

# Experience and aspirations for how we live citizenship

## Children, Citizenship and Europe:

Listening to marginalized children in Wales and France



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**The Centre** for researching  
children and young people's  
participation and empowerment

# Context

**EU Policy**      Communication Towards a children's rights strategy  
(2006)

NGOs doing UNCRC based lobbying

Right/need for marginalised children's voices to be heard

## Wider lens than the UNCRC

**“Seeing children through the lens of their citizenship gives a very different picture of their place in the social world. Here they are recognised as young people with strengths and competencies.”** (Neale 2004: 8)

## What is children's citizenship?

**Are children potential, actual or different citizens?**

**If we claim actual citizenship, what is that?**

(e.g. Cockburn 1998; Invernizzi and Williams 2008;  
Lister 2008; Moosa-Mitha 2005)

**What** should **citizenship** mean?

# Bit of a difficult question!

Although no fixed content there are ...  
a combination of the elements (or building blocks)

rights, responsibilities, status/respect, participation  
and membership

(Delanty 2000, Lister 2008).

This research uses these building blocks and asks...  
What do marginalised children think citizenship  
should mean?

because citizenship can be an exclusionary concept

# Who

## 6 Children's Participatory Action Research Groups

- Gypsy Travellers
- Young Carers
- Disabled Children

Save the Children, Barnardos and Swansea Council supported the Wales groups' action.

- Looked After Group
- Minority Ethnic Group
- Refugees

Small, local French association supported by me.

**55 children, aged 5-13**

Numbers varied as freedom to consent and withdraw consent

50% of children in Wales, 50% in France.  
65% were girls and 35% were boys.

# What we did

Usually met 5 times in school, residential and play settings

- Data generation,
- Data review (coding),
- Further data collection,
- Analysis
- Prioritising

Produced action focused group reports and videos for local, national and EU lobbying

## Through co-created activities:

- Performance
- Art
- Group discussions
- Site Tours
- Video and photo

**Things are better now since we did that talking together**

## **"It's like racism to us. Stop them calling us names."**

We talked about belonging and being different and the children shared their experiences of being stared at and insulted as they walk about in town; bus drivers shouting at them and their family; and other children people picking fights with them in school and as they are going home. It is not always like this for everyone, but they had all had some of these experiences some of the time.

These are some of the things they said:

"We gets treated differently because we Travellers ... they call us names."

"Yeah they call us stinking gypos. "

"You just walk around and they look at you. They just look at you weird."

"And then when they see you they go behind your back and they whisper."

"One time when I was walking home from school...these gorgies [non Gypsies] came up to me and pushed me over and started kicking me and stuff."

### **We're different**

A Gypsy Traveller representative who was with us during some of the research asked how the children would try to change people's minds, to let people know they're not like others think. These were their ideas:

"I'd say I'm not [a Gypsy]."

"But you can't say you're not when you is."

"Say I'm just like you. If other people are there, say I'm just like them. We've just got..."

"Different names"

"Yeah we're the same like them just we live in trailers."

"We're different."

"They've got different ways to us."

"And we've got different accents."

"and there's just something different about us."

### **We're the same**

Although some of these children live differently from others, they want people to realise that they are people just the same as well. So I asked them how they're the same and this is some of what they said:

some of what they said:

"We go to the same school as them. We eat the same."

"We look the same."

"We don't look the same but we're the same people the same."

"We're in the same class as them."

"We've all the



same children's rights"

"We do the same things we've just got different ways of doing it."

"Say we goes home from school, say they goes home from school and looks the door, we goes home from school and pulls away."

### **What can I do to stop people calling gypsies names?**

When the children did a play about name-calling, a teacher was asked to play the role of policeman and to take the offenders away. This seems like an example they'd like adults to follow to do something to stop people from calling Gypsies and Travellers names. Here are some more ideas:

1. Teach people that Gypsies are the same as other people they just live differently.
2. If people don't stop calling names and picking fights – stop them or sue them.

# What I've done since

Preliminary exploration of their 421 codes for Rights, Respect, Responsibilities, Choice and Change

Attempted to:

See beyond my starting points: UNCRC

Say that citizenship for these children is about these Rights, Responsibilities, Respect?

**Looking for behaviours, experiences and processes**

# Findings

## Behaviours and Experiences

Activities

Principles and Values

Emotions

## Processes

Contribution

Decision Making

Distribution

**What was the activity experienced or aspired to more than any other?**

# Citizenship Activities

Experienced or aspired by  
which groups?

All groups

Play
Creative Leisure Sporting activities
Education
Working (including education)
Having or being with family / friends
Construct identity/self/space
Communication
Caring

Experiencing Safety
Travel
Relaxing

All but Young  
Carers

By Young  
Carers

# Citizenship Principles or Values (also activities)

Experienced or aspired to

By all groups

Being nice and kind
Helping
Decision Making
Recognition
Caring
Communicating

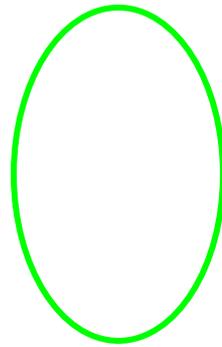
By at least 4 groups

Respect	Not DC
No Violence or Bullying	Not DC
Non-discrimination /Equal/Same	Not LA
Politeness	Not DC or Ref

By 1 or 2 groups

Honesty	ME, LA
Generosity	ME, DC
Acceptance	ME, LA
Reward	GT
Privacy	LA

# Citizenship Emotions



# Citizenship Emotions

## Explored by certain groups

Feel secure in a home	Ref, LA
Feel secure in another setting	GT, DC
Experience affection	LA, ME, DC
Feel Happy	ME, DC

Are these preliminary differences in experience or aspiration a matter of coding, perspective or what?

# Citizenship Processes

Reflected in all the groups

<b>Process</b>	<b>Components</b>	<b>Link to ideas of Citizenship</b>
<b>Contribution</b>	<b>Giving</b> <b>Sharing</b> <b>Being given</b> <b>Receiving</b>	<b>Rights and Responsibilities</b> <b>In(ter)dependence</b> <b>Provision</b>
<b>Decision Making</b>	<b>Obeying</b> <b>Rule following</b> <b>(Limited) choice</b> <b>Freedom</b>	<b>Participation</b> <b>Power</b> <b>Autonomy</b>
<b>(Principles of) Distribution</b>	<b>Activities, Attitudes and Resources based on what: e.g kindness, respect, recognition, fairness.</b>	<b>Redistribution</b> <b>Status</b> <b>Morality</b> <b>Justice</b>

# Citizenship Processes

How is this reflected in all groups?

## Contribution

giving care  
be given more help

## Decision Making

little choice  
being constrained

Recognises his need  
Wanting freedom

## Distribution

Recognition of her circumstances

## Pen-portrait: Daria, 11, a Young Carer

Daria cares for her younger brother who has autism and her mum who is sometimes ill. She has to watch out for her brother, who often gets distressed, and she has to explain his behaviour to others.

She'd like there to be more things for her brother to do in the local area and more help for her at home when her mother is ill.

Daria doesn't really get to decide about anything, though her mum does try to let her choose what to do for a trip out sometimes, but this is limited by the needs of her brother, whose needs, she understands, often come first.

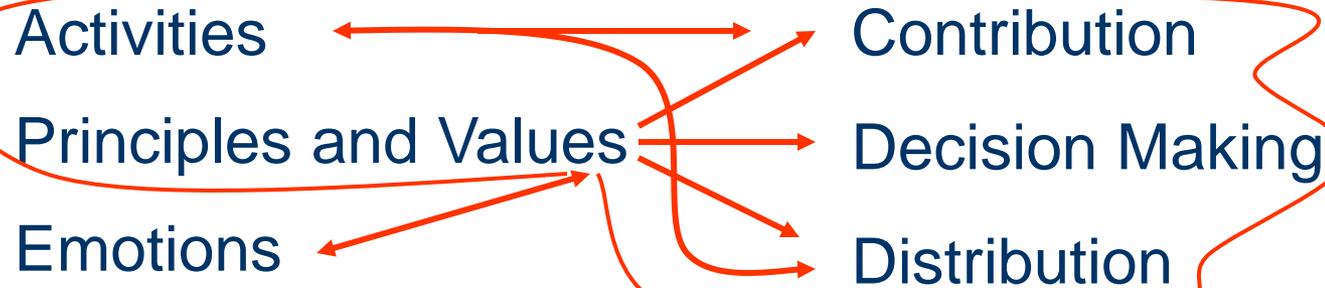
At school she would like more freedom to do whatever she feels like.

Also at school, Daria would like more understanding:

*“Other people, like teachers, don't understand like what [caring] we do and if we need a day extra [for homework] teachers won't give it to you. And they're like: “Well you should have done it in like the day we give it to you.””*

# Citizenship Lens?

## Interacting Behaviours and Processes



## Because it may help

Get beyond the juxtaposition of rights - responsibilities

Better see how children contribute to the achievement of their rights and the rights of others.

## Explore their data more

Particularly what principles they think should govern how citizenship activities are distributed between people

## Test their citizenship lens on EU policy

Explore contributions expected and distributions offered

Explore principles and values active in EU citizenship