessing the benefits (or otherwise) of the current ‘Public Private Partnership’ model of schooling.

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

If you are interested in writing a blog, please contact Rebecca Webb on R.C.Webb@sussex.ac.uk. She is always eager to engage and will give as much/little support with writing and editing as you may wish.

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, 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 bids, or other research-related activities, such as networking events or conference attendance.
OTHER BLOGS

Dorte Thorsen (IDS) and Professor Roy Maconachie (University of Bath) published a new blog on ‘Cocoa Ethics: questions about child labour and social sustainability’ in Evidensia, as part of ACHA (Action on Children’s Harmful Work in African Agriculture) - a 7-year, DFID-funded research programme.

Rebecca Webb and Perpetua Kirby have written a blog, ‘Hope in the Present’, about their current research focusing on creative and deliberative approaches for engaging young people with sustainability-related uncertainties in Ecuador and India.

OTHER EVENTS THAT MIGHT BE OF INTEREST …

• 3RD INTERNATIONAL YOUNG CARERS’ CONFERENCE
  3-6 May 2021

  See the conference website for more information.

• YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND POLITICS SEMINARS

  The Youth Employment and Politics webinar series is linked to IDS’ strategic research initiative: ‘Ensuring decent work and political inclusion for young people’. Upcoming events in this series will take place on 7 and 28 May, and 22 June.

  Visit the IDS website for further information.

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!