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Is this the year of sharpening divides? Not only – as surely it will – between rich and poor, but between public good and private gain? Already child poverty is rising steeply, reaching 3.8m in the UK, with 1.6m in severe poverty; this despite the Coalition’s Child Poverty Act requiring by law the end of child poverty by 2020. Already the life expectancy gap between a girl born in Kensington and Chelsea and a boy in Blackpool is 15 years, and in this time of market-led rent and reduced housing benefit, life expectancy for homeless people is 47 for men and just 43 for women. Youth work has been cut within local authorities by between 20 and 80%, and the Health and Social Care Bill threatens to replace a universal, comprehensive public service with a patchwork of competing, fragmented, often commercialised services. Social care service users, mostly living with few resources and in poor health, will be amongst the most seriously disadvantaged.

As one young activist said to a group of social care professionals: “If this doesn’t make you angry, then you’re in the wrong job.”

So what is our job in these times and what makes it the right job to be doing? The Centre for Social Action has been pursuing social justice with marginal groups for over 20 years in the UK and overseas. Through our evaluation and research, training and consultancy, publications and partnerships, we have sought to empower the local resident, the community and neighbourhood and the service user as creators not consumers, as active participants, not passive recipients. In the future this may potentially be facilitated by the devolved powers afforded in the Localism Act though we have yet to see how much scope there will really be to run local assets

<http://www.urbanforum.org.uk/briefings/localism-act-briefing>.

We are equipped and prepared to be part of a re-emergence of community empowerment approaches, of shared knowledge to affect change. And we know many of you are too and we look forward to working with you in this joint endeavour.





Dr Thilo Boeck

Despite this challenging picture there have been two major achievements for members of the Centre for Social Action this year. In July last year Thilo was awarded his PhD and graduated in front of proud family and friends. His thesis was entitled *Young People and Social Capital: an exploration*.

The same month, Jennie heard her application for Readership had been successful and she is now Reader in Participatory Research and Social Action.

Young people and research at the Centre – the work of the Associate Research Assistants [ARA]

The Associate Research Assistants are age exempt posts in the Centre for Social Action for young people to work as part of our team as researchers and evaluators. Over the past 12 months the contributions of Ruth Taylor, Susie Dobson, Pritesh Nathubhai, Mayuri Chudasama, Iman Dalenius and Harrison Carter have continued to be central to much of the work of the Centre. In 2011 Harry, Iman and Susie were working for their third year with us and Mayuri, Pritesh and Ruth their second. In the previous years they have built up considerable knowledge and expertise in research and evaluation and also in understanding how the university works. This has enabled them to develop their role even further. In the past year they have participated in decisions about which tenders to apply for, had greater input into developing tenders both in terms of what their involvement could be and methods that could be used. They have also undertaken a range of work and contributed a chapter directly to the book Jennie and Thilo are editing (see below), as well as contributing both material and conceptual ideas to the sections written by Jennie and Thilo.



ARA's Harry Carter, Ruth Taylor, Susie Dobson, Mayri Chudasama and Pritesh Nathubhai, with Jennie and Thilo in the back row.

*Being an ARA is a very exciting role and this year we have delved into many different projects including Square Mile, People & Place and U R Boss as well as having our own chapter in Jennie and Thilo's book which I am looking forward to reading. **Pritesh***

*This year the ARA's, have had a whole range of projects to get our teeth into from Sq Mile looking into developing areas in Leicester surrounding DMU to the People & Places project in which we found out about the experiences of young people all over England that had worked with local museums to display exhibitions about different countries and their cultures. As you can see two projects totally on other sides of the scale yet both immensely interesting and useful to learn and put in practice our different research skills we have learnt since working as ARA's. **Iman***



Pritesh and Susie

People & Place

All the ARA continued the work started the year before on the People and Place project evaluating young people's involvement in 6 local museums with members of staff from Youth and Community Division at DMU.

Ruth writes,

Entering into the room where I was about to conduct my first interview for the People and Place project was admittedly rather nerve racking. When speaking to the young people later, although reserved, it was obvious the youth workers and everyone involved in the project had achieved some of the aims. I feel it wasn't just good for us to hear about but also a good time for them to reflect and realise what they had, or hadn't, achieved. The relationship the project leaders and young people had built up was clearly a strong and honest one – and one that the project leaders and some of the young people wanted to still develop further, after and beyond the end of the project.

Sq Mile – Mile²

Mile² is an initiative of the Vice Chancellor, Professor Dominic Shellard and forms part of his mission to demonstrate that Universities are a public good. Over the next 18 months, De Montfort University is working in partnership with a local community, Leicester City Council and other stakeholders to demonstrate how the skills and knowledge of a University can assist and sustain the development of a community and improve the wellbeing and prospects of the residents.

The ARA undertook some of the consultation work with residents about their community development needs. **Harry's** thoughts about the Mile² project and the ARA's involvement in the consultation:

It has been an eye-opening experience visiting the Leicester Mile², and being involved with De Montfort's flagship programme. For a number of years, I think Universities have been seen as isolated institutions from the communities that surround them. Whilst their teaching and research contributes to different bodies of 'academic' knowledge, they rarely inform or influence change in the area they reside. This is in part due to students coming from across the country, indeed the world, and forming their own discrete population, that is close geographically but the polar opposite in everything else to the local community. Through the Mile² project De Montfort intends to devote attention, time and resources to its local community.

It was incredibly interesting to talk to local young people, asking them about local amenities, transport, schools and areas to socialise. Whilst this may not go as far in terms of bulking out the corpus of knowledge in tried and tested areas of university research, it will no doubt be valued by the community.

U R Boss

Jennie, the ARA and other colleagues at DMU are continuing to work on the evaluation of the Howard League's **U R Boss** project. The first interim report **Welfare+Rights, an evaluation of the legal service** was published early in 2011 and the second, on organisational issues, will be available from the U R Boss website shortly. This year the ARA have attended meetings to discuss the focus of the next report, developing the framework for the evaluation of the participation work of the project and interviewing key members of staff for this. The whole team have contributed to developing the range of methods to use to enable young people who use or take part in the project to give their opinions and comments.



the Howard League for Penal Reform

An interim evaluation report into the Howard League's legal service for children and young people

The Howard League's legal service for children and young people (under 21) in custody was established in 2002. It is the only frontline national legal team specialising in the legal rights and entitlements of young people who are locked up – in prisons, secure children's homes and other secure establishments. Children and young people can call the Howard League legal service from prison on a free legal advice line.

The team's work covers many areas of law and all sorts of problems faced by young people, including help with accommodation on release, help with parole and complaints and representations about how they are treated. Where possible the team tries to develop the law by bringing about improvements for their clients and all other young people in the criminal justice system. The Howard League takes forward issues raised in legal work to inform policy and law through lobbying government and taking cases for judicial review or in some cases to the European Court of Human Rights. All legal work is quality assured by the Legal Services Commission.

There are 3 specialist teams, the children's team (for young people under 18), the young adult team (for ages 18-21) and the public inquiries team.



As **Susie** writes:

U R Boss is a project run by the Howard League for Penal Reform that aims to engage young people who are either in or have been in custody, by participation in groups that will help inform reports and change policies. They are currently in the process of setting up a young advisory board and satellite groups from which young people can inform and help shape future campaigns. The ARA team have been looking into how we can properly evaluate the group sessions that U R Boss runs, and finding ways of engaging young offenders in evaluation. We've also been meeting with the workers at the Howard League to discuss how we can gauge the success of the project and how it will take shape over the coming years.

Recruitment of new ARA

In the spring/summer of 2012 we will be seeking to recruit new Associate Research Assistants to work with us – this is because five of the current six ARA will no longer fit the age exempt criteria (16-19 years). The closing date for the posts will be 6th June, so if you know young people that might be interested please contact Jennie (jfleming@dmu.ac.uk or 0116 257 7873 for the details).

*For some of us this will be our last year as ARA so big changes will be seen as new ARA will be appointed to start this summer. This will be exciting as it's good to refresh the group with new ideas and new ways of working and we hope that these changes will be good. We will deliver their training and support them to work efficiently and productively. **Pritesh***

Involving children and young people in health and social care research

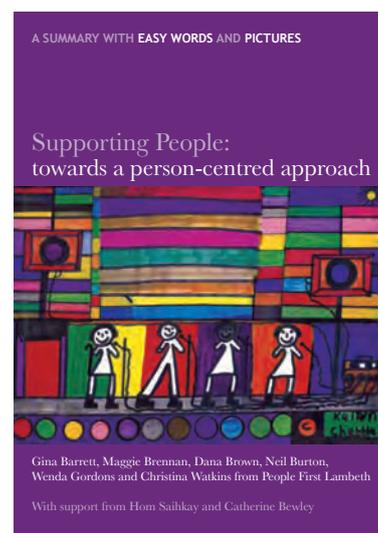
Jennie and Thilo have been working hard to compile an edited book – **Involving children and young people in health and social care research** – that will be published by Routledge in May this year. The book has a range of contributions from young people (including the Centre's ARA), practitioners and researchers and is divided into the five stages of the social action process – What, Why, How, Action and Reflection. It starts by considering **what** research with young people is and **why** we should do it, which will lead the reader into **how** to do it. The book then gives some practical examples of **action** and finishes with some **reflections** about the whole process. This process is discussed using the 'real life' experiences of researchers from a wide range of backgrounds in health and social care, who have either undertaken projects with children and young people, or who are experts in the field of participation.

The Mighty Creatives

Raksha, Ruth, Mayuri and Jennie are part of a team with colleagues from the Youth and Community Division evaluating **The Mighty Creatives** (TMC). TMC is a young people's creative development agency for the East Midlands. Their website states, 'Our programmes and partnerships prepare children and young people for a lifetime of leadership, innovation and enterprise by giving them the creative skills to drive positive change in their lives and communities'. The first phase of the work will involve scoping of both existing evidence of outcomes and impacts and of the range of work, settings and client groups that TMC is involved with. Input from workers and young people will help to ensure that the emerging evaluation framework appropriately reflects the four business planets, and the opinions of young people about what types of impact should be measured. The next two phases comprise the design of the evaluation framework itself and ensuring its effective implementation.

Standards We Expect dissemination

Though the research element of the Standards We Expect has been over for some time we are still working hard on the dissemination of the findings and the recommendations for policy and practice. The book **Supporting People Towards a person centred approach** has been published and is available from **Policy Press**. There is an accessible summary of the book **Supporting People: a summary in easy words and pictures**.



There are also five reports of specific aspects of the project:

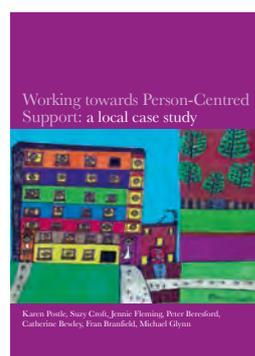
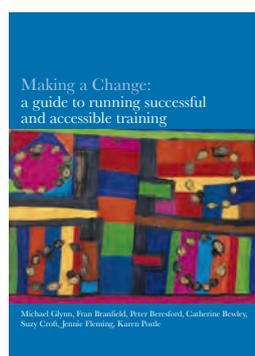
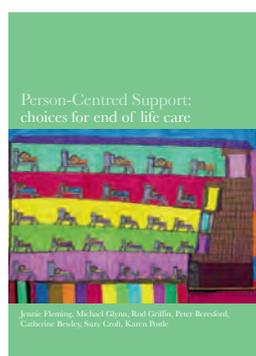
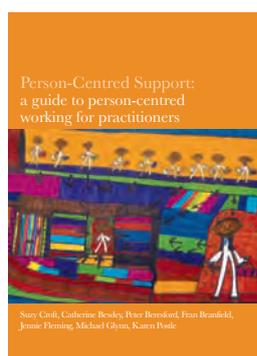
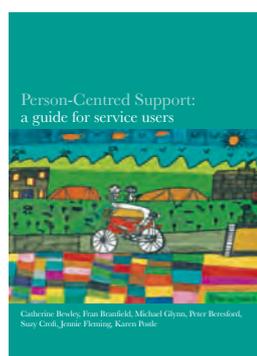
Person Centred Support: a guide for service users

Person-Centred Support: a guide to person-centred working for practitioners

Person-Centred Support: choices for end of life care

Making a Change: a guide to running successful and accessible training

Working towards Person-Centred Support: a local case study



There is a JRF findings **Transforming social care: sustaining person-centred support**

Members of the consortium took part in Guardian roundtable discussion on the future funding of social care in August. The discussion was chaired by David Brindle of the Guardian and other contributors included Paul Burstow MP, Peter Hay, President, ADASS, Stephen Dorrell MP, Frank Cooper President National Pensioners Convention, Helga Pile National Officer for Social Care Union as well as representatives from Skills for Care, the Race Equality Foundation, Carers UK, Health and Social Care Equalities and Human Rights Commission and the Kings Fund amongst others. The write up is available [here](#).

Shaping our Age



Shaping Our Age is a unique collaboration between the WRVS, Centre for Citizen Participation Brunel University and Centre for Social Action at DMU and most importantly older people themselves. It takes as its starting point working out with older people what wellbeing means to them and then working with them to find ways to support, enhance and maximise their self-defined wellbeing. The WRVS has committed itself to incorporating the lessons learned from this initiative in its own future operation. It thus provides both a test ground and a jumping off point for a new participatory approach to older people's wellbeing that has potential wider relevance nationally and internationally.



Shaping Our Age has two key concerns: older people's wellbeing and their involvement. What is special about this national project is the way that it seeks to connect and interweave the two. This is especially important because of the frequent failure to involve older people in issues affecting their lives. Shaping Our Age is essentially about involving older people in improving their wellbeing. The project aims are to:

- to support older people to define well-being and measures of their wellbeing;
- identify innovative ways for older people individually and collectively to improve their own well-being;
- provide the evidence base and tools needed for WRVS and other providers to transform the support they offer to improve older people's well-being;

A defining feature of **Shaping Our Age** is that right from the start, older people themselves have been and will continue to be involved in every aspect and every stage of the project. They make up the majority of the project's reference group which is chaired by an older person. A partners' group of senior representatives from other organisations across the older people's sector also supports and bring their valuable experience to the project.

The project has recently launched its report of older people's understanding of wellbeing '**Voices on Wellbeing**' and a **summary** version of the report. We have identified five local WRVS projects (in the Scottish Borders, Yorkshire (2) and the South East of England (2)) that we will liaise closely with over the next 18 months to work with older people to develop ways of improving well-being. We have just recruited 4 excellent Involvement Workers, who will work with older people at the 5 sites to develop ways of enhancing older people's wellbeing.

SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC AND PATIENT INVOLVEMENT (PPI) IN HEALTH CARE RESEARCH – Raksha Pandya writes

This year has been full of more exciting work and lots of variety. Some of the highlights included supporting about 40 studies for intensive PPI support. These studies ranged from dementia research right through to health promotion initiatives. The PPI support that I offer includes meeting with researchers face to face, having telephone conversations, email support and inviting researchers to attend specialist PPI training and support services. The most popular form of PPI in research studies continues to be mostly consultation based PPI. Collaborative ventures continue to be rare in research that I am seeing coming through to the RDS and service user driven research is even rarer.

PPI Workshops for Clinicians and Researchers

Since last year four PPI workshops were delivered across the region including in Leicester, Northampton, Nottingham and Derby. Around 60 people attended these specialist workshops and the feedback was extremely positive. We have also fine tuned these workshops too so that they are focused specifically on bid development rather than the more basic 'what is PPI?' The PPI workshops are designed to help researchers to plan meaningful and appropriate PPI in their research proposals in order to improve the overall quality of their bid. They give the researchers an opportunity to consider PPI during bid development and beyond and help researchers capture this within their applications. The session includes a combination of information giving and group discussion. Each session will last three hours and will have a maximum attendance of eight people. The next session is 25th April in Northampton at the University from 2pm-5pm.

Pre Protocol Award

Raksha now manages the small grants pot of money at the RDS (Research Design Service) for researchers to apply for the 'pre protocol award'. This fund is designed to help researchers gather patient's views on the developing research idea. The fund of money is rare and the only sort of its kind in the whole of the East Midlands Region. Clinicians and researchers can apply for up to £500. A breakdown of the budget is required on the application form, and items requested may include payment to the service users for their time and out of pocket expenses, hiring a venue, and catering. An ongoing evaluation both internally and nationwide is currently being carried out regarding the efficacy of the awards. For further information contact Raksha Pandya on rpandya@dmu.ac.uk

Leicestershire Northampton and Rutland Research Engaging with Patients and the Public Forum (LNR REPP) Forum and Website www.lnr-repp.org.uk



Just under 100 people attended the LNR REPP launch event in Leicester and Northampton and we had some excellent feedback. The programme of the day was broken into three sections:

- 1 **Developing research protocols:** with presentations from our RDS and the Local Involvement Network (LINK) describing what support and guidance is available for researchers. We also had an example of a current project from the Mental Health Research Network which is in the early stages come and talk with a lay person.

- 2 **Conducting the research:** with presentations in this middle section highlighted PPI in action, (including a contribution from Jennie Fleming who discussed the benefits and organisational challenges of employing young people as researchers at the Centre for Social Action).
- 3 **Implementing the findings:** the audience were given examples of how to better disseminate and implement findings of research.

For more information do go to the website! <http://www.lnr-repp.org.uk/>

Teaching and learning

All members of the Centre continue to be part of teaching and learning in the School. Thilo and Jennie are part of the supervisory teams for 9 PhD students studying a range of interesting topics, including ethical dilemmas in paediatric intensive care, impact on families of immigration to the UK from Lithuania, integration of immigrants in Europe, Communities, justice and cohesion with most using participatory methods. For example Addy Williams who is in Uganda at the moment undertaking participatory research to increase voluntary sector ngo's accountability to the people they work with and Jackie Martin, who is working with a group of adults with Aspergers to explore how adults with Aspergers choose to have a voice in the services they receive.

Katherine Duffy successfully obtained her PhD by written works – **Combating Poverty & Social Exclusion in Europe**, she was supervised in the final stages of this study by Jennie and Prof Roger Smith.

Thilo and Jennie are leading the Youth and Community Work's Practice Related Research module and despite having a lot to learn about the administrative side of module leadership, are very much enjoying the contact with students.

For the first time this year Jennie is supervising one of the MA Social work students.

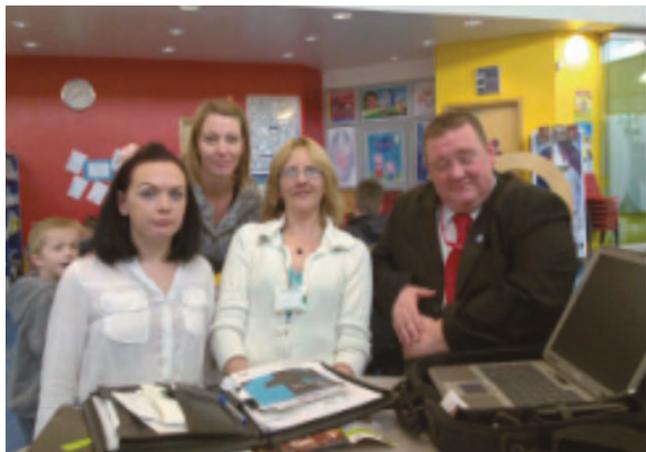
Amplified Resilient Communities

In our previous Newsletter we have talked about the Joseph Rowntree funded project '**Amplified Resilient Communities**'. Over the last months we have been working with some amazing residents, encouraging to think outside the box, expanding their own networks and encourage collaboration. We have supported these individuals to come together as a group but also to develop their own ideas using social and new media. All the participants have been doing this work on a voluntary basis and in their own free time. This is an example of resilient individuals and groups who are trying to change the culture within their community through collaboration, enhancing trust and creating new opportunities and resources for the community.

Elaine Halford has started a new group in Braunstone Leicester. The group is a chance for mums and dads of any age to meet up and make new friends. The group is already exchanging experiences, tips on DIY, gardening, childcare etc. They also will start a project on digital storytelling and have a slot in the local radio station. Drawing on new networks and through collaboration with other organisations using social media the group is flourishing and getting access to free resources – including a laptop!

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/206429136066608/>

<http://mumssupportingmums.weebly.com/index.html>



Ian Davies has initiated and is managing a new space in Leicester for people with an interest in showing off their photographs. Based in the old Leicester Lending Library, the **Leicester People's Photographic Gallery** will be a social enterprise that aims to give amateurs and professionals alike the chance to exhibit their photographic work. The gallery will provide a mixture of space for large-scale exhibitions, permanent sponsored displays by professional photographers and temporary spaces for works by community groups and schools.



Courtesy of Keith Cooper <http://www.northlight-images.co.uk/index.html>

City Councillor Wayne Naylor has created a virtual Surgery using a facebook group. The group is available to all residents living in, and workers working in the Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields Ward in the City of Leicester UK. He is interacting with local residents and keeping people informed about relevant issues for them and their community. **Cllr Wayne Naylor Virtual Surgery**

We have also started to work with **Streetvibe** (<http://www.streetvibeyouth.com/>) The project supports young people aged 13-25 in various activities such as decision making, young parent support, street work and a mobile outreach provision. We will support some young people to effectively use their website, facebook and twitter to encourage collaboration and access to new resources. We also will support them in digital storytelling and encouraging projects on 'collaborative consumption' (as an example see http://www.nesta.org.uk/areas_of_work/public_services_lab/collaborative_consumption)

Survey of Leicester

Commissioned by the City Mayor of Leicester, Thilo Boeck is working with the City council and the University of Leicester in developing a survey of Leicester, which reflects the City Council's wider approach to economic renewal and social development. The CSA will be supporting a more participatory approach where research professionals work alongside members of a community to define issues, make sense of data, and appraise and act on the results. The project will be trialling and modifying the technical approaches to gathering and representing data through community engagement, making sure that the process is accessible to local residents.

Young people, resilience and the power of networks

This transdisciplinary project arose from an exchange which led to the realisation that very similar interests are being pursued currently at DMU and by colleagues from the University of Western Sydney, which could be significantly enhanced by the creation of strong mutual links and joint work. The empirical and conceptual basis for the collaboration emerges from existing understandings of young people and their place within electronic and social networks, especially in the context of vulnerability and social exclusion. Our previous work undertaken by Amplified Leicester and Amplified Resilient Communities with its focus on resilience and the use of community networks finds close parallels in the interests of Australian colleagues in the use of 'social networking technologies' to promote 'resilience for vulnerable young people'. This project will build on existing theoretical and applied work being undertaken around the theme of networks, resilience and power. It will enable us to develop a collaborative and comparative framework for research development with Australian partners. The Associate Research Assistants are part of the team and contribute to the discussions via a facebook group.

International contacts

Social Action is alive, well and thriving in Quebec, Canada



Over the autumn term of 2011, Prof Dave Ward spent three months as Visiting Professor to the School of Social Work at the University of Montreal in the province of Quebec, Canada. He writes about his experience:

My host there, Dr Annie Pullen Sansfacon, had some years ago studied for her PhD with the Centre for Social Action, supervised by Jennie and myself. My initial expectations were that I would be visiting and engaging in a corner of North America, French speaking perhaps but, nevertheless, 'American' in culture and structure. What I discovered was more complex, challenging, interesting and different than I ever imagined.



First of all, Quebec, as a result of its distinctive history, is very different to the rest of Canada and the USA. The most obvious manifestation, of course, lies in the establishment of French as the first language for all aspects of everyday life, not least in the educational and social welfare spheres where I was to be involved. Secondly, and a total surprise to me, was to discover a comprehensive and well resourced framework of public services, ranging from, for example, transport, public safety and utilities, through culture, sport and leisure to health, welfare and education. High levels of past and continuing investment and concern for quality were obvious to the eye. As far as I could judge from what I saw and heard, such public (in Quebecois terminology, 'collective') provision

is genuinely and deeply valued and supported across the population, seen not just as part of the texture of everyday life but also, with great pride, as marking out Quebec as a civilised, safe and comfortable place to live and visit.

Seeing and understanding this context, I came to understand why Social Action and, in particular, its description in *Self-directed Groupwork: Users Take Action for Empowerment* (Mullender, A. and Ward, D. (1991) *Self-directed Groupwork: Users Take Action for Empowerment*, London: Whiting and Birch) had met with a good response in Quebec over the years. Social Action, I came to see, aligns closely with the 'structural approach to social work' developed initially at the University of Montreal by the late Maurice Moreau and now integrated into Canadian theory and teaching. According to Moreau (Moreau, M. (1990) *Empowerment through Advocacy and Consciousness-Raising: Implications of a Structural Approach to Social Work*, *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 17, pp53-67) the central objective of this structural approach is to empower clients, that is, to render them freer and more powerful vis-a-vis those who oppress and dominate them. The structural approach rests on the assumption that one group (the dominators) in our society successfully maximizes its life chances by minimizing those of another (the dominated).

The approach calls for two interrelated roles on the part of workers. The first role is to explore the socio-political and economic forces at play in people's individually experienced difficulties, in order to collectivize rather than personalize and individualize their sources and solutions. The second role is to reverse the process of self-disempowerment or of internalized oppression. The worker helps participants to recognize and modify any ideas, values, feelings and behaviours that contribute to their own oppressive situation or to that of others.

My question then became: while this is theory with which I could closely identify, could I find it in practice? Yes, indeed, I could! Leading out of discussions in seminars arranged for me with students and interested practitioners and with practitioner contacts leading from one to another, I found a range of projects and practitioners working with their own brands of Social Action. Almost without exception, they were keen to explore, debate and further develop our shared values, skills and approaches. Outside the 'classroom', I had fascinating meetings with staff in social care teams, a family centre, a mental health project, centres for refugees and immigrants and a young offenders team. Inspiringly, it became clear that Social Action is alive, well and thriving in Quebec.



This autumn the Occupy Movement hit many cities right across the globe. Montreal was no exception and I was able to visit its camp in Square Victoria several times, entering a 'territoire' declared to be 'autogere' (see photo), which in translation means 'self-managed, run on a cooperative basis'. The French translation for Self-directed Groupwork is 'Le Modele de Group Autogere'. I felt at home!

Sadly the Occupy Montreal camp disbanded late November, not, at least directly, as a result of official pressure but because the camp became overwhelmed as a refuge for Montreal's homeless – an outcome which exposed for me not only systemic failings in Quebec's 'collective' social provision but also the unavoidable contradictions and dilemmas faced by all of us, however principled, engaged in radical practice.

Las Desigualdades Prevalecen: Jóvenes y el Acceso al Capital Social



Thilo Boeck has been in Santiago de Chile developing links with the University De Los Lagos. Part of the visit was to give a talk to academics and students titled "Las Desigualdades Prevalecen: Jóvenes y el Acceso al Capital Social" (inequalities prevail: young people and the access to social capital) and a workshop on participatory mixed methods research. It was a very interesting and enlightening exchange of ideas and we are now working on developing links between the Centre for Social Action and CISPO

(Centro de Investigación Sociedad y Políticas Públicas). As a start of the relationship, Thilo has been invited to become part of the international PhD supervision team.

The links to the talk and workshop (in Spanish) can be found at:

http://www.capital-social.com/wp/?page_id=9

http://www.capital-social.com/wp/?page_id=270

Skills for care

De Montfort University was commissioned by Skills for Care (England) and HWSETA (RSA) to support social workers from different Local Authorities to undertake small-scale research projects based on an international exchange with practitioners in South Africa. The purpose was to bring together practitioner researchers from the two countries to develop methodological skills, undertake joint investigations and share ideas and experiences with employers and academic interests in both countries.

Social workers from each country were paired and allocated 8 topics to investigate. These topics were identified by Skills for Care and HWSETA and covered things like case load management; Social Work training; the use of data management systems; supervision; empowerment; multi disciplinary working and personalization. Prior to the exchange visits, workers received online training in basic research skills presented by Hellmüth Weich and Jennie Fleming. What made this training unique was that it was presented to both groups simultaneously, with one group being linked to the group in the UK via SKYPE. Jennie and Hellmüth used the lessons learnt from their previous work when they trained young people in South Africa via SKYPE and other online technologies to do this effectively.

The social workers in each country were paired with a colleague in the other country. They had to compare and contrast practices and procedures in each country during short exchange visits and develop ideas for shared learning and new approaches based on their findings. They developed and applied a range of methods as appropriate, and produced subject reports based on their analyses.

The researchers generated significant messages during the exchange but the scale of the project meant that these findings are essentially provisional and cannot readily be generalised. The university research team has derived some broad conclusions about the practical and methodological implications of this approach, which we hope to apply in future work.

Co-editor of Groupwork Journal



Jennie was appointed the co-editor of Groupwork (joining Prof Tim Kelly from Dundee University). **Groupwork** publishes articles about the social aspects of groupwork across a range of settings including education, youth and community work, social work, and criminal justice, health, occupational therapy, staff development, mental health, counselling, as well as staff development. If you are interested in writing for Groupwork, please to get in contact with Jennie.

Social Work & Social Sciences Review editorial board

Jennie also joined the editorial board of **Social Work & Social Sciences Review** addresses developments in the social sciences which affect how social work is understood and practised.

Twitter

Members of the CSA team 'tweet' from time to time. If you want to follow us our twitter names are:

 @jenniefleming

@tgboeck

@rpandya1

Conferences

2011 State of the World's Volunteerism Report

In October 2010, Thilo Boeck was invited by United Nations Volunteers (UNV) to participate in a Regional Consultation meeting in Turkey. The purpose of the meeting was to help to identify regional and country specific perspectives on issues around volunteering. The "2011 State of the World's Volunteerism Report" is available at

<http://www.unric.org/en/latest-un-buzz/27161-2011-state-of-the-worlds-volunteerism-report>

Jennie has presented papers about the Standards We Expect project at a number of conferences including the European Social work Research Conference (Oxford March 2011), the National Children and Adult Services conference (London October 2011) and the Naidex conference (London October 2011).

Commissioning the Centre for Social Action

The Centre for Social Action is always interested in new contracts to do training, research and consultancy with a range of statutory, voluntary, or private sector organisations. All these activities are informed by our social action methodology; so we always aim to work collaboratively with our commissioners and community members to ensure there is full understanding and ownership of the proposed project on the part of all those who will be directly involved in it.

We are experienced in the fields of health, youth work, children and family support, community development and regeneration, social capital, restorative justice and participation and service user involvement.

We can be commissioned to undertake the following services:

Research and evaluation: we undertake project evaluations and community consultations of all kinds. These often involve training community members and service users to be researchers or information gatherers in their own communities and always aim to ensure ownership and understanding of topics chosen for research on their part.

We can also conduct surveys of a particular field in order to produce good practice guides, or conduct audits of existing practice, such as community development work. We also offer training about research and evaluation for organisations and community members (e.g. training for health professionals and service users on participatory research).

Training: we work directly with community groups using social action methods to enable them to identify issues important to them and devise action plans to address them. Trainers share their skills with community members and facilitate them to have direct ownership of eventual outcomes. We also offer training to practitioners from all social welfare fields in social action methods, which introduces them to a range of ideas and exercises which can then be used directly in work with their particular community groups, to stimulate greater community involvement and ownership.

Consultancy: we can provide consultancy to various groups, organisations, teams and individuals on setting up services and projects and running groups using social action methods. The social action methodology can be used in a very flexible way to address a wide range of organisational needs.

If you are interested in discussing any of these possibilities then please contact Jennie Fleming at the Centre for Social Action on tel (0116) 257 7873 or jfleming@dmu.ac.uk

health&life sciences

Centre for Social Action

**Working alongside community members, practitioners,
managers and policy-makers to achieve social change.**



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