



PROJECT SUMMARIES

INTRODUCTION

The Kids in Action network is being established to increase the profile of participatory research with children, to offer local projects increased credibility in their efforts to fund and resource their projects, to provide a platform for shared learning and development of these methods, and a means for generating resources to share with others to support the use of participatory health research with children. There is also scope for the Kids in Action network to be a platform for providing child input into debate about global issues.

It has been established under the auspices of the International Collaboration for Participatory Health Research and is being coordinated by Associate Professor Lisa Gibbs, Director of the Jack Brockhoff Child Health and Wellbeing Program and Co-Chair of the Children's Lives Initiative at the University of Melbourne.

The Kids in Action network was launched end September 2016 and currently has membership on 5 continents.

For further information contact Lisa Gibbs: lgibbs@unimelb.edu.au.



CURRENT MEMBERS

- Professor Tineke Abma, VU University Amsterdam*
- Professor Lala Acharya, Purdue University*#
- Emilie Achermann, PH Zurich University#
- Therese Bauer, PH Zurich#
- Dr Ali Black, University of the Sunshine Coast*
- Femke Boelsma, VU University Amsterdam #
- Professor Irma Brito, Universidade de Cabo Verde*
- Dr Jennifer Cartmel, Griffith University#
- Marilyn Casley, Giffith University#
- Dr Ann Dadich, Western Sydney University*
- Professor Lynn Davies, University of Birmingham*
- Assistant Professor Christine Dedding, VU University Amsterdam*
- Dr Ani Etokidem, University of Calabar*
- Jennifer Fane, Flinders University#
- Dr Anita Franklin, Coventry University#
- Dr Jana Fried, Coventry University*
- Associate Professor Lisa Gibbs, University of Melbourne*#
- Assistant Professor Brenda Gladstone, University of Toronto#
- Dr Jeni Harden, University of Edinburgh*
- Krystyna Kongats, University of Alberta#
- Revathi Krishna, Monash University#
- Dr Maria Magnusson, University of Gothenburg and Angered hospital*
- Katitza Marinkovic, University of Melbourne#
- Dr Siobhan O'Higgins, National University of Galway*
- Dr Margareta Rämgård, Malmo University*
- Associate Professor Gerry Redmond, Flinders University*
- Janine Schrijver#
- Dr Felicity Shenton, Investing In Children#
- Dr Harry Shier, Queens University Belfast*
- Professor Kay Tisdall, University of Edinburgh#
- Professor Fernando Wagner, Morgan State University*

* PHR with Children Working Group

Project Coordinator

CURRENT PROJECTS

Project Name

Children's Views about the Family Place

Project Coordinator

Jennifer Cartmel

Project Location

Logan, Australia

Age Group Involved in Research Decisions

Children (5 years and under)

Project Description

The Family Place is a unique place-based program in Logan that is currently engaging with families through a soft-entry, universal approach to early intervention and prevention. The Family Place is a strengths-based practice where staff and collaborative partners work together to provide multi-level support to families and the community. Families create their own family support programs through purposeful relationships and interactions (TSA CfC L, 2015). The centre is building parental capacity, parents are connecting with other services and families are experiencing a sense of belonging in the community. This is evident from the feedback given by parents in the 2014 evaluations (TSA CfC L, The Griffith Knowledge Partnership & C&K. (n.d.). This project is an opportunity to see feedback from the children who attend.

**Project Name**

Young Edinburgh Action

Project Coordinator

Kay Tisdall

Project Location

Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Age Group Involved in Research Decisions

Children (10-14 years)

Youth (15-25 years)

Project Description

Young Edinburgh Action (YEA), is an innovative approach to implementing City of Edinburgh Council's Young People's Participation Strategy and is informed by the views of young people and professionals, academic theory and the needs of the council.

YEA has developed a partnership with the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships to capture the unique qualities of the practice and share learning about the approach.

YEA addresses issues across children's services, from health to social work to planning.

**Project Name**

Investing in Children

Project Coordinator

Felicity Shenton

Project Location

United Kingdom

Age Group Involved in Research Decisions

Children (14 years and under)

Youth (15-25 years)

Project Description

Investing in Children is a children human rights organisation based in the North East of England. Since 1995 we have been supporting children and young people to carry out research, engage with policy makers and service providers and to help to develop and deliver public services. This includes ongoing work with GP practices, Hospitals (Alder Hey Children's Hospital, University Hospital of North Durham, RVI Newcastle), Clinical Commissioning Groups and NHS providers. We have working groups, i.e. groups of children and young people, that meet on a regular basis to help to shape health services. We have a group that meets to shape service for children with Type 1 Diabetes (T1KDZ), the eXtreme Group which is a group of disabled children and young people and also work with mental health services.

In addition to this we support children and young people to engage with research and evaluation of one-off health projects (County Durham School Nursing Service, North East Orthodontics Services, Queens Nursing Institute Teen Transition Project, County Durham and Tees Valley Better Health Programme.) We have developed child-led research tools that ensure that children and young people can carry out their own research.

CURRENT PROJECTS CONT.

Project Name

VIPER - Voice, Inclusion, Participation, Empowerment, Research

Project Coordinator

Anita Franklin

Project Location

England

Age Group Involved in Research Decisions

Children (10-14 years)

Youth (15-25 years)

Project Description

VIPER (voice, inclusion, participation, empowerment and research) was a three-year project funded by the UK Big Lottery Fund to research young disabled people's participation in decisions about services. The project was delivered by a consortium that included the Council for Disabled Children, National Children's Bureau, The Children's Society and the Alliance for Inclusive Education and a team of disabled young researchers (the VIPERS) recruited specifically to the project. We set out to research disabled children and young people's participation in decision-making about local services with the aim to improve services used by disabled children and young people in England.

The ethos of this project started with the principle that all young disabled people have the same rights as young non-disabled people to participate in decisions and issues that affect them. A rights based approach challenges the view that young disabled people need extra care and protection that would be considered unacceptable for non-disabled young people. This view disempowers young disabled people and limits their right to choice and control in their lives.

A key principle for this research and the partnership was the social model of disability and all project activities adopted this approach. A social model of disability approach places the responsibility of removing the barriers with society and NOT with the young disabled person. This has meant that the research focused on identifying and removing the attitudinal, physical, economic and social barriers that prevent young disabled people from participating in decision making. These barriers are created by negative attitudes in society towards people with impairments or differences.

The project involved a large research programme. We reviewed existing research, carried out a consultation exercise with organisations working with disabled children and young people to look at current practices, and undertook in depth case studies using focus-groups and interviews with disabled young people and professionals to explore how disabled young people can successfully and meaningfully participate in decision-making about services, organisations and policies. All of the Viper researchers were given opportunities to take part in all aspects of the research and a choice about how much or how little they got involved in each stage of the project. For a small minority, attending the meetings was all that they wanted to do. But for most, they chose to do much more and we tailored opportunities to their individual interests. All Vipers stayed involved in the project from beginning to end, a period of three years commitment.

**Project Name**

Using photovoice to explore the experience of young carers

Project Coordinator

Krystyna Kongats

Project Location

Toronto, Canada

Age Group Involved in Research Decisions

Children (10-14 years)

Project Description

Young carers are typically between the ages of 5-18 years of age who provide care for a family member such as a parent, sibling or grandparents who may be experience a chronic or life-limiting illness, disability, addiction or mental illness. Young carers are a relatively hidden yet large population in Canada; it is estimated that 12% of young people are young carers. Young carers provide practical, personal and emotional support that can have positive benefits on the young carer, however these responsibilities can also have negative impacts on young people's health, safety and development. This burden is not about the amount of responsibility and care young carers provide, but it is about how they are affected by it. [Organization name] is one of the few organizations to provide recognition and support for the young carer's role. The Young Carers Program aims to improve the well-being of young carers by relieving stress, anxiety and hopelessness, increase self-esteem, and decrease stigma by connecting with other young carers, hence decreasing isolation. The goal of this proposed participatory research is (1) to explore the experience of what it is like to be a young carer and (2) to assess the impacts of the Young Carers Program (YCP) from the perspective of YCP members. To achieve this goal, we will conduct a participatory photovoice project with young carers. Photovoice is a method that combines photography and storytelling to explore a particular issue, in this case the experience of young carers. YCP members will be invited to participate in a project over the course of 3 months to creatively share their story and shine light on some initial impacts of the YCP program. The findings from this research will raise awareness about young carers as well as identify ways community organizations can support young carers.

CURRENT PROJECTS CONT.

Project Name

Child Reporters Initiative

Project Coordinator

Lalatendu Acharya

Project Location

Koraput/ Orissa, India

Age Group Involved in Research Decisions

Children (10-14 years)

Project Description

Child Reporters Initiative (CRI) is framed within the concept of child participation and the guiding philosophy to create a platform for children's voices and listen to them. Using participatory methods, involving local community volunteers, the CRI is led by children studying in different government and other schools in Koraput, a district in the Orissa, India home to predominant tribal populations. The child participation project was conceived in 2004/5 is continuing with different iterations and programmatic adjustments.

**Project Name**

KLIK

Project Coordinators

Janine Schrijver

Femke Boelsma

Project Location

Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Age Group Involved in Research Decisions

Children (6-9 years)

Children (10-14 years)

Project Description

In the Netherlands a project named KLIK (an acronym which translates into Children Learn Inventive Power) started in July 2015. In KLIK photos play an important role to help children to explore their life-style and their neighbourhood. KLIK therefore stands for the click of the camera as well as for the click between the child and his/her environment. KLIK is a participatory action research project, which aims to improve the health and resilience of children living in a disadvantaged neighbourhood. Ideas and plans are developed to promote the health of children through partnerships and participation of children and other stakeholders/partners from the neighbourhood. The experiences of children are the base of the bottom-up health promotion, and photography is the common thread throughout the process.

KLIK employs activities on three levels: home, school and the neighbourhood.

**Project Name**

Talking Circles

Project Coordinator

Marilyn Casley

Project Location

Various, Australia

Age Group Involved in Research Decisions

Children (6-9 years)

Children (10-14 years)

Project Description

The Talking Circles were designed to encourage children to ask questions about their lives and how they can make a difference for themselves, each other and their community (Carmel & Casley 2014). They are based on thinking about learning as a process of awareness and community building, providing opportunities for conversations with children about their ideas and perspectives. The process is underpinned by the notion of generative listening (Scharmer, 2009)- listening to oneself, listening to others , and listening to what emerges from the group. Through the process of listening to and talking with one another, children made connections and established relationships with each other and the adults involved. The findings from the Talking Circle project illuminated thinking about the knowledge and skills required to build relationships between adults and children and between children.

It has been proposed to use Talking Circles as an evaluation tool to gather children's perspectives on programs and delivery of services for them.

CURRENT PROJECTS CONT.

Project Name

Lost in Transition: An investigation into children's understandings and experiences of wellbeing during the transition to school

Project Coordinator

Jennifer Fane

Project Location

Adelaide, Australia

Age Group Involved in Research Decisions

Children (5 years and under)

Project Description

While there are numerous international conceptualisations and measures designed to identify or assess young children's wellbeing, no current frameworks or instruments have taken young children's voices and experiences of wellbeing into account. As the UNCRC upholds children's right to have their opinions taken into account in matters that affect them, this project seeks to understand how young children experience and understand wellbeing, and if their conceptualisations differ from those of adults. This project has two stages, a preliminary study which sought to identify how young children experience and understand their own wellbeing, and a longitudinal study which will track child wellbeing using child identified indicators of wellbeing across the transition to school. Both stages of the project have used emoji as a child-centred visual research method to elicit children's voices within childhood research.

**Project Name**

Children's Rights and their Relationship with their Environment

Project Coordinator

Katitza Marinkovic

Project Location

Kinglake and Anglesea, Victoria, Australia

Age Group Involved in Research Decisions

Children (6-9 years)

Children (10-14 years)

Youth (15-25 years)

Project Description

This project aims to learn about children's experiences as active agents of change and their relationship with their environment, in communities that have been affected by bushfires or are at-risk.

There is a wide consensus across international research, public policy, and community organizations, about the importance of listening to children's and youth's voices about their unique experiences with their environment, including those related to events such as natural disasters. Their active participation is a fundamental aspect for the development of resilient communities and the promotion of health and wellbeing, specially regarding effective strategies that seek to protect their rights and address their problems and needs in an effective way.

Because this initiative corresponds to the first stage of a PhD research project, the first year will consist of immersing in two communities that have been affected by or are at risk of bushfires: Anglesea and Kinglake. Therefore, the first objective will be to construct links and share with children and youth involved in initiatives such a Youth Fire Brigades and others that are related both to children's rights and their relationship to their environment, and where children have an active role. However, collaboration with participants from other contexts and places is also one of this project's interests.

Finally, it's important to mention that this project's focus will lay primarily on children's relationship with their environments, in the way that they decide to approach this issue. Therefore, the topic of natural disasters will only be directly addressed if it's proposed by the children themselves, as a way of respecting their right to decide how to approach their relationship with the environment and to share experiences and feelings that might generate any kind of distress.

CURRENT PROJECTS CONT.

Project Name

Disaster, Poverty and Coping

Project Coordinator

Revathi N. Krishna

Project Location

Chennai, India

Age Group Involved in Research Decisions

Children (6-9 years)

Children (10-14 years)

Youth (15-25 years)

Project Description

People living in poverty are particularly vulnerable to the effects of disasters, with long-term economic, health, and mental health consequences (Dercon, 2004; Carter, Peter, Tewodaj, & Workneh, 2007; Galea, Tracy, Norris, & Coffey, 2008). Children exposed to disasters can be particularly vulnerable and have different needs from adults due to many factors including their age (Peek, 2008), loss of perceived safety, an inability to make sense of the world, and loss of important attachment figures (Norris, Friedman, & Watson, 2002).

Recently, I conducted a systematic review on how children and families living in poverty in the Asia Pacific region cope with disasters. The review (currently under consideration at a journal) highlighted the lack of inclusion of children as active participants despite the established evidence to include them in the disaster risk reduction (Ronan, Crellin, & Johnston, 2010; Ronan & Johnston, 2005; Wachtendorf, Brown, & Nickle, 2008) and related policy and planning dialogues. Only three studies of the 26 studies included for the systematic review included children as participants. Hence, the aim of this PhD research will be to understand the experience of children and families living in poverty in preparing and coping with disasters. It is their active participation that will shape the project and provide an understanding of their experience and answer some of the research questions laid out for the project.

The specific research questions I aim to answer in my PhD are:

1. How do families living in poverty teach / talk to their children about disasters, preparedness and recovery?
2. What are children's experiences of disasters when they are living in poverty?
3. What are the coping strategies that these children use to prepare, cope and recover from disasters?
4. Would interventions that focus on building problem solving skills and resilience generally in children (including discussion on disasters) would aid children in coping with disasters more effectively?
5. What are the active ingredients in a resilience building intervention that aides children who live in poverty to cope with many life adversities including disasters?
6. What are the differences between children and families experience in preparing and coping with disasters while living in poverty in India and Australia?

**Project Name**

Children as contributors

Project Coordinator

Lisa Gibbs

Project Location

Victoria, Australia

Age Group Involved in Research Decisions

Children (6-9 years)

Children (10-14 years)

Youth (15-25 years)

Project Description

Our aim is to explore the extent and nature of child contribution in their daily lives and how this is experienced at different ages. Children will be co-researchers in a partnership study with local schools, sporting clubs and ABC children's program - Behind the News to co-generate new findings and identify new directions for promoting child wellbeing and resilience.

Specifically, we are planning to:

1. Work with Behind the News to synthesise the results of their first Happiness Survey
2. Conduct research workshops with children in 4 diverse partner schools (bush, beach, city & suburbs) and youth at 2 partner sporting clubs with diverse membership to see how they respond to the survey results, and identify additional survey questions to provide insights into child experiences as contributors in their daily lives
3. Literature review to inform framing of the extra questions and analysis of results
4. Provide Behind the News with the child and evidence-informed additional questions for their 2017 survey.
5. Engage children in the partner schools and sporting clubs in analysing and reporting the new survey results (e.g. through the Behind the News Rookie Reporter segment)
6. Engage children/youth in partner schools and sporting clubs in the development of a proposal for change that will guide further work in promoting child wellbeing and resilience in Australia and offsetting the impact of adversity.

CURRENT PROJECTS CONT.

Project Name

Well-being of 8 to 10 year old children

Project Coordinator

Emilie Achermann

Theres Bauer

Project Location

Zurich, Switzerland

Age Group Involved in Research Decisions

Children (6-9 years)

Children (10-14 years)

Youth (15-25 years)

Project Description

The project is realized with a group of ca. 20 students at the Zurich University of Teacher Education. The project looks to answer the following questions: What do children understand by well-being? When do they feel well? What contributes to their well-being? Can they contribute actively to feeling well?

The project is based on the photovoice method: Children are given disposable cameras and asked to take pictures of situations and locations where they feel well. The pictures then serve as stimuli for qualitative interviews carried out by the students. The interviews are transcribed and analyzed. The results are communicated to other students of the Zurich University of Teacher Education and to teachers.

Until further notice the project takes place every year.

**Project Name**

(Co) Producing Help-Seeking Narratives with Children of Parents with Mental Illnesses

Project Coordinator

Brenda Gladstone

Project Location

Toronto, Canada

Age Group Involved in Research Decisions

Children (10-14 years)

Youth (15-25 years)

Project Description

Recent estimates suggest that 12.1 % of all Canadian children under 12 have a mentally ill parent. In this complex and under-served area little is known about how young people manage the challenges they encounter and respond to services they do receive, or how they would like to be supported in this context. We studied children's help seeking narratives using an arts-based participatory research approach posited to foster critical reflection and facilitate expression and communication about (often sensitive) aspects of experience. A second objective was to examine how young people acquire further competencies and skills through guided participation and active engagement in the research process, documenting the process of arts-based knowledge production throughout the study.

The study was designed to go beyond identifying children's problems, to examine possible solutions they identify as important and to provide information that would benefit knowledge users and decision makers because their views would help to determine how to do things differently in practice. Methods: Ten young people (13-18 yrs.) currently receiving community-based mental health services participated in the project. Participants worked work as a group longitudinally over the course of the study, guided by adult facilitators to clarify study objectives and research questions; produce 2-3 minute digital stories consisting of visual imagery and a sound-track, including voice-over narration; analyze study data; provide feedback on project findings; and, recommend knowledge translation strategies to reach and engage particular audiences. Participant observation and informal interviewing methods enabled documentation of project activities and participant engagement in the research process. Results: In addition to gaining skills through the digital storytelling process, young people want their stories to be used to educate and provoke audiences. They are keen to think about how their stories might impact others and embrace the idea that knowledge has the power to incite change. At the same time, participants are fully aware of the risk associated with sharing stories. The pity look for example, articulates an unhelpful response by other people to stories of vulnerability. The (re) action of others is consequential for young people who interpret responses like this as people shoving off what you are saying, deciding it may be better not to talk about the challenges they experience.