Reimagining schooling from the perspectives of marginalised children and young people

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THE CENTRE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S PARTICIPATION
www.uclan.ac.uk/cypp
The big themes...

- Schooling
- Teaching
- Schooling and parenting practices (by children and adults)
- Wellbeing and happiness
- Individual Psychology
- Participation
- Growth

- Education
- Caring
- Relatively enduring relations of inequality
- Self-determined goals
- Social Context
- Protest
- De-Growth
What is schooling/education for?

European, national, government and parental expectations of educational achievement e.g.

**EU COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION 22.5.18: quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning**

- To allow ... **successful transitions in the labour market**.... jobs being subject to automation, technologies
- To ensure ‘**resilience and ability to adapt to change**...such as ... ability to cooperate, creativity, computational thinking, self-regulation ... essential ... in our quickly changing society...
- To promote ...‘**a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship** ... cultural diversity ... sustainable development’.
Education and Citizenship

• Actual citizens not learners (New Zealand 1939)
• Live citizenship rights, responsibilities, etc – education a responsibility more than right
• Parents modelling ‘good citizenship’ contributes to attainment (Desforges and Abouchaar 2003:85-7)
• ‘Good’ is a reflection of dominant values
• Children may have other values
Questioning the data

- 10 studies from 2003-2019
- Qual interviews and focus groups with 1250 children and young people aged 3-25
  - What are they saying about aspirations in educational settings?
  - How does this relate to notions of citizenship?
  - Do their aspirations meet or contradict dominant expectations and notions of schooling and citizenship?
The Studies

2003-4  *Listen Up* = repeat focus groups in Wales with 178 children aged 9-15 years

2007-2011 *Children Citizenship and Europe* = repeat action research groups in Wales and France with 55 children aged 5-15 years

2009 *Generations for the Future* = consultation events and questionnaires with 100 children and young people (GRT) aged 3-22 years

2012 *We want people to see things our way* = interviews and focus groups with 78 children and young people (disabled) aged 4-24 years

2012-14 *Safeguarding Teenage Intimate Relationships* = Questionnaires (2500) and interviews (90) with 11-17 year-olds in UK, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Italy and Norway

2013-16 *The Children’s Parliament* = interviews with 27 children aged 7-12 years and 8 professionals in Finland

2014-16 *Participation and Empowerment Experiences for Roma youth* = Action research groups with 550 x 8-21 year olds in 9 EU countries (inc UK and France)

2014-2017 *Stories to Connect with* = 62 x 10-24 year olds and 12 adults in UK and France

2018 *Brexit* = briefing events about participation and Brexit with 36 x 3-20 year olds in socio-economically deprived areas of England.

2017-19 *J-UK* = focus groups & interviews with 100 x 10-25 year olds (disabled) in England and Japan
“reflexivity can be conceived as three gossamer walls through which researchers construct knowledge from within three sets of relationships, including relations with:

• oneself (and the ghosts that haunt us);
• ... research participants; and
• ... one’s readers, audiences, and epistemological communities.” Doucet 2009
Findings
– Self-defined goals in educational settings

1. Peer relationships
2. Relationships with teaching staff
3. Inclusion and diversity
4. Relevant learning opportunities
5. Punishment and privacy
6. Participation
Peer relationships

• Bullying by peers continues as does stigma
• Factors underlying bullying (inc. cyberbullying) are race-, class- disability- and gender-related discrimination
• These are relatively enduring structural features in our societies not just in childhood
• *Friendship promotes/is element of wellbeing*

ASPIRATION: the absence of bullying and presence of friendship and positive peer relationships.
Relationships with teaching staff

ASPIRATION: Positive learning environments ... this requires teaching staff, with the right attitudes and support systems
Inclusion and diversity

- Ethnic identities were not respected or understood by all teachers
- Culture not represented in the curriculum
- Parental confidence in the school

FILM

ASPIRATION: Recognition and respect for cultural expressions and ethnic differences ... AND enough workers who understand these issues and systems that enable long term trusting relationships with parents.

"Sometimes teachers treat us badly and judge people’s religions, also don’t give an opportunity like ‘who wants to run an errand’ and they look at you and say ‘Definitely not you. I don’t trust you’ and people feel completely unmotivated."

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University of Central Lancashire

School of Social Work Care and Community
Relevant learning opportunities

‘Children would go to school more if they learnt things that they wanted to learn about’

• Curriculum irrelevant to (only?) disabled and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children

“Would we be able to attend European Universities with ease, post Brexit?“

ASPIRATION: Personalised education provision and opportunities for learning across borders
"If someone does something wrong our teacher normally keeps the whole class in, even when she knows who did it."

"One teacher … kicked someone in the back of his chair just because he didn’t understand what was going on."

"You’ve got to go downstairs to reception, which is really embarrassing, to get toilet paper – we’ve never had toilet paper since we’ve been in this school."

Fairness, status, equality between generations
Participation?

- Wish to be heard, taken seriously and to be part of designing the solutions to the problems they were encountering
- Not labouring for other people’s goals

When the teacher at school drinks her coffee, although we are hungry, really hungry. It's that she has the right to drink at school and we don't, nor to eat!

- Actions and Acts of Citizenship
Forms of Child Citizenship

- Citizenship is lived - the experience of rights, responsibilities and inclusion/exclusion
- Citizenship needs to be reclaimed for the marginalised
- Different ways children’s actions relate to citizenship

Children lead activism

For example, in Hungary, in 2016 students protested against the public education system and in Lithuania, the Pupil's Union campaign was successful in reducing the number of final exams taken by school pupils. In Spain, and in other examples across Europe, Roma children...
IMPLICATIONS

1. Less about what education would enable them to achieve in their future - more about what it feels like in the present.

2. Capability Approach

3. Citizenship

4. ... fear of climate change and terrorism
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<td>Participation in public and social life</td>
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<td>Leisure activities</td>
<td>Working together with other citizens with autonomy</td>
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<td>Time-autonomy</td>
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<td>Mobility</td>
<td>Autonomy to follow goals and freedom of movement</td>
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<td>Identity, Expression and Self-respect</td>
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Parental CITIZENSHIP

• Actions of citizenship and Acts of citizenship
• What actions and Acts of citizenship should parents be modelling in order to promote the wellbeing of children, as defined by children’s list of capabilities?
• Citizenship is a two-way relationship. There is less talk of state’s responsibilities towards citizens – but also need to look beyond nation!
Conclusion

• Engage in public debate with children through which they can define well-being.

• Work in partnership with them – not making them solely responsible for their own well-being.

• Provide information and the space to reflect so that they can formulate plans, control budgets and scrutinise the implementation of co-designed services.

• This would also meet societal needs (and some of the EU’s concerns) - an environment in which individuality is valued, creativity is enabled, fairness is experienced in the moment and shared goals for sustainable futures are identified and pursued.