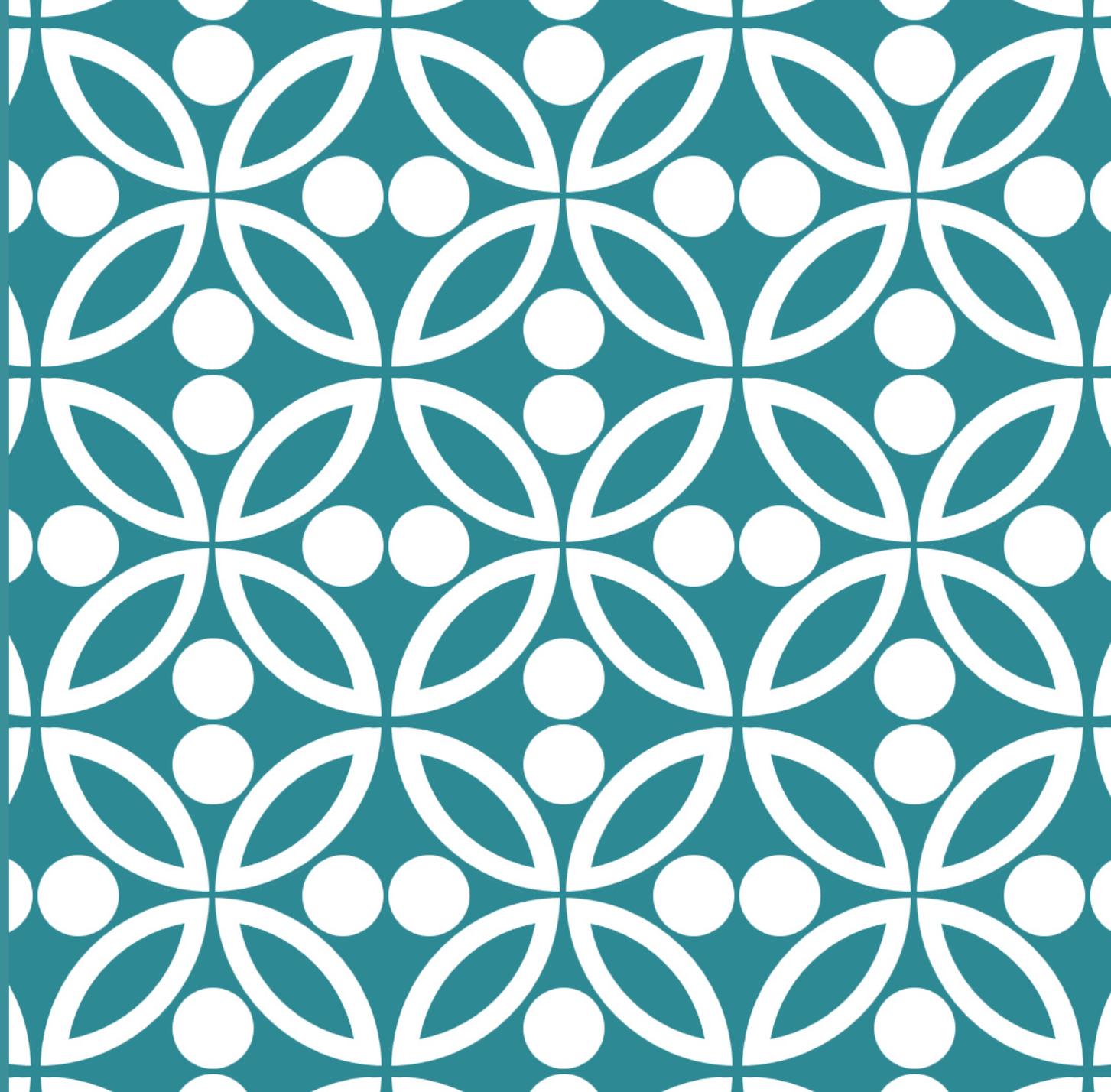


USING RAP AS A CREATIVE METHOD IN RESEARCH WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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SESSION OUTLINE



Project Background



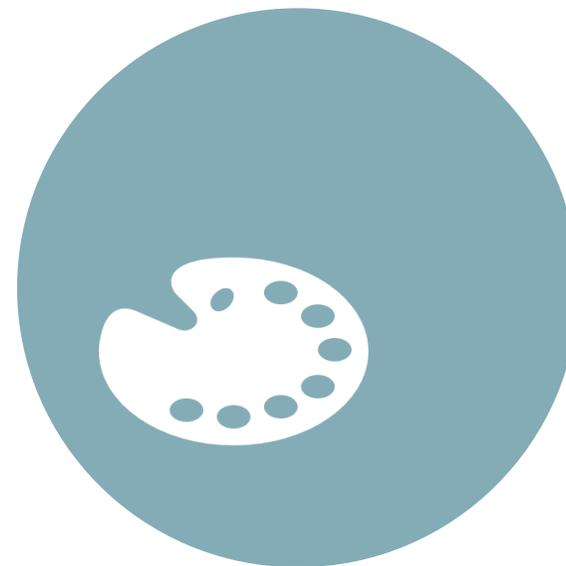
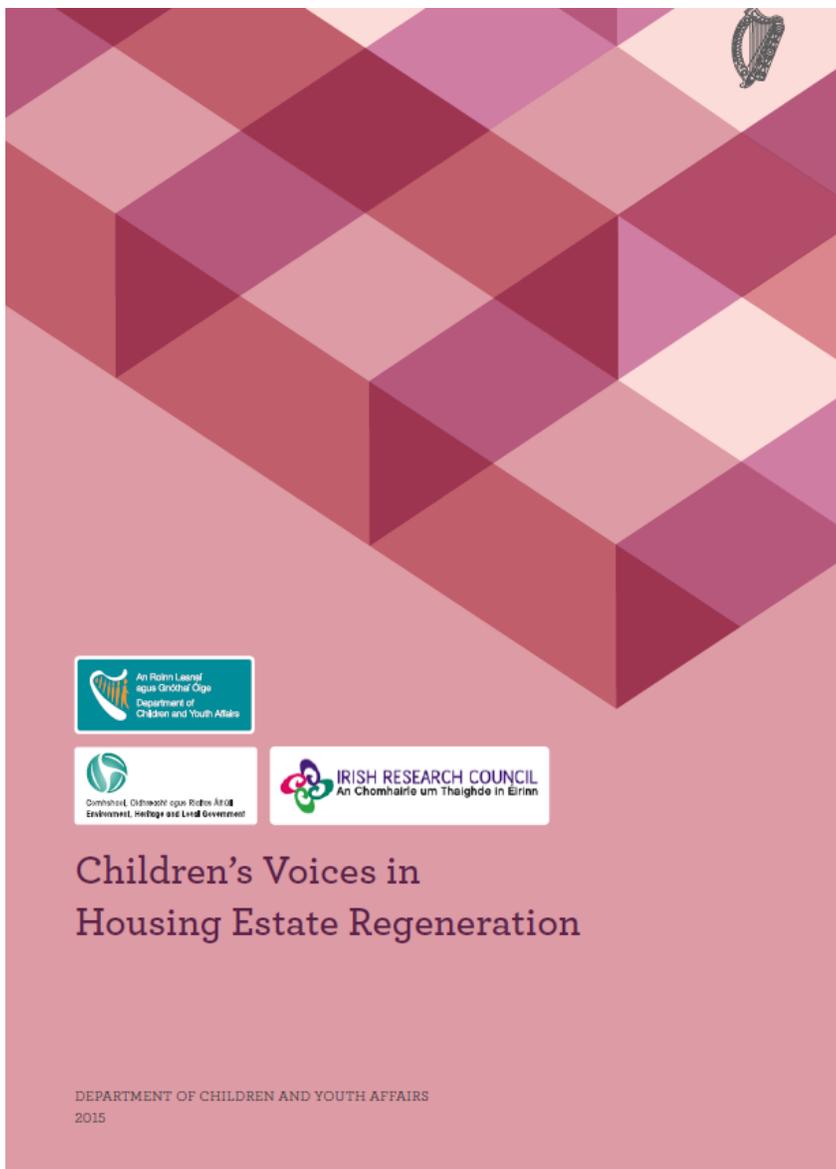
Creative Methods and Rap



Methodology



Findings and Conclusions



PROJECT BACKGROUND

What are the views of children and young people in Knocknaheeny, Cork City on the regeneration of their estate?

PROJECT PUBLICATIONS

- Byrne L., O'Connell C., & 'Sullivan S. (2019) 'Rap and Political Participation: Using Rap as a Creative Method in Research with Children and Young People'. *Young*, 28 (1): 50-68.
- O'Sullivan, S., O'Connell, C., and Byrne, L. (2020) "'Listen to What We Have to Say": Children and Young People's Perspectives on Urban Regeneration'. *Social Inclusion*, 8 (3):77-87, available on <https://www.cogitatiopress.com/socialinclusion/article/view/2884>
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Article

Rap and Political Participation: Using Rap as a Creative Method in Research with Children and Young People

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Abstract

This article explores how rap music workshops can be an effective method when researching neighbourhood regeneration and refurbishment with children and young people, especially in disadvantaged communities. The article draws a research with 78 children and young people in a large social housing estate which is undergoing regeneration and refurbishment in Cork City in the South of Ireland. The focus of this article is on a sub-group of six teenagers who participated in a rap workshop. The research demonstrates that rap music workshops are an insightful data collection method, particularly in contexts where rap music is already an embedded part of the local youth culture. This research also reveals how children and young people have the imaginative capacity to make an informed analysis of their communities and that they hold a strong desire to influence the decision-making process. This article will be of interest to researchers concerned with creative methodologies designed to elicit and understand children's and young people's experiences and perspectives.

Keywords

Rap, participation, research, regeneration, children, young people, creative methods

CREATIVE METHODS

Complement other methods.

Help facilitate people to express dimensions of their experiences and views that they may find difficult to do through interviews and focus group discussions solely.



CREATIVE RESEARCH METHODS IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

A practical guide

Helen Kara





RAP MUSIC

Rap, a conduit for political discourse, is often orientated toward critique and oppositional political messages (Neal, 2004).

It has been embraced by educationalists and youth and community workers as a way of reaching out to marginalised youth (Harris, 2013) and raising consciousness about issues affecting their communities (Allen, 1996).

While rap is also a contested practice with concerns over its labelling as the ‘music of marginalized groups of people’ (Ringsager, 2017: 81), it can offer a:

‘means to enhance their [young people’s] emotional expression and development, and as a way of supporting their participation as active members within their community’ (Dickens & Lonie, 2012: 60).



METHODOLOGY

Multiple/mixed methods to ascertain children and young people views and experiences of regeneration:

- Ten focus groups involving 78 children and young people held over the Spring and Summer of 2013.
- Creative methods included rap, photovoice and art.

THE WHEEL & ART



Park Swings are
broken



PHOTOVOICE



STEPS IN THE RAP PROJECT

- The project engaged a well-known local rapper, GMC, who worked with 6 young people (3 male, 3 female) aged 14-16 over a period of three days in a temporary recording studio in the estate.
- A local youth worker was also present who offered encouragement and support to the rappers.
- The group started by workshopping 'The Wheel'.
- Each rapper then worked on their own lyrical section that was collectively combined into a single composition with support from GMC, the youth worker and two project researchers through a process of continuous dialogue.

Researcher: How's it going Magic?

Magic: It's not.

Researcher: What are you trying to say now?

Magic: I don't know what to say.

Researcher: What about the wheel (pointing to the wheel on the wall), you were the one that said Knocknaheeny has a bad name and it's largely untrue.

Magic: Yea, but she is after writing about that.

Youth worker: But you can say it in your own way.

GMC: What do people think about Knocka?

Magic: That it's full of Feens.

(Everybody in the room laughs)

GMC: So say something about that.

Lyric by Magic:

*But what do ya see when you
look at me, A young teen or a
feen from Knocknaheeny?*

'DEAL WITH IT'

Verse 1 by Magic

The creation of this regeneration is making
A new Knocka nation. We're patiently waiting
For the restoration of our community
We can change what others have to say and have to see.
But what do ya see when you look at me
A young teen or a feen from Knocknaheeny?
Our place it's known as a disgrace
People haven't took the time to see our real face.
As youths we need to be seen and heard
Our questions we need to be answered and not ignored.
So what you gonna to improve Knocknaheeny?
Have you a magic wand or are you just a genie?

Listen on:

<https://soundcloud.com/gmcworkshops/sets/knocknaheeny-regeneration-ucc/>



Verse 4 by Reputations and Masterplan

Think of all the families being separated
Is that what you mean when we're regenerated?
How would you feel if you were kicked out of home?
Moving somewhere else where you feel all alone.
We know Knocka has a bad reputation
But there is no need for a mass evacuation.
Shades [police] moves us on when we're only hanging around.
People stealing, stabbing, dealing, that's what's really going down.
Stop stopping Bonna [Bonfire] night it's only our tradition.
Why bother saying it, ye're not going to listen.
Horses in estates they're a state, they're neglected.
But others are ok, leave 'em alone just accept it.
We know that there's issues that need to be dealt with.
But your masterplan never asked us SHHHH!
It doesn't matter though about what we think.
Why's it always the youth are the missing link?

Bridge 3 by Magic

The things you say should be gone,
We think they're grand, But you got it all wrong.
So deal with it, Deal with it
Just deal with it, Deal with it.

CONCLUSIONS

- ❖ Children and young people have the imaginative capacity to make an informed analysis of their communities and they hold a strong desire to influence the decision-making process.
- ❖ Rap music workshops are an insightful data collection method, particularly in contexts where rap music is already an embedded part of the local youth culture.
- ❖ Rap also helps address the concern that research about children and young people is generally conducted from adult perspectives and seeks to redress this imbalance with the essence of the method based on the autonomy and agency of the child (Hearn and Thomson, 2014).
- ❖ As a result of the research, the Irish government's *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making* (which is guided by Article 12 of the UNCRC) states that:

‘local authorities will integrate local children and young people’s participation into Housing Regeneration Programmes funded under the National Regeneration Programme’ (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2015, p. 40).

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