

Girls group: Part one

This document contains edited field notes written by researchers and practitioners involved in a thirteen week project with the girls group. The project involved young women from the group, two youth workers, members of the reanimating data project team (Ali Ronan and Ester McGeeney) two digital artists from Manchester Libraries (P and S), and two film makers (M and S).

Most notes were written after a session to document the work, reflect on the project and plan for future sessions. Some notes were taken after watching documentary footage of the sessions. All notes have been compiled by Ester McGeeney to create a record of the project and edited to protect the anonymity of young people and collaborators. Some images have also been edited to remove names where relevant.

Session 1: 20th June 2019

By Ali Ronan

Yesterday we went to the girls group 4-5.30 at a Centre which welcomes refugees and works tirelessly for social justice. The girls' group has been in existence for a number of years, numbers waxing and waning. We were wanting to meet the girls and to explore the project in more detail. I had brought some photos from the 80s with me, consent forms for the filming, a set of interviews and a screening of Top of the Pops from 1988. There were 2 youth workers, M. and T.

There were 4 girls waiting for us with the 2 youth workers, and they took us into a small room where we put the chairs into a circle and began to talk to each other and laugh. There were 2 Asian girls and 2 African girls. I had brought a small clay figure to show the group (as it had been suggested that this group might do some clay work), a small figure that had a very grumpy face - made by primary school children - part of 150 little figures that they had made to recreate a suffrage march. The girls laughed at her but showed no interest in clay as far as I could see.

We all introduced ourselves and the film-maker (S) and I tried to explain the project. The 80s were unknown! But the girls were interested in the fact that there were interviews from girls like them...We started to break the ice by talking about school, and we had a very lively discussion about punishments and detentions. At that point 2 other girls joined us, 2 more Asian girls from the local High School, the others were from a local secondary school and one from a local college. The age range of the girls was 12-16. We talked about teachers, about what makes a good teacher, why they like certain subjects at school. And what makes certain subjects 'boring'. All the Asian girls wore hijabs while one African girl had long dreadlocks and the other college girl had short hair. This seemed important in terms of their identity, the notion of representation and how these young women see themselves.

The girls were laughing about a teacher who had been bad tempered - perhaps 'she was on her period' they guessed- this gave me some idea about where I might take the conversation. We started to watch the TOTP from 1988, they glanced at it - commenting on the fashions- but they were really engaged when black singers came on to the screen. We then talked about different types of music and what they listened to and whether they cared what each other listened to. S began to talk about punk and they laughed at the idea of Mohican haircuts. The young European Muslim girl declared that she would like to dye her hair purple. We could have started a discussion about risk....

They talked about the tokenism of Black History Month and the boring history lessons they had.

They knew very little about the 1980s - I then took a risk and took one of the interviews and began to read it with my neighbour, the young dreadlocked African girl aged 13, we read about staying out late and how a mother worried and how the girl slipped out and came back at 2am. It started a big discussion- what was the mother thinking? Why did the girl tell the interviewer such intimate details of her life? It was frustrating not to have more time as there were so many interesting ideas coming out of this one small extract.

There was no doubt that this conversation could have been expanded and developed, the next extract was about sex education and we started to talk about periods but then the next part of the session -Zumba- was ready to start. We had to stop.

I am going back on 27th June to talk through the consent forms and really explain it to them. We envisage starting to film on July 4th.

My plan is for a 6 session project. 3 sessions introducing the archival material, in this case using 2 interviews from WRAP young women that are from Pakistani and Black heritage. It was very obvious that this connection and representation really engaged the young women. There are enough extracts to work with over a few weeks, we could then think about using the focus of sessions 4 and 5 as possible 2 x sessions that would be sharply focused work to create a response to the extracts with a drama/oral worker or with a creative worker.

My ideas for the sessions.....are very fluid at the moment but informed by the response of the young women - they were interested! And they wanted to talk

I am imagining working for an hour or so so that there is room in the overall session for more 'fun' activities.

FILMING 1, AR Work on creating a virtual profile of the 2 young women- who was she, where did she go to school, what was she like, who were her family? Using the extracts x 2 to fill out the profile for the interviewees. Using paper to draw pencil outlines and fill them in with imagined ideas and more fixed ideas from the extracts. Talk with the girls and get them to imagine the past and the present !

2. AR Creating a comic strip - many of the girls like to draw - that might represent one of the extracts. Using speech bubbles to start creating a story - starting to contrast 80s and the 2019 responses to the extract/s

3. AR Looking! at more of the extracts to draw out ideas from the young women about what they understand from the interviews. How might we record this?
 4. Working with an artist/worker to try and pull together a short, snappy response to the interviews either through craft/art/textile or through word/drama/video x 1.
 5. Following on from session 5 x 2 . Working to create somethingthat can be showcased... This needs careful briefing of the artist and we need to be clear about what we really want?
- FILMING* 6. Pulling it together, getting the girls to talk about what they have thought about - what they have learnt ? P. to vox /box either as a piece of oral testimony or a filmed piece depending on what the girls want to do..she was excited about this..

Session 2: Thursday 27th June 2019

By Ali Ronan

I met with youth workers M and T half an hour before the session. We looked at 2 of the purple books that I have (WRAP 1 and 6) and also at the Feminist Webs book. We discussed the group and how to present the consent forms..... I'm just thinking on my feet! We talked more in depth about the project, about finding appropriate material and thinking of ways to present it. We agreed that we would see what the girls want to do in terms of creative responses to the material....

We went into the room which was set up with tables and chairs; not very cosy and in hindsight I should have rearranged the room in a circle- which I will do next week. But there was a lively 'buzz' in the room. There were 8 young women with 2 workers. A real mix of young women: a young Chinese girl 14, a white young woman at college 18, a black young woman 14, a young Romanian woman 14, an Asian young woman 14, a Black young woman at college 17, two Asian young women both 13. The youth workers are 2 white women: one a young woman who has just finished her youth and community work degree and a Greek woman who is a postgraduate youth worker.

I remembered some of the girls and we chatted about school, their day etc. We then started discussing the idea of 'consent' and it was clear that they have talked about it at school (in Citizenship) but that they really had no idea what it was about. One girl suggested that it was about asking your mother if you can go out- this started a long discussion about the restrictions on the young women, all the younger women talked about having to stay at home, helping their mothers with chores and with looking after younger siblings. Their brothers were allowed to do nothing. This provided a real sense of solidarity between the young women and was clearly something that they had not spoken about before. They discussed curfews. They felt 'stuck inside.' This is a theme I think.....

We then talked about the previous session that I had led, the young Romanian girl remembered the little clay suffragist figure Mrs. Grumpy and they laughed about TOTP. 'Some (of the music) was ok' they agreed reluctantly. I reminded them that this project is about young women 30 years

ago and we began to talk about what is important to them today – phones and technologies came up – which led to another discussion about data and personal information. One girl did not have a phone but all the others used them – mostly for games and keeping in touch with friends. Their parents could also keep a track of them. The two 17/18yr olds agreed that they seemed to have more freedom when they were 14 and that even 4 years ago, the phone was less ubiquitous. There was some talk of playing out in the street and playing with neighbours.

I reminded one girl that she had commented on the interview that we read out last time –‘Why would you tell someone all that?’ She couldn’t remember but seemed astonished that I remembered. It led onto another discussion about privacy and social media. They were on a WhatsApp group for the girls’ group. They didn’t talk much about social media, their phones seeming to be a source of entertainment with games. This led onto a discussion about games and whether they were gendered in some way. The girls were generally dismissive about that idea.

We then started to look more seriously at the consent form. It is very wordy and complicated! M. and I tried to simplify the language without patronizing the young women. They have been filmed already by the BBC when they were doing an intergenerational cooking project, last year, and as part of a general youth work evaluation. Both ‘filmings’, it seems, just asked if they were ok with it all.....so this in depth discussion and asking them their opinions and ideas felt much more serious for the young women and they were hesitant and reluctant at first to take part, so we had to talk about the archive and the fact that the film would not be on any social media platforms. When we talked about the fact that people would be interested in what they had to say, at that point they seemed both amazed and interested.

We then played a short game to lighten the mood, ‘something people don’t know about you’- lots of information emerged about liking animals, hating animals, not liking people, wishing they were a boy, being shy etc. There was lots of laughing but ‘the boy’ comment raised more discussion about gender roles, some of them saying that they wished they were boys and one girl declaring she acted like a boy This is another theme I think.

We then went back to the project, and how they might respond to the interviews...ideas came up about making a comic – one girl said she was good at drawing cartoons, one girl suggested making a ‘flip book’ of images, another suggested using photography somehow.... It was very lively.

I am going back next week with S. (film-maker), to film. The girls all took home the consent forms and one girl took one for her sister.... So fingers crossed!

Session 3: 4th July 2019

By Ali Ronan

I met with one of the youth workers (T.), at 3.30 and we went through the plan of the session. I had brought lining paper, pens, little hats (I may buy cheap sunglasses too) and edited texts of 3 interviews. I talked through the plan with T. although she was quite happy to 'leave it' to me.

We then went into the room, moved the tables and arranged the chairs in a circle. There is a whiteboard in the room, so as the girls came in, they scribbled on the board and R wrote 'Welcome Go Girls'.

Four girls turned up, usually there are 8 or 9 but it was very hot and sunny...

E, young Black woman, 18 yr old at college

A, young White woman, 18 yr old at college

R, young Asian woman, 14 yr old at school,

M, young Black woman, 15 yr old at school

T, White youth worker, woman 20+ Youth Work graduate

A. White youth worker woman 68!

They had all met me, apart from M, and we chatted about school etc. I then reminded them that this was the start of the WRAP project – in earnest- and explained that there would be no filming as the filmmaker's sister had been taken ill.

We started with a name game, Going to Alaska which is funny and got them intrigued. Then a problem solving game 'The Sun is Round', which had everyone laughing.

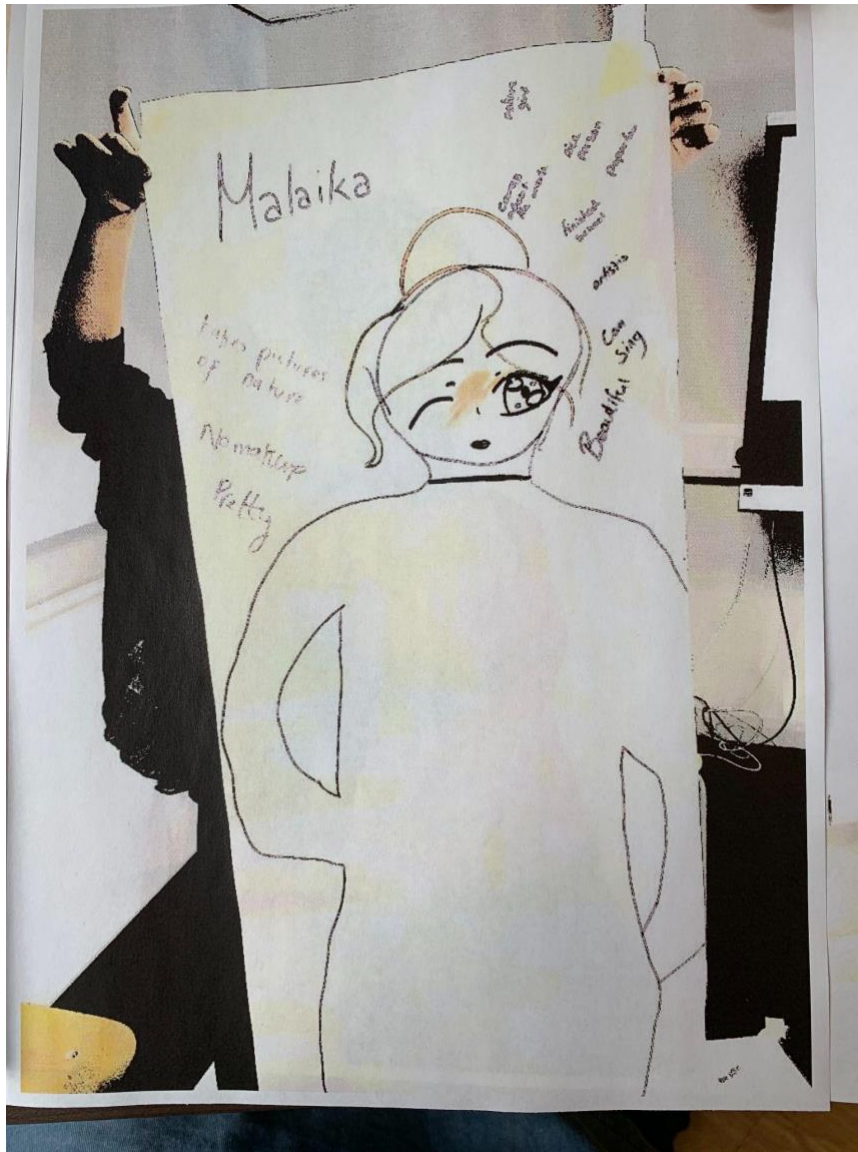
We then played a game in pairs asking our partner 3 things, Name, school/college and something nice that happened today. This led onto to a discussion about 'listening' and how we know if we are being listened to- it also started the discussion of what you may choose to share with other people. This can be developed.

I then moved onto a discussion about how we might work together using some ideas from something I had seen in the Art Gallery last week. (see below) one young woman wrote the ideas on the whiteboard and we discussed them : as usual the word Respect generated a lot of discussion. The young women all agreed that this word is pretty ubiquitous in their school college 'rules' but that no one ever really discusses its meaning, we talked for a while about body language, listening, and attitudes and general ideas about 'respect.'

It was an interesting and engaged conversation, with all the young women saying that no one at school or college ever interrogated this word. It is just there 'in the ether' as it were. We could have taken longer over this as the young women were very engaged. I have used this a number of times as a way to start discussing the wider ideas about communication, regard and listening.

Then we moved on.....I suggested that we used one of the WRAP interviews to start the whole thing. We were working with extracts from interview AMB 18.

We put a large sheet of lining paper on the floor: one of the girls lay on it and we drew round her. We then identified the girl we were going to look at as a 16 yr old Afro Caribbean and we began to talk about what she might be like – her name was Malaika and she was 'nice' and 'pretty'. There was a lot to discuss there – the still dominant culture of 'pretty' and 'nice', but we moved on to the interview.



M played the young woman and A the interviewer. We read out the AMB 18 extract 1: which asks where the girl lives and who with. The two young women read out some of the extract and I stopped it at the point where the interviewee talks about lying to her parents about where she was going.

A lively discussion about this – 'is this really 30 yrs ago?' they all asked? We talked about lying, about telling the truth. M is a Christian and talked about the pressure from the church to be honest

and to conform. R who is a Muslim also talked about the pressure from family. This discussion started a debate about the role of parents, safety etc. What was interesting for me was that there was very little talk about social media, much more about relationships with parents and friends..

We then read a very short extract about sex education. E and R playing the parts. Again I stopped it after a few minutes and there was a very lively discussion about sex education at school, particularly about periods and about whether boys and girls are 'taught' the same things- schools till seem to teach sex education in gender groups. We then started to discuss how they were taught about relationships and whether there was an assumption that they were heterosexual. This causes a huge stir- they all felt that homosexuality was not mentioned at all and they felt very constrained about talking about their own feelings. Both R and M declared that they would be unable to 'come out' in their families. And then -it was 5.30 suddenly! They all said in a very quick evaluation that the interviews were the best part of the session and they were looking forward to next week.

For me, there are a numbers of relevant ideas:

- The girls are very open to exploring ideas
- They are willing to try new experiences
- Themes that are emerging might be

Education

Family

Place

Class

Learning about sex.

Session 4: 11th July 2019

By Ali Ronan

This is the fourth session. Last week was very engaging although there were only 4 girls there.

This week was very different, we had been unable to film last week but had agreed that a film maker (M.) would come to the session and document the session. I had been in touch with M. and agreed to meet her at 3pm in Inspire. At the same time, two outreach workers and digital artists (P. and S.) from Manchester libraries had agreed to come and so I was aware that the session may be busy and possibly chaotic. The outreach workers were to bring ipads and try out some 'comic' apps.

T., the youth worker, arrived and we looked at a rough plan for the session, M (film maker). arrived and then P. and S. from the library. The girls began to arrive and we went into the room and put

the chairs into a circle. 3 of the girls from last week arrived but one of the girls was unable to come because of child-minding demands. 4 more girls arrived.

Z 13yr Pakistani

A 17yr White

S 13yr African

E 18yr African

U 13yr Pakistani

R 14yr Pakistani

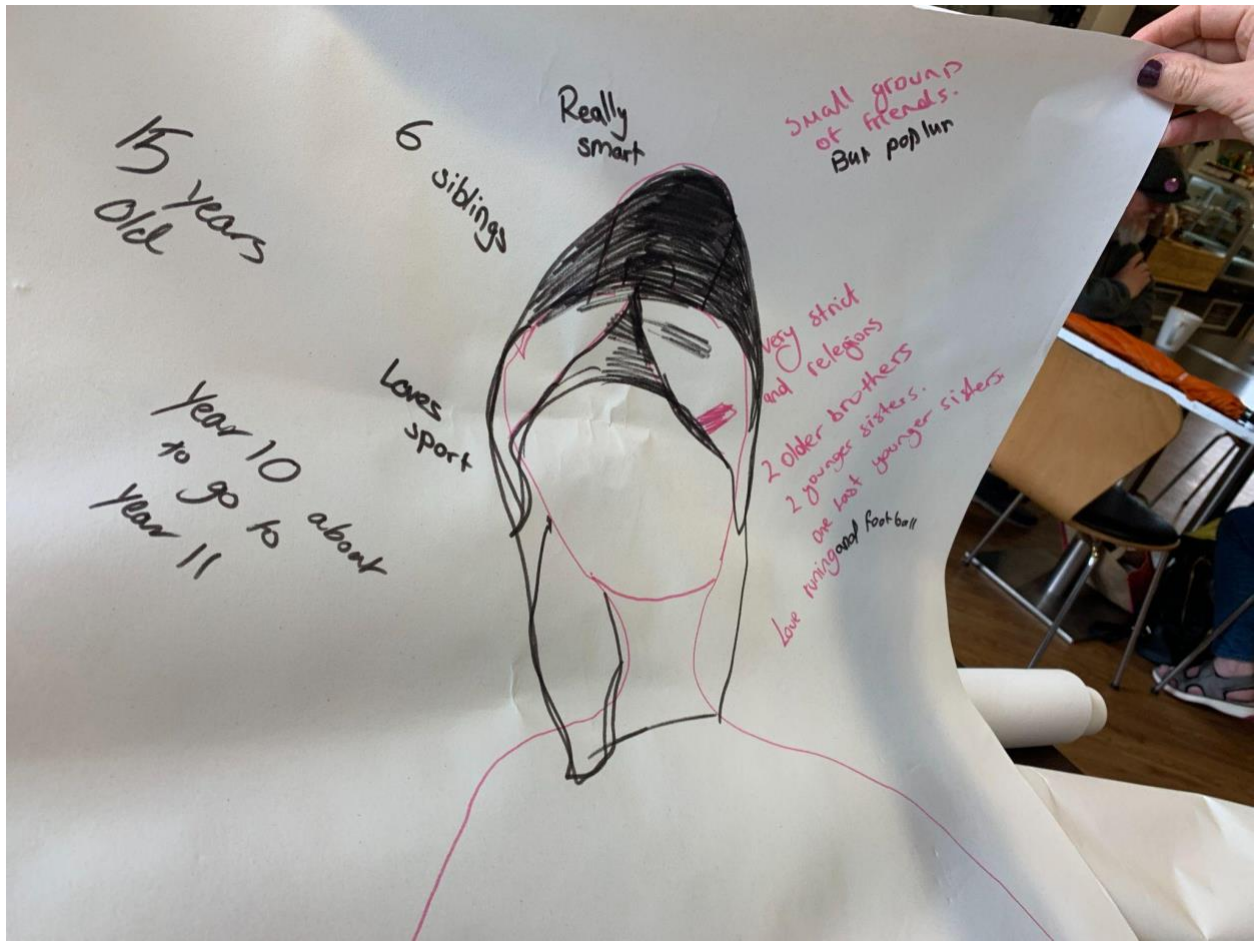
We started with some introductions – there were a lot of adults! We started with M. and she explained about the filming- none of the girls had remembered their consent forms and we decided to continue with permission being given retrospectively. M. was very skilled at making the young women relaxed and at being unobtrusive. Very quickly she ‘disappeared’ and carried on filming. P. and S. introduced themselves, looking at the Ipads and explaining about the Apps- although it was obvious that the girls weren’t quite sure what they were talking about!

We then played a warm-up game introducing ourselves by using a positive adjective – eg Awesome Ali- and remembering all the names in the circle- it got some laughs but I think we could have played one more game to get a good sense of a ‘group.’

We then started to revisit the ways we wanted to work, exploring confidentiality and being kind to each other. Some ideas about safety could be explored in more depth

We then started to revisit the project – looking at the portrait from last week and recalling some of the themes that had emerged about growing up. A. talked about being 17 and how hard it was to get a job because she wasn’t 18. We then started to talk about age and how being 13 was important to the girls and they were proud of being ‘teenagers’.

We started by drawing a girl, who we called Haleema and trying to ‘flesh’ her out. This could be done in much more depth – to really start exploring some of the contemporary issues for the group. We then looked at this weeks ‘interview’ which was a short extract from MIS09 with a Pakistani/British young woman about her family and her relationships with her father and her mother.



15 years
old

6 siblings

Really
smart

Small group
of friends.
But popular

Loves
sport

Year 10 to go to
Year 11 about

Very strict
and religious
2 older brothers
2 younger sisters.
one best younger sisters
Love mixed football

~~Male~~ Aged 20+, middle class, Mixed Pakistani / White British.
Muslim.

INTERVIEWER: So if we can get back to what you were saying, is it your father that's from Pakistan, how important, I mean is he a Muslim?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And is he a practicing Muslim?

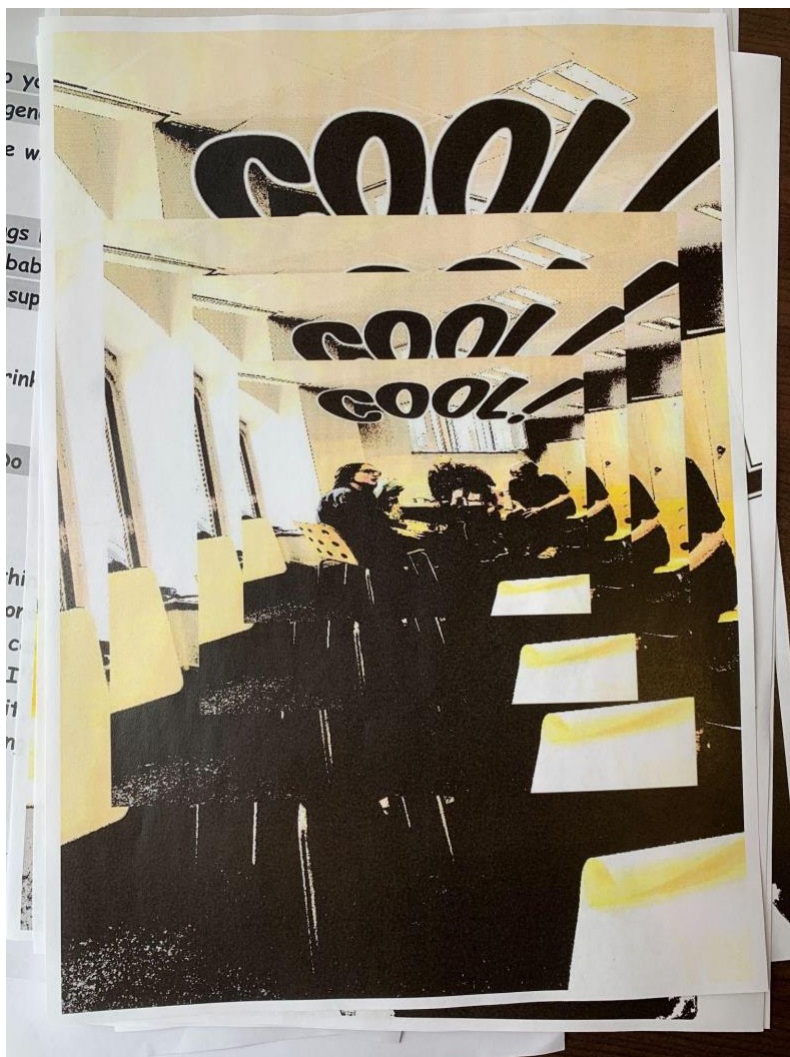
INTERVIEWEE: Well he would say he was.

INTERVIEWER: So how much influence has he had on you and the family?

INTERVIEWEE: It is quite strange I mean when I was younger he used to go on massively long, he was away for three years at a time and then he started coastal work in England so he was around much more often and my sister has had a lot more problems with him because she was the one who used to have screaming fits with him every Saturday because she couldn't actually go out sort of thing and I have managed to ease my way through that sort of thing.

We then acted out the interview with S and R reading out the two parts. - it was clear that although they were reading the words, that they didn't really understand the content, the father is always saying 'men are only after one thing.' And it was clear when I asked what they thought that meant, that the young women had no idea at all. We started to discuss what being a 'good' Muslim means now – the father in the interview is described as a 'good' Muslim. But this didn't engage the girls at all – we moved on to explore the roles of mothers in the family, it all seemed a bit flat but I think that paradoxically it was both too close and too removed.

We decided to move onto using the iPads and we split into two groups looking at the comic apps, both the older girls went into separate groups and began to work with the younger girls. It was really a bit rushed and slightly chaotic but there was a bit of a buzz, one group re-enacted and recorded the interview again, another group started to think about a comic strip.



M. was filming all the time and then asked each girl to talk to camera and introduce themselves.

Suddenly it was 5.30 and we all started to pack up and the girls said one word to say what they thought of the session: 'interesting', 'funny', 'fun'.

I had a train to catch so we said goodbyes quickly. P. agreed to print out more consent forms and leave them in the library where the girls could pick them up at another session on Friday. I emailed her a copy. All the girls left and we agreed to keep in touch by email. P. is coming on 18th and we have agreed to try some new ways with the extracts, perhaps poems, cutting them up etc and we plan to use drawing, the girls want to draw- as well as using the apps.

Session 4 (Continued)

By Ester McGeeney (using the documentary footage created by M.)

Two young women (S and R) are performing the parts of interviewee and interview from the MIS09 extract. R is wearing large sunglasses and a sunhat as her 'costume'. S refuses. The others are sitting around them in a circle watching. At several points Ali pauses the performance and asks the group some questions. Through her questions Ali encourages the girls to relate to the data and share their own experiences of family relationships.

Pause 1: Ali pauses the girls after 'well he would say he was' and asks what it means to be what they think she means by this. R interprets this as her saying that the dad is trying to be a 'better muslim'. When Ali asks what this means R and S suggest this means going to mosque, reading the quran, praying every day and being kind. There's a sense that Ali is trying to get at something else but she moves on.

Pause 2: Ali pauses after the section about the participants' relationships with her dad and his relationship with her sister (who has argued with much more). The girls all talk about their own position in their families and who has it easiest / hardest. They say things like:

S: I am the last one - all of my sisters can do what they want but they have to ask my mum. But for me, I have to beg.

Z: My sisters and I - we can do more than my brother.

E: My older sister - my parents had more expectations for her because she was the older one. She had to take care of me. I my mum wasn't around she was like the next mum looking after us...It was easier for me because I was the youngest one.

Pause 3. Ali stops after the line: 'men are only after one thing' to unpick if the girls understand what this means (its not clear that the younger ones do) and whether this is something that parents still say today. E suggests that things haven't changed much because boys are still mainly only 'after one thing. - 'I think now, especially with teenage boys, it's really hard to get into a serious relationship because nowadays boys I feel like they only want one thing which is similar to what that extract said. That maybe they just want sex or your body or whatever. So, so yeah. It's still quite similar to this day.' They move on to a long discussion about parental boundaries. Cultural and religious differences are clear here (R is Pakistani, S black african and A White British) but are hard to name.

S: If I am friends with a boy she doesn't have a problem with it but if i was in a relationship with a boy, mmm - I'm dead.

Ali: So you could say, I'm just friendly with a boy and your mum is fine.
S: Yeah she's fine. I have friends who are boys. My mum is fine with it.
Ali: But if you said, I'm going out with a boy
S: Not like out, like playing around like out, but not actually to like to date.
Ali: So if you said you were going on a date with a boy?
S: She would never let me. (all laugh)
Ali: So why would she not let me.
S: Cos she would say I'm too young for those kind of stuff.
Ali: And does she explain what kind of stuff that is?
S: Yeah (all laugh).
Ali: And what about your parents (to R) would they say anything to you about this and whether you can go out with boys?
R: If I ask them straight questions then yeah but if I just like go on with my normal life like...they will....kind of thing...yeah...I dont know...
E: (to R) would they allow you to have like boy, like friends, like male friends?
R: No.
S: Why?
R: points to a part of the drawing of Haleema and Ali reads out what she is pointing to. Ali: Very strict and religious.
S: My mum is strict but not like - I'm not gonna say african but my mum is strict but not like seriously seriously strict. Like everyday strict. I'm ok to have like friends that is a boy, like we can do everything together. Like my cousin, Lets say my cousin. Im allowed to live with him ...but not like in a relationship with.
A: I think its different for everyone's parents to be honest. My mum and dad have never had a problem with my hanging out with boys but i think thats purely the fact that from when i was little to this day I've always had boys as friends, like. It wasn't until I was in like year 11 in high school I had girls as friends. I used to have maybe 1 or 2 but it was all boys. Its obv probably a lot lot different for you guys but like boys can come and stay at my house because my mum has that trust with me because she knows its not like that. Its kind of like - Whats that word. Platonic. It's like they are my brothers, not boyfriends. But obviously for you guys it must be a lot different. It depends how you've grown up I guess.
S: So you're saying that when you were small yeah you were allowed to have a boyfriend?
A: no, no, like when i was little i always used to hang around with boys instead of girls and cos i have been like that since i was little up until now, they trust me around boys cos they know they are just friends, like they'd know if it was anything more because i'd tell them.

Pause 4: The final pause is after a section where the participant talks about her relationship with her mum who she can 'talk to about anything'. Ali asks the girls if this was their experience?

A: No (laughs)

R: Sometimes and sometimes not.

S: It depends. like when she's in a bad mood you keep all the stuff in your head later when she's in a good mood you say something. cos when she's in a bad mood she will not even listen to you. Ali draws in a couple of the other girls who haven't really spoken. They say they can talk to their mums. Ali asks 'who is the boss in your house' and the girls discuss their situations.

Pause 5: Ali is asking the girls about what restrictions / rules their parents have for them and the following discussion unfolds. Again it feels like cultural and religious differences are keenly at play (S and E are Black African and Christian, R, Z and H are Pakistani muslim and A white British) but are not named.

S: It depends what I am actually gonna do when I am going out. Like, if I like, let's say yeah, school yeah. My mom says, a school trip...it depends. Like if its one where you go away for like three days, my mum would not allow it because she would know that...Like I have asthma yeah, so imagine when like an attacks come, she don't know what to do. So, long trips she wouldn't let me go accept sometimes but she'd let me go for like one day. Or like sleepovers, she would never let me go.

E: That's the thing with sleepovers yeah. When I was younger we never was allowed to go to like sleepovers. Only, here was this one family that my mum knew -

S: Yeah cousins!

E: Yeah! So if my parents knew their parents or like they were friends we could go and sleepover at their house and they could come to ours, but it was never like -

S: Friends.

E: Yeah. Never a friend from school for example.

A: Awwwwww. (laughing and speaking in an exaggeratedly emotional voice and holding her hands to her face) That's sad.

Everyone laughs.

A: I used to go to sleepovers all the time. Aw I love sleepovers! You missed out! Girls!

Ali (to R): So do you do sleepovers?

R: No! Like, anything could happen. They might even have a brother! (laughs).

Ali: Ahhhhh ok. So that's seen to be problematic if there might be boy in the house?

R: Yeah but also the person could have like nits and stuff like that. They could pass it to us.

Everyone: Urrrgh

R: So thats why they didn't let me go, because anything could happen. And like, they could even kidnap me. (laughs a little)

A: Woah. That's extreme.

R: (defensively) Anything could happen!

Ali (to Z and H) And what about you two? Are you able to do sleepovers?

Z: Yeah.

H: (quietly) I don't like sleepovers.

Z: I did one before yesterday, and then I'm going to do a sleepover tonight as well.

Ali: Oooh!

A: Sleepovers every night!

After this they take a break and Ali turns to S. who suggests that they could make a short film based on the characters they have been exploring. She has ipads with her, which have a comic app. This is something the girls are excited about playing around with. They split into two groups and focus on a character each (Malaika and Haleema).

The session generated interesting conversations around family relationships, parental restrictions and religious cultural differences. These were sparked by the data and Ali's questions around Haleema / MIS09 and her frank conversation with the interviewer about her dual heritage (White British / Pakistani) and how this has shaped her views on relationships and sex. The theme of family relationships and parental rules remained the focus for this project.

Session 5: 18th July 2019

By Ester McGeeney

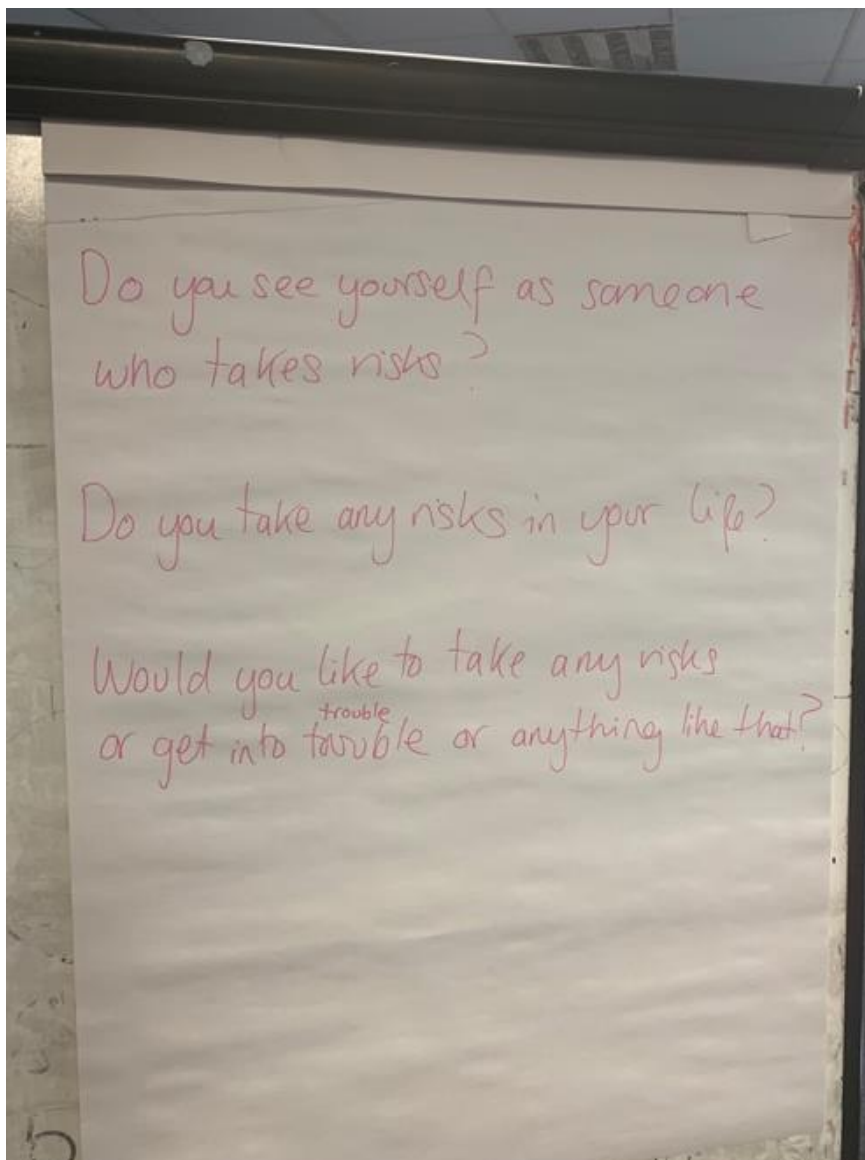
For session five we had decided to focus on risk. This was a theme that had emerged from earlier discussions, with one young woman reflecting that she doesn't take risks but would like to dye her hair purple. Ali and I decide that we will re-ask one of the questions that the interviewer asks to lots of the interview participants: Are you someone who likes to take risks? In the WRAP archive the responses are beautifully varied. One young woman says she sometimes doesn't pay the right bus fare, another says she once smoked dope, another has booked a holiday she can't afford and another stole some tampons from a club toilet. Our plan is to explore this data and reanimate it, using P., the iPad and the comic app.

Unusually most of the girls don't turn up, perhaps because it's the end of term. So we only have the two older girls who act as peer educators within the group. We all introduce ourselves and then Ali opens up a conversation about confidentiality. E and A say that this isn't something that they talk about much at school, only when the teacher wants to take you outside of the room to have a talk. It comes up a bit in E's health and social care course and in A's psychology course and in her photography course where they are told that they need to get people to sign model release forms. Although as P. reflects, as a photographer you don't actually need consent to take photos of people in public places.

We work in pairs, two peer educators, two youth workers, a researcher and an artist. P. gives each pair a mike and we record ourselves being asked: are you someone who likes to take risks? P. and I reflect on how this has changed over time with both of us feeling like we used to be a lot more able to take risks than we do now. We all reflect as a group that this is a hard question to answer. Much like many of the WRAP girls we struggle to come up with something to say. Next A and E perform a couple of extracts, audio recording so that we will have material that the group can use to play around with in making animated material. The first extract is about the girl who says the only risk she takes is going on a holiday that she hasn't paid for. This doesn't seem that risky initially, although it leads to A telling us about the time she went to London on her own on the coach. This was scary (and something E. definitely feels that she would never do) and A. didn't feel brave enough to leave her friends house much in the three days she was there. When it came to getting the coach home she couldn't find the coach stop and found herself wondering up and down the Hammersmith Road looking for the coach and then crying as she realised she'd missed her coach and had no idea what to do. All the adults imagine that young people get taught lots of about 'risky behaviours' at school but A and E don't seem to have. There's not much on

drugs and when we read the extract about the girl who smoked dope once, A and E reflect that this doesn't seem that risky anymore. Lots of people do it and the police don't care. Next we read about the girl whose risk is sometimes not paying the right bus fare and once taking tampons from a club toilet. Not paying the right bus fare isn't possible anymore the girls say although you can back pass your bus pass, slipping it through the line of people so that more than one person can use the same pass. And stealing tampons is fair enough. They should be free anyway. We all agree.

Interview with A. (recorded in 2019)



Qu: Do you see yourself as someone who takes risks?

An: I'd say in the last year or so I have taken more risks well in my eyes they're risks so, when I went on a residential to PGL and I did all this climbing up heights and stuff and abseiling that felt like a risk to me even though I was perfectly safe. um...I've taken other risks like I started singing in public which is terrifying but apart from that I'm someone who stays what they're comfortable with like..

Qu: How does it feel taking these risks?

An: Like it really gets your adrenaline pumping because it's something you are not used to doing. So it's like ok I'm doing this, I don't usually do this this is scary but...I mean after you've done whatever the risk is, if it's like an activity, you feel so much better.

Interview with NUR19 (recorded in 1989)

Q: The other thing I can think of, talking about taking risks, is if you think of yourself as someone who does take risks? Do you see yourself as someone that canDo you do anything else that's risky?

A: I would say going on this holiday is risky.

Q: What's risky about it?

A: Not having the money to go.

Q: You have booked the holiday and not got the money to go, yes I suppose that is a bit risky.

We run out of time and there was none left for doing and making. It's hard to find the balance between unpicking and discussing and creating and doing. Ali observed that the previous week they had split into two groups, one led by Ali and one by S. Youth worker Ali focussed on process, discussion, meanings and group relationships. Artist S. focussed on product – creating the comic strips and using the comic app. We agree we need a combination of both and that perhaps it's time to orientate this group towards making a product.

We are learning that the work is slow, that we need to talk as we do or the doing will never happen and that youth work is unpredictable. We are also learning that the WRAP extracts will take us in unforeseen (and forseen) directions. Or as Rachel Thomson has suggested - that the WRAP extracts are wormholes – tunnels through space-time that you dive into at one end and never

quite know where in space-time you will journey to. Jumping into one story from 1980s Manchester about NUR19's 'risky' decision to go on a holiday she can't afford takes us straight to London in 2019 and A's story of getting lost and panicky in London. Then we are off to 1980s Paris as P. tells us her partner's story about getting separated from her friend on the metro and roaming around the city to try and find her in a pre-mobile, pre-digital era.

We plan for future weeks to try out creating a comic strip or using the book creator app to create a book that animates the WRAP girls stories. The girls are interested in stories of migration, of fitting in and not fitting in when you move to a new place. More wormholes to fall down and see where we end up.

NUR19

Q: The other thing I can think of, talking about taking risks, is if you think of yourself as someone who does take risks? Do you see yourself as someone that canDo you do anything else that's risky?

A: I would say going on this holiday is risky.

Q: What's risky about it?

A: Not having the money to go.

Q: You have booked the holiday and not got the money to go, yes I suppose that is a bit risky.

A: Well I suppose that's the only risk I am going to take.

Session 6: 25th July 2019

By M. (Youth worker)

During this session the group explored more extracts from the interviews of young women. The focus area was 'taking risks'. The group wrote on a piece of paper what does it mean to them to take risks. It was quite interesting the positive comments they made. The comments they used: overcoming fear, saving someone's life, choosing a career/academic path, having new experiences, being positive, coming out of your shell. After that they used the plastic figures of different animation characters to present a role play from the extracts. The role play was on taking risks and touched different issues, such as taking drugs or choosing a job that traditionally is being occupied by men. Some of the girls are thinking of doing something similar, so that led to a discussion on the different choices women have nowadays, when it comes to choosing a job, compared to the ones 30 years ago. The group also played with their image taking pictures of themselves and using different digital alterations of their image; created speech bubbles with their comment on risk taking; created simple animation videos with the plastic small figures the staff

had brought. The group would like to explore more the digital equipment and create different stories and pictures with them.

By P.C. (Digital artist)

Nice session with the girls group the other afternoon .. in the sweltering heat!! M. introduced a couple of the extracts.. sound engineer and the camping in snow smoking dope ones.

We introduced the idea of being creative right at the beginning and the girls read out the interviews whilst animating a couple of characters.



M. got a discussion going about what risk means to the young women, they wrote down on a big bit of paper. We used this as a bouncing board for the next creative bit. The words written down were then used in creative ways. Two of the girls made 2 images with words and backgrounds. They were very quick and fluid but produced lovely finished pieces. They used Pixelmator for this - a mini photoshop type app.

E. made a gif. This is another very simple and effective exercise. E. got S. acting out 3 confidence portraits that were then made into a gif with words relating to earlier exercise.

S. and another couple of girls made animations. This was all done very quickly so quite rough but enjoyable and good to start seeing where this could go.

Session 7: 1st August

2019

By Ester McGeeney

I'm on my way back. I'm soaked. It was summer when I left home and up here there's flooding, cancelled trains and thick heavy rain.

I met M. (youth worker) in the INSPIRE cafe before the session today. We talked about youth work and juggling multiple jobs. We talked a bit about the session and agreed that for this session we would ask the girls to select one theme to focus on for the rest of the project – something that

they could focus on to make an animation / comic as a final product that could be included in the digital archive and educational resources we are creating.

Three girls had confirmed that they would be coming today. It's quiet because it's summer.

E. arrived and then S. We chatted a bit in the café and then moved into the room. We started with M. asking S. to say what we had done the previous week. They told me about the digital animations they had made - first filming (using an app I later found out was called Stopmotion). They had used little lego figures to set up scenes and had taken photos of them. The app then turns the still images into an animation. They tried recording audio over the top - reading from the transcripts. They clearly enjoyed using this and wanted to try this out again.

We didn't do a starter activity - we had been chatting in the cafe beforehand and we felt that as we didn't have much time it was better to get straight on with things. Later I felt like maybe something fun at the beginning would have been a good idea as it was a bit of a stilted session at times.

I recapped what the project was about (exploring an archive from thirty years ago and seeing if the archive is interesting and how things have changed or stayed the same for girls and women in Manchester). I asked if there were any themes that they had looked at already that they were interested in exploring further and E. said that they had been really interested in the relationship with parents. She said that the extract they had read before really stuck with her as it felt like nothing had changed. S. agreed. I had one extract printed with me that was about a strict dad / going out. S. and E. read it out

AMB18 Extract one

QU:Who do you live with?

AN:I live with my parents.

QU:Mum and dad?

AN:Yeah.

QU:How do you get on with them?

AN:Alright.They're protective,like.

QU:Not letting you out?

AN:He lets me out, sometimes he won't.

QU:How much do you go out?

AN:I stay in all week because I'm tired from work. Weekends I go out, not all the time...[xxx]..if I feel like it.

QU:What time does he say you have to be in by?

AN:He don't say the time. I come in when I feel like it.

QU:He doesn't want to know who you've been with?

AN:Yeah, that's right.

QU:Do you tell him?

AN:I used to lie to him, when I was going out with my boyfriend. He didn't like it...I used to just say I was going to my friend's. I used to just lie to him.

QU:Wouldn't he have liked it if he knew you had a boyfriend?

AN:Well, he did find out. Kept on moaning. Mum didn't mind..she kept going on at me. Then I thought, right, I'm not going to listen to them anymore. I'm going to ignore them. I've had enough, at home. I'll say that I'm going to leave home, but I won't go.

QU:Do they think that you're going to?
 AN:My mum goes - oh, get out of the house! Then when I'm going to the [xxx], she goes - oh, better wait til your dad gets back. ..[xxxx]...She always says - I can't wait til you get out of this house..
 QU:So how many of you are there living at home?
 AN:Seven, five brothers, one sister. One of them's already left home and the other's moving out.
 QU:Any younger than you?
 AN:No, I'm the youngest.
 QU:And you've got a lot of brothers?
 AN:Yeah.
 QU:What's that like?
 AN:Oh,gosh! They're like me dad. They're worse.
 QU:Do they try to protect you?
 AN:Yeah.
 QU:In what way?
 AN:They're worse than..[xxx]
 QU:Do they go out and..[xxx]
 AN:Yeah...
 QU:Do they get the same treatment?
 AN:No, it's just me.
 QU:Do they worry that you'll get pregnant?
 AN:Yeah, I think so.

As soon as they finished S. said something like my mum would kill me if I got pregnant. She said her mum says she'll kick her out if she gets pregnant. (When I asked) S and E said that their parents never say how not to get pregnant or anything about sex or contraception – they just give the clear message not to get pregnant or in E's case – not to 'do anything stupid'. I asked S. if her mum would kick her brother out if he got someone pregnant and she said no. S. didn't seem to think this was unfair though as her brother is older.

E and S read the next extract from AMB18- when E. said the line 'the more your parents try to stop you, the more you want to do it' M. E. and I laughed and E. said - that's so true.

Extract two AMB18

AN:My mum was alright, but my dad was just going on, saying, Who're you going out with? Things like that. Where you going? He don't mention times, he just said don't be late.
 QU:Do they disagree with sex before marriage then?
 AN: No, nothing like that. But they think that because I'm at college, they think I should get on with what I'm doing, then wait for a bit.[xxxx]..I'm not that stupid, cos I don't want to get pregnant yet, you know what I mean? I'll finish off me course and do more hairdressing, get more money til I can afford to get a house and things like that.
 QU: So it's not a religious thing with them?
 AN:No, not like that. They don't want me to see how my job goes..[xxx] 16 years old...
 QU:Which is fair enough.
 AN:Yeah, I understand that. I agree with them. But I don't want them to stop me from seeing people, like stop me from doing things. The more your parents stop you from doing things the more you want to do it. Like, don't smoke! (smoking gesture) When my parents

were..[xxx]..they were arguing, being strict..[xxx]..They were trying to make us grow up like that, but I don't think it's right.

QU:They didn't do it with your brothers?

AN:I can't remember cos I was young. Me brother, I remember when he was 16, he was going out, he had to be in half ten, 11 o'clock. He just got fed up, started doing their own things.

QU:They didn't have the same sort of protection you did?

AN:I think I get it easy. With my sister he was strict. He's letting go a bit. He doesn't let me go out all the time, but..

QU:Are you scared of your dad, if he gets angry?

AN:Yeah, used to when I was younger. I thought - oh gosh! yeah, if he hits me again I'm walking out of the house, not coming back...but he wouldn't do it anymore, no...I don't really listen to him.. He was strict, his mum were strict, his parents, because his dad died when he was 3. So that's why he's grown up like that. With mum, she says - Do some work, stay at home, finish off your course and then do what you want.

QU:It's not the same for you though, is it? (laugh) What sort of things do you do, when you go out?

AN:I go out, go to clubs and have a drink, get drunk.

QU:What sort of clubs?

AN:Down-town, studio bar, Hacienda,Gallery, Seymore's, have you heard of that?

QU:Yeah, used to go there.

AN:It's quite good there. I go on Sunday.

After they had finished the extract E's phone rang and she went out the room. I asked S. to imagine what the girl looked like. She said dyed hair and piercings. When I asked she said she imagined her as white. She was surprised when I said that AMB18 was Black. She said that White people are generally more 'free' and then black / African families don't take any 'nonsense'. When E. came back in we repeated the same 'quiz' and E. also imagined the girl as white and was also surprised that the girl was black. She said she thought everyone in the study was white because there weren't that many Black people in Manchester 30 years ago were there? None of us were sure on percentages although we noted that Manchester has a long history of migration. E. also said that she thought that the girl was white because she goes out clubbing. African families are stricter.

I read out from the field note about the interview with AMB18. There's quite a bit in there about sex - this might have been the first time this stuff had been talked out within the project? The girls were quiet and didn't say much afterwards. There's also stuff in there about the girl being selected to take part in the study because she was black. I felt like some of this was awkward / uncomfortable. There's loads to unpick in there - including the language - words like 'half caste' that are used in the fieldnote. It was hard though to unpick it all - it felt like a lot of pressure on the two girls to do all the work / talking because there was no-one else in the session. Things got easier when we started doing and making things.

amb18 Rt 25/4/89

[redacted]
age 16/17, afr caribbean, lives at home with her parents, heterosexual.

Pulled her out of her class, rather than another girl who wanted to be interviewed. I think she was aware that I wanted to talk to her because she was black as she referred to it a lot during the interview.

Quite nervous, spoke fast and not very clearly, kept moving about [redacted] Works 2 days a week in a hairdressing salon at [redacted] After the interview she asked me if I was married. I told her I wasn't, but lived with my boyfriend, she asked me if he was black. I would have liked to talk to her longer as we were just getting going, but she had to go as a friend was waiting for her. She never really relaxed but I think if she had she would have had a lot of questions to ask. Started asking me about STD's, I think that she was worried about an infection that she had had. We talked a lot about her father and his strict paternalism. She has been given very little freedom, not allowed a boyfriend until she has finished her training. Noted that black families are much stricter than white, referred to her friends as having a much easier time as they were half cast.

Said she would only go out with black men, thought that colours should stick together. Not enough time to really develop this. She was aware that black men were difficult to have relationships with. Wouldn't wear condoms, wanted to get girls into bed and then no responsibility. Also interesting on the double standard in terms of her families treatment of her and her brother.

Had had one sexual relationship and used no contraception as her boyfriend would not use a condom (neither wanted pregnancy). It was too difficult for her to go on the pill, as had to keep the relationship secret from her father. Next time she says she would go on the pill, she couldn't bring herself to ask someone to use a condom, especially a black guy.

Safe Sex: Didn't have enough time to go into this. I asked her about oral sex, she didn't understand what the word meant. When I did she did the ugh ugh "it's hanging....I'd never do that".

1

We moved on to playing around with making animations inspired by / responding to the data. We used the lego figures and the STOPMOTION app that the group had used previously. The task was to make an animation either of AMB18's story or their own story (about their relationship with parents).

E creates a scene using the lego figures about a girl who wants to go out but her father won't let her.



She takes photos of the scene to create an animation and then recorded a voice over. This was an edited version of the AMB18 extract - edited so that it read as more of a monologue: *'I live with my parents. Alright they are protective like. He lets me out. Sometimes he won't. He don't say the time, I come in when I feel like. I used to lie to him'*.

The film is playful - E is playing around with visualising, animating and storying the data. She shows me the film and explains:

E: The girl came in with her dog. The dog is important - for support (laughs). And she came in to ask the parents about going out, butt its really late so the dad's like. 'No. you can't go out.'

Researcher: Why is the dad on a little chair?

E: Cos he's like (laughs. all laughing) the man of the house. Whatever. So he got off the chair....and this way she's like. No you can't go. And the mum's at the back because she doesn't want to cause any trouble. And she turned around to talk with the dog (laughs). The mum came in to calm her down and now like they are all hugging. Saying, it's cool, you can go out tomorrow.

Researcher: Is that your story or is that-?

E: (laughing) I don't know. I just made it up.

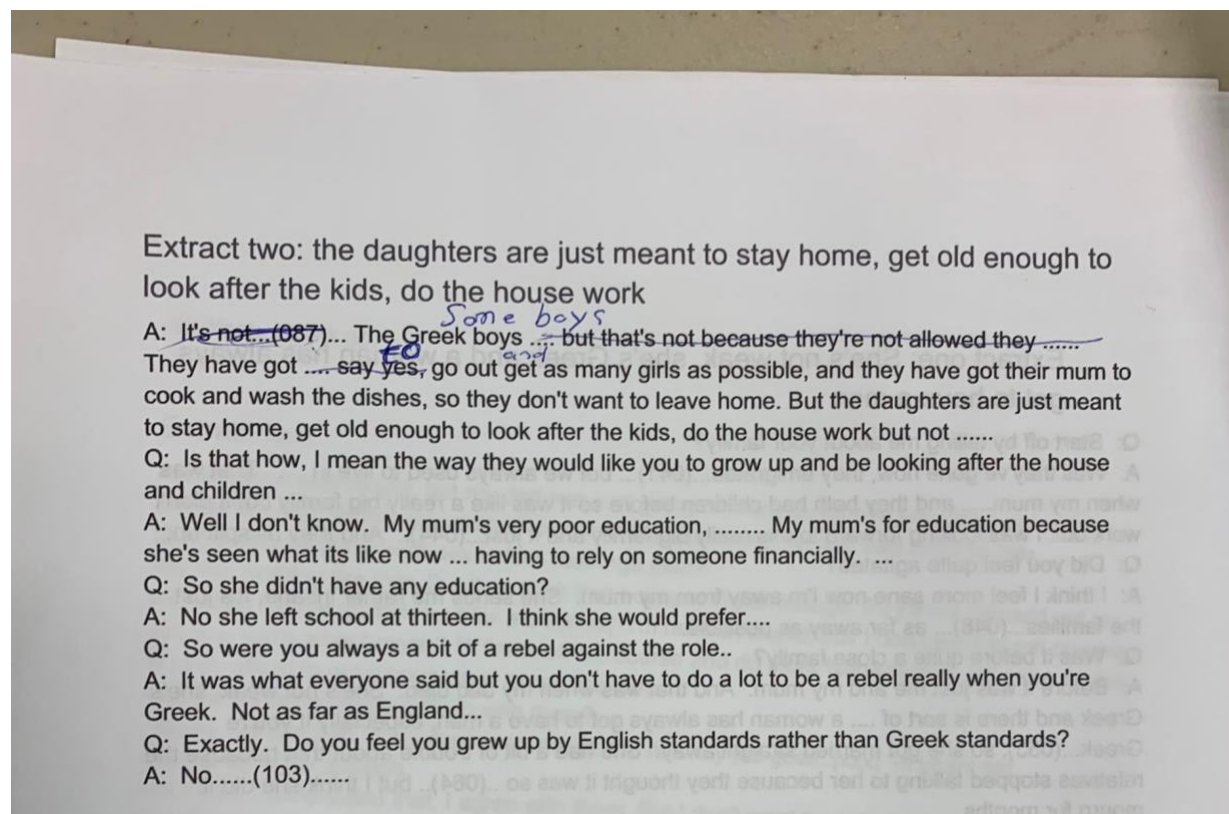
Researcher: Is it the story we just read or just a random story?

E: Similar yeah. I got inspiration from it.

S. made an animation about family relationships and housework. She said this was 'a random story' but also sort of her story - her mum always makes her do chores. S. (like E) seemed uncomfortable about telling her own story or owning this as her story. I had been showing youth worker M. an extract about a woman (ALS18) who has a Greek mum (M. is Greek) and is talking about their relationship. It includes an extract where ALS18 is talking about how she always has to do the housework. I read it out to S. as it seemed to describe a similar situation to her story. S

seemed more comfortable telling ALS18's story than her own. The girls edited the transcript to make it about 'boys' rather than 'greek boys' and so that it read as a monologue. S. recorded it over the top of her animation. It was tricky to get the audio to fit with the length of the animation and to make a quiet recording with no background noise.

S: (voice over) Some boys, they have got to go out and get as many girls as possible and they have to go to their mums cook and wash the dishes. So they don't have to leave home. But the daughters are just made to stay home.



In the meantime another young person M. had arrived. We caught her up to date. She saw us creating a green paper background for S's lego scene and immediately asked if we were using a 'green screen'. She said she had seen youtube videos about this. We had been trying to make a green backdrop but it wasn't really working. I gave M. the AMB18 extract to read. She wasn't sure how to turn it into a story that she wanted to tell. She started making a green box with three sides to film in and said that she wanted to do hers about her talking to her friend rather than an interviewer. She was experimenting with shifting the camera to different angles and seeing how the shadows changed. She ran out of time.

M. had popped out to get some pizza so we stopped to eat the pizza.

For next week I think it would be good to carry on trying to make short animation and if M. is there I think she would like to carry on developing hers. Maybe S. (from Manchester libraries) can help the girls to develop more sophisticated animations or learn some more techniques - S. and M. in

particular seem really interested in film-making and the technical side of things. I think they are keen to experiment with different techniques and make more sophisticated animations if they can.

It was good to work with a focused theme and to focus on 'doing' and creating but it was quite a stilted session at times - I felt like the girls were more relaxed when they were doing something compared to when we were reading the extracts out as a whole group and discussing them. I think this was partly because there were only two girls there for most of the session - it felt like there was a lot of pressure on the two girls to talk and analyse.

I also learnt how hard it is for these girls (in this setting) to tell their own stories. In another group (women's theatre society) the young women have seen the WRAP data as an invitation to tell their own stories, whereas in this group this is a strange and uncomfortable invitation and the girls seem more comfortable working with the stories from the archive.

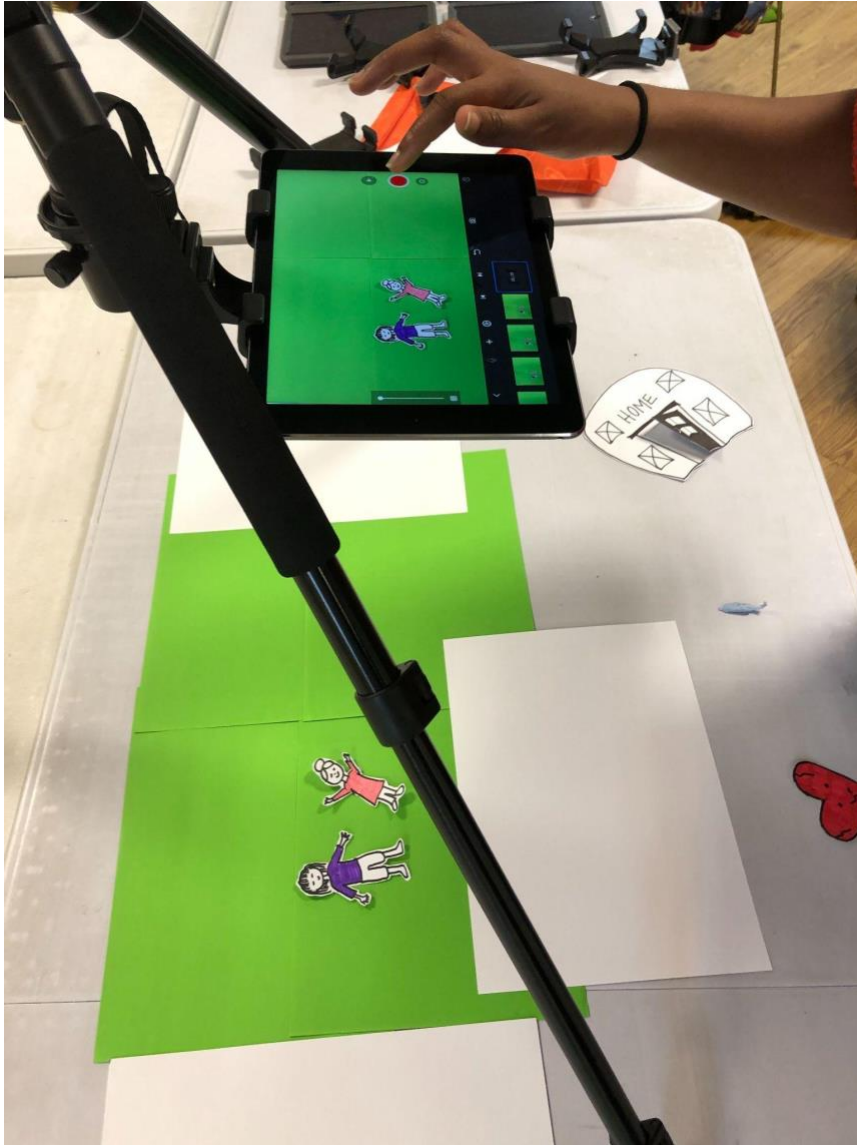
There is lots of data in the archive about parents and relationships with parents that the girls could continue to play around with and respond to - seeing how it does and does not resonate with their own experiences.

The other theme that came out of the session was race and how different ethnic groups have different sexual cultures - this includes what young women do, what is expected of them and what they are allowed to do. This is there in the material and in our conversations - sometimes explicitly, sometimes not. It struck me walking away from the session that there is something strange and uncomfortable about white people trying to get black people to talk about sex when they don't want and that this may have been what was going on in AMB18 (the fieldnote that I read out) and in the session today. The girls seemed to suggest that talking explicitly about sex and being sexually free is what white people do - not black / african people - which is part of why they assumed that the interview (and all the participants in the study) would have been white. This is really interesting and definitely something that it would be interesting to explore more. There are no extracts that are about this explicitly but it is suggested at in some of the extracts relating to parents / parental relationships that we have pulled together (AMB18, ALS18 and BT14 and MIS09).

Sessions 8, 9, 10 and 11.

By Ester McGeeney

Four sessions ran over the summer attended by three of the young women (E, S and M). They worked with digital artists S. and P. to create short films. E.'s was based on the extract amb18 Rt 25/4/89 that had been explored in earlier sessions. E. recreated the story with animated characters that she has drawn. P. and S. helped turn this into a short film. M. and S. also started making a short film about basketball (M's passion!) but they didn't have time to finish this.



Session 12: 12th September 2019

By Ali Ronan.

On Thursday 12th I met the group outside the room, in the café area. Youth worker M. was there and R the young Pakistani girl arrived with A the young Chinese girl. Then M the young white girl arrived with an older woman and explained that her mentor from Mind was ill, I thought the older woman said that she was M's mother but I was uncertain. They went to see if there was another mentor and said they would come back.

We went into the room with chairs seated around the table. R and A were obviously pleased to be back and chatted about the summer, spent in London in R's case, she talked about her family and about shopping- 'I got a hoodie!'. A was much quieter and didn't give much away.

Then M came back with the older woman and they said that they might stay for a little while. We stayed talking about last week and about some of the themes we had touched on, I explained that the project we were working on was particularly interested in how young women learned about sex, and what they learn at school. Just then N another young Pakistani came in and we all greeted her with delight and it was interesting to note how M reacted to people greeting each other with delight as if she was puzzled by it all. The conversation turned to poetry and N told us that she had won a poetry competition about young migrant voices. She recited the poem in Urdu, about travelling to England and about spending time in Pakistan. The group didn't really react although they were obviously impressed by N. She played it down and although we tried to encourage her to tell us more, she clammed up.

We then started to talk about what they learn about sex and periods. A and N both laughed a lot and said that they didn't really need any real education as they were not going to have boyfriends. In R's case she said that she would marry someone that her family chose for her and A just laughed and said that she didn't want a boyfriend as she was more interested in learning and getting on at school. (As I write this I realise that there are so many themes here to follow up, but somehow there is reluctance in the group to explore things in depth, they sabotage the conversation by laughing and changing the subject) But then M said that she had always learnt a lot about sex and periods from her mum, indeed the older woman was her mother and they were obviously enjoying the session. M said that there was a very little discussion at school and that the whole emphasis was on biology and heterosexual sex. She was articulate about homophobia and the importance of knowing certain facts. The conversation then turned to how we all learned about periods, N told us a long story about starting her period at school and how she had to get two friends to go to the school office to get pads for her. She stayed in the toilet throughout break. It reminded me of some of the stories that the older women from Harpurhey/Colleyhurst had told me. Youth worker M. told us a story from her childhood, that when you start your period in Greece, your mother slaps your face to remind you of the redness in your face. When she told her mother that her periods had started, her mother slapped her hard across the face and she wept. The whole group was quite shocked. T, M's mother told us a story about school and the difficulties of getting pads at her school and how little she was told by her parents. M was surprised, I think, to regard her mother as a young person (We learnt later that M has been diagnosed with autism) N echoed a lot of these remarks about the embarrassment still of asking for pads, about the lack of sanitary products in toilets – we suggested that youth worker M. might follow this up in the Inspire centre- and about the price of pads and tampons.

We then started to talk about film night and agreed on Hidden Figures about 4 African American women who worked on the early moon landings. We then closed the session. I had provided paper and pens and both R and A had drawn and doodled all through the session.

Session 13: 19th September 2019

By Ali Ronan

I had picked up (young person) M from school as she had said that she wanted to come to the group but her mother was working. She chatted all the way about college, about school and about her brother and so on. We parked up near the centre and then we found a tiny baby pigeon on the pavement that had clearly fallen from a nest. M wants to be a veterinary nurse and she was distraught. We put the bird into a box that was nearby on the pavement and went to the centre. Youth worker M was there with A and both P. and S. (from Manchester libraries) were in another room setting up the tech stuff. Both A and M were crying about the tiny bird and I phoned the vet who said we could bring the birds there. We went to the vet which is down the road and the nurse was very kind. The girls were so very sad, crying and not wanting to believe that the tiny bird had broken its wing and probably broken its leg. We agreed to leave the pigeon with the vets (it has since died) and went back to the centre. Youth worker M., N and another girl A who was N's cousin were there. M and A cheered up at the sight of cupcakes and icing – we had to stop at a supermarket to buy HobNobs (vegan) and vegan spread for M who is vegan.

S. and P. worked in another room with 3 girls to try and finish the short animations as this is their last session. E. finished her animation over the summer and just needed to record the audio.

M. still had lots to do on her animation (in which she throws a (hand drawn) basketball to her friend S. Drawing this session she painstakingly takes photos of the basketball to make it move through the air, making it look like the two young women are throwing, catching and spinning the ball.)



In the main room, E and N and A were reading the dialogue for E's film which was inspired by AMB10 25/4/89. M. (film maker) was there filming the session and we got all the young women to sign the consent forms (yeh!) and we did have a discussion about consent and ethics. There was an interesting discussion about the project, E said that once she had realised the interview was with a black girl she had felt more connected with the words on the page.

M. (film maker) asked the group what they had enjoyed, M (young person) was very clear that she like the opportunity to discuss things and to meet other girls. E talked about making the animation and the way she had been able to adapt an interview from 1989 to overlay on her own experiences. N and A became more animated and said they had enjoyed the chance to work with E, they had worked on the dialogue for the film and they spoke about that.

The cupcakes were a real success and got the group talking about veganism and food.

M. (film maker) commented on how much more animated they were and more articulate since the last time she had filmed them. We have agreed to show the film Hidden Figures next week.

Extract one

7.5 sec

QU: Who do you live with?

AN: I live with my parents.

QU: Mum and dad?

AN: Yeah.

QU: How do you get on with them?

AN: Alright. They're protective, like.

QU: Not letting you out? *Do they let you out?*

AN: He lets me out, sometimes he won't.

QU: How much do you go out?

AN: I stay in all week because I'm tired from work. Weekends I go out, not all the time... [xxx].. if I feel like it.

QU: What time does he say you have to be in by?

AN: He don't say the time. I come in when I feel like it.

QU: He doesn't want to know who you've been with?

AN: Yeah, that's right.

QU: Do you tell him?

AN: I used to lie to him, when I was going out with my boyfriend. He didn't like it... I used to just say I was going to my friend's. I used to just lie to him.

QU: Wouldn't he have liked it if he knew you had a boyfriend? *Are your parents happy*

AN: Well, he did find out. Kept on moaning. Mum didn't mind.. she kept going on at me. Then I thought, right, I'm not going to listen to them anymore. I'm going to ignore them. I've had enough, at home. I'll say that I'm going to leave home, but I won't go. *that you have to*

QU: Do they think that you're going to? *Do they think you'll leave*

AN: My mum goes - oh, get out of the house! Then when I'm going to the [xxx], she goes - oh, better wait til your dad gets back. [xxxx]... She always says - I can't wait til you get out of this house..

QU: So how many of you are there living at home? *How many people live in your house*

AN: Seven, five brothers, one sister. One of them's already left home and the other's moving out.

QU: Any younger than you?

AN: No, I'm the youngest.

QU: And you've got a lot of brothers? *do you have a lot of brothers*

AN: Yeah.

QU: What's that like?

AN: Oh, gosh! They're like me dad. They're worse.

QU: Do they try to protect you?

AN: Yeah. *They're worse than my dad*

QU: In what way?

AN: They're worse than.. [xxx]

QU: Do they go out and.. [xxx]

AN: Yeah...

QU: Do they get the same treatment?

AN: No, it's just me.

QU: Do they worry that you'll get pregnant?

It's chaos at home

Girls group: Part two

This document contains edited field notes written by researchers and practitioners involved in part two of the work with the girls group. The project involved young women from the group, two youth workers, a member of the reanimating data project team (Ali Ronan) as well as a textile artist (H) and film maker (M.).

Some notes were written after a session to document the work, reflect on the project and plan for future sessions. Some notes were taken after watching documentary footage of the sessions. All notes have been compiled by Ester McGeeney to create a record of the project and edited to protect the anonymity of young people and collaborators.

3 October 2019

By Ali Ronan

I had arranged for H. to come to this session, H. is a 'stitcher' and maker and an experienced group worker too. She is a white young woman.

There were 10 women in the group, 4 workers (all white, the youth worker M. is Greek) and 6 young women. 2 Pakistani, 1 Chinese, 1 Black, 2 white : all born between 1997-2007.

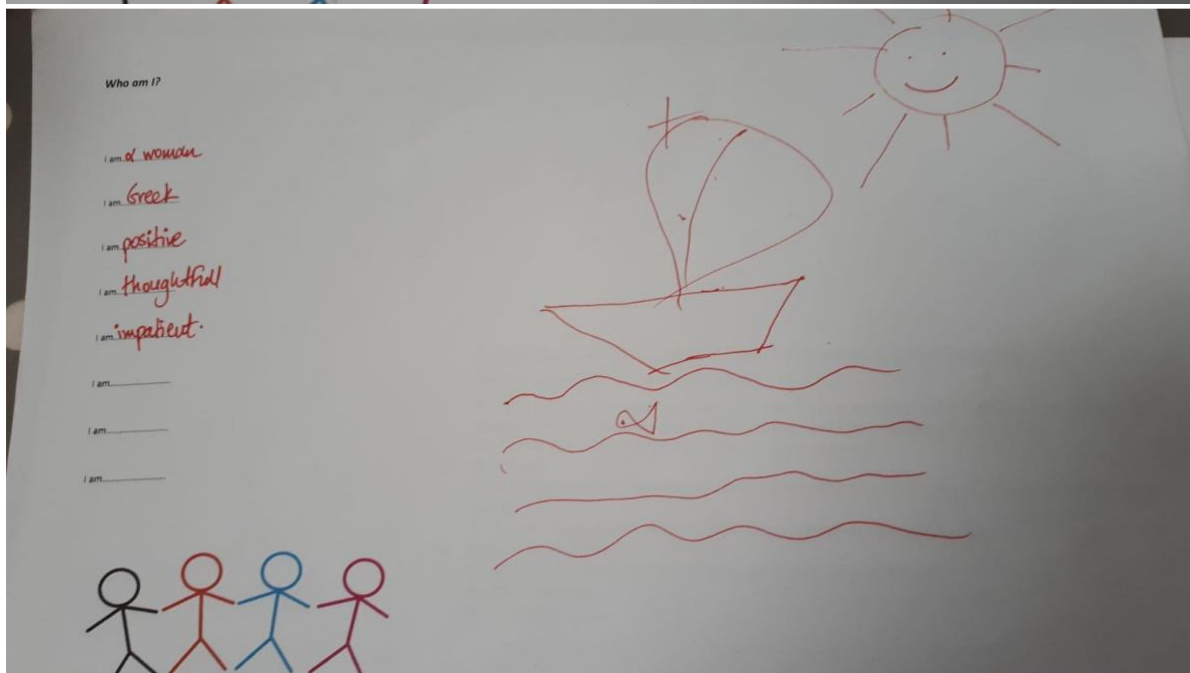
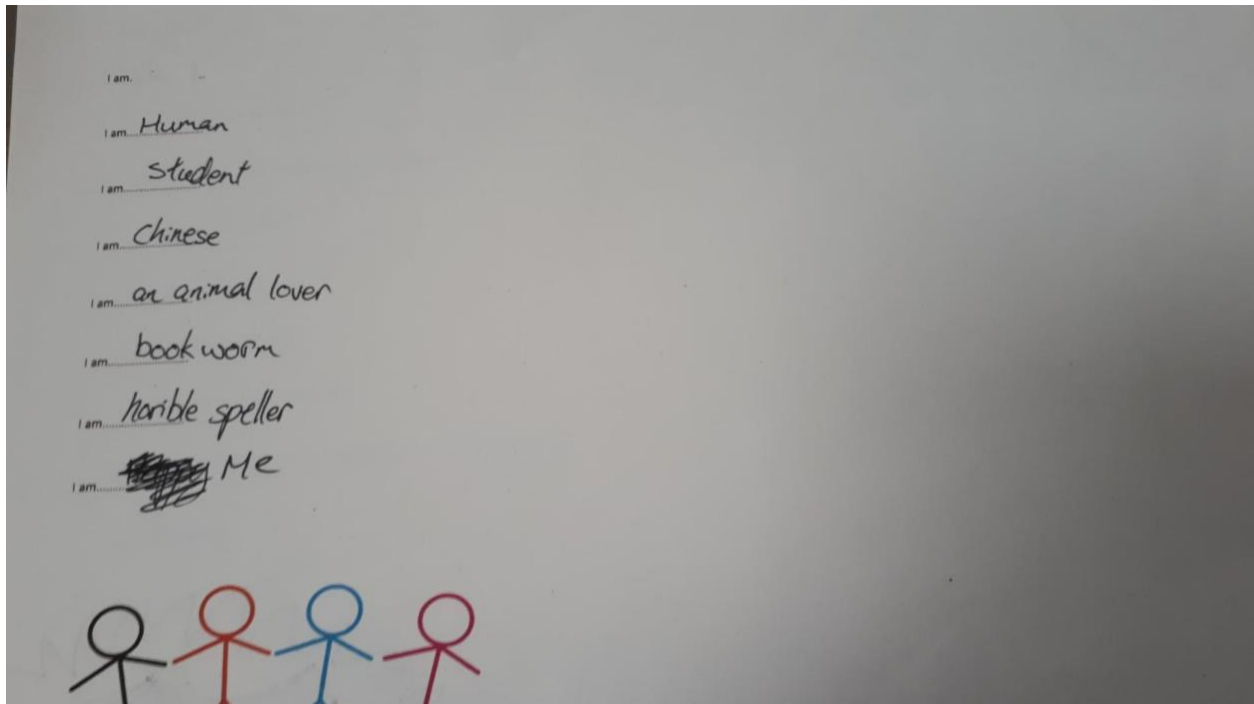
We started with introducing ourselves using a positive adjective – Heavenly H. etc and this got lots of laughter. We then used a Who Am I? handout which provoked a lot of discussion, everyone filled one in and we then went round saying one line to create a very loose poem.


I am a woman
I am open-minded
I am human
I am a daughter
I am nice
I am a vegan
I am impatient
I am loyal
I am a student
I am pansexual

At this point, the group stopped and started to discuss the term 'pansexual', H. said she usually described herself as a lesbian and the group began to discuss whether they had opportunities to talk about sex in this way. R and Z, the two Pakistani girls, identified strongly as Muslim and M, the Black girl, as a Christian and they all wanted to discuss ideas about relationships,

particularly talking about 'virtual' relationships. A, the White young woman who is at University studying photography talked a lot about Instagram, SnapChat and so on. A, the young Chinese girl declared that she had little access to the internet as her phone is confiscated by her parents. Z and R also said they were not that interested in the internet.


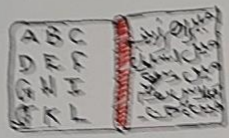


H. encouraged us to draw a representation of ourselves – prompted by me. This was the start of thinking about a message that we might want to create for ourselves.






| am a sleepy person
 | am a photographer
 | am pansexual
 | am a talkative person
 | am cold right now

- a girl
 - a human
 - a student
 - a cyclist
 - a daughter
 - a muslim
 - a person

I am
I am nice
I am good at sports
I am loyal
I am a Christian

I am
I am Human
I am student
I am Chinese
I am an animal lover
I am book worm
I am horrible speller
I am ~~Me~~ Me



We then looked at one of the extracts about 'fitting in' at school - this led to a very interesting discussion about 'cliques'. The young women said that these were often based around religion and that led onto how the young women 'read' school cultures. This can be revisited.

Extract four: at an all girls school, there were a lot of pressure to be the same, you can't be an individual.

A: I just used to do everything everyone else used to do just to be one of the..... Smoking in the toilets, I hate smoke and I used to pop out but I smoked... because everyone else.....

Q: At that age, how old were you, about fifteen, sixteen?

A: Fifteen.

Q: It sounds like that you weren't having relationships for your sake..... it was part of the whole scene.

A: It was really difficult at an all girls school, there were a lot of pressure to be the same, you can't be an individual.

Q: Why do you think that is, is it because it is an all girls school?

A: Well I don't know.....

Q: But things like....

We then looked briefly at another extract about 'bodies' and the young women were clearly very aware of the pressures of the media but also aware of 'fake' images.

Body: I have never sort of been happy with my body.

INTERVIEWER: Did it have any relation to how you felt about your body at that age?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. I have never sort of been happy with my body.

INTERVIEWER: Very few of us are allowed to be.

INTERVIEWEE: I had quite a few problems at one point. I think it was partly to do with the family as well and it was just my reaction against my dad. My dad came home for the first time when he came off the ship and it was just very difficult for a couple of years and I had a lot of problems. But even then I shrunk to about the size of seven and a half stone and I hated my body and I always have.

INTERVIEWER: Was the physical side of sex, presumably linked to that?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes it was quite difficult and I never thought I was very good and couldn't imagine how anybody would actually be attracted to my body or would actually want to have sex with me, or to be attracted to me.

INTERVIEWER: Were you thinking always in terms of people being attracted to you?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

Then we moved onto the stitching – we all chose a saying to stitch:

Shine
I am a Girl
Be confident
Be yourself
Stay loyal
Be positive
Be still
I am human
Stay strong

We began to choose colours of thread and started stitching – H. was great, very calm, very supportive. There was lots of discussion about the little messages that we might choose. The time ran out – we all gave the unfinished work to H. to complete for 17th October.

A quick feedback as a 'go round':

Relaxed
Chilled
Fun
Interesting
Nice – new
Different
Welcoming
Frustrating

17th October

By Ester McGeeney (based on watching footage of the session)

Ali is opening a packet of biscuits. M. (film maker) is filming. The girls are signing consent forms.

Ali is leading the session. She talks about a book she's been reading which has the idea of having a soul who is an animal. Ali asks: if you had an animal that represented you, what would you be.

M (YP). says what kind of dog she would be (Pomorianian) and why (I'm a person who can be quite clingy / yappie - I talk a lot).

A (YP). - mine would be a cat. Because I can be really calm but if I'm unhappy or offended I'm really stormy and not a nice person. I actually scratched someone once. I would be a black cat because I normally stay in the shadows.

A (youth worker) a lion. Can be laid back and sleepy but can be aggressive and protective.

M (youth worker)- a type of bird.

Z - you'd be a spider.

M - I love the sense of freedom in the air and in the sea. A sea eagle.

Ali - I'm a cheetah - I get very excited about things - I'm speedy in that way and then when i'm finished i just stop.

U. - A husky. They are black and white. I don't like dogs.

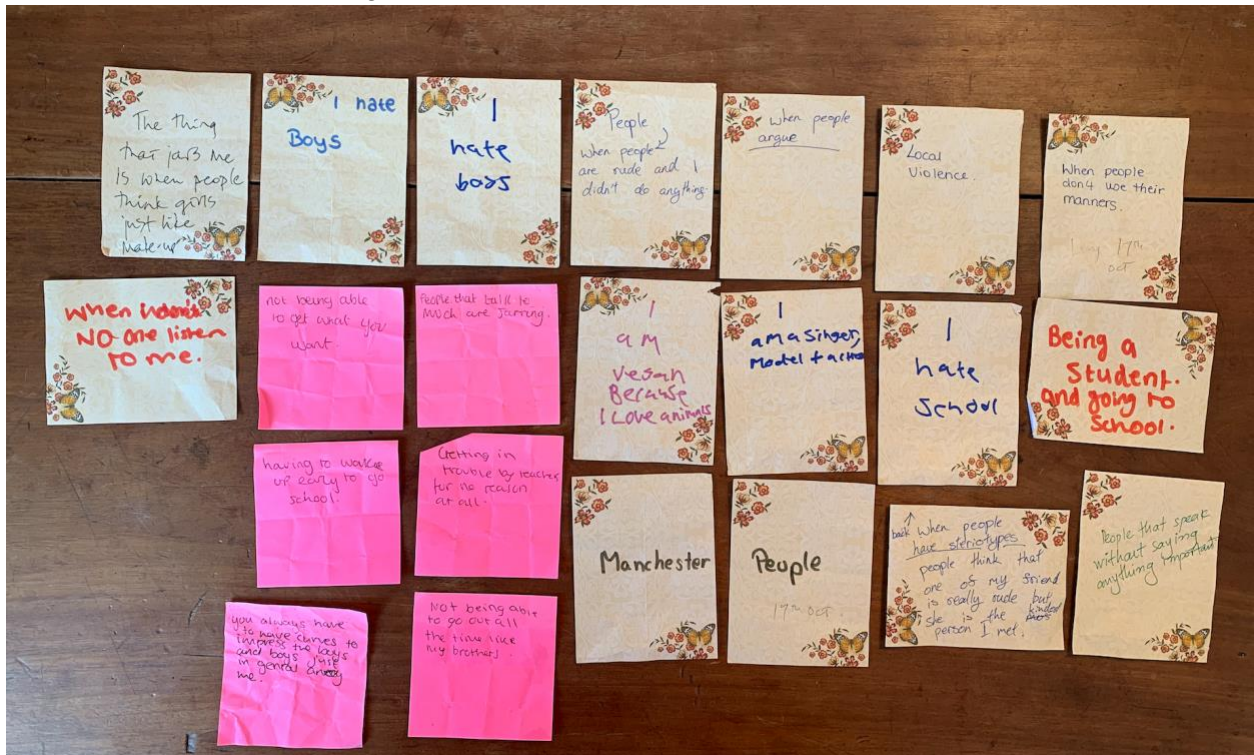
Aa: - can't think of anything.

Z. - I'd be a parrot. It can fly and it can talk. Its colourful.

S. - I wanna be a wolf - I just love them. I'm always warm.

Ali recaps what animals everyone is.

Ali introduces the jar activity. Puts people in pairs and gives them empty jars and pieces of paper. She asks them to think of things that jar them about being a girl / being at school / being young. S. is annoyed because she's already had to write a lot today. The girls write their jar comments. Some are finding it hard.



Z is showing a square of fabric she made with H (a textile artist who has been working with the group) - to represent who I am (she says). Ali asks her what it means to be a girl. She says: 'girls like different things to boys.' and then the other girls join in the conversation which goes something like as follows.



M- I wouldn't want to be a boy.

S - I would.

U - They have too much freedom.

Z - They don't tell their parents where they go.

A - My brother can walk down the street when it's dark but I can't.

S - I feel like their lives are so easy. You know when you need to pee yeah?! (laughing). Its easier for boys.

M - They expect boys to be strong. Boys are controlling.

A - Everyone thinks the boys are stronger and they are going to help us but actually it's the other way round. We are stronger mentally. Most of us are smarter than the boys. The teacher wants us to help the boys. They take all the credit.

M. - People expect boys not to be emotional or to cry. People expect girls to be emotional.

U. - Girls can wear boys clothes but boys can't wear girls clothes.

S - some boys are so stupid.

The youth worker M. asks about whether women can multi-task better than men.

Ali - women are better at taking care of each other.

A. - Boys always go around together - 10 of them.

S. - Boys are more free. Girls gossip and talk about each other.

Z. - Teachers can't handle boys. Z says that she likes that she goes to an all girls school.

S - Mixed is good because you have communication with boys. How can you communicate with boys?

Ali - reads some of the jar comments. 'People who speak without having anything to say.'

'When people don't listen to me.' U says - my mum always listens to my little sisters and not me.

Discussion of whether people can talk to their sisters / mums. 'Local violence' is another comment written by one of the youth workers. Talk about the number of stabbings that there

have been locally in the past week. S. talks about a boy at school that she is really scared of. She sits next to him in maths and is scared of him. 'I hate school'. She says. A says - 'I like school but I don't like the lessons'. A says - 'people make fun of me because my name is chinese'.

Some of the girls talk about being a muslim at school. Ali is asking about sex education at school. For some it happens in science lessons - delivered by a male teacher. Some YP don't 'care' about sex ed. Youth workers say it's important to understand about your body. Some girls saying that they wouldn't talk to their mums about sex. Ali and youth worker (M) read an extract. (From Haleema / MIS09) about what advice she got from mum about having an eating disorder / periods. Ali pauses to invite the girls to relate to the extract.

Ali and M. continue to read the extract. Ali breaks at points to say something / ask questions. Discussion about the importance of having an older sister to talk about periods. Some of the girls are struggling to take part in the conversations. More able to talk about how the school encourages them as girls (they go to an all girls school). Eventually everyone gets going on the topic of siblings - in particular sisters. One girl says she wishes she had younger sisters as her house is always so quiet and no-one talks. She likes going to her friend's house because its so noisy. Ali offers them a game to end but Z. wants to 'read' (the data). M. comments that Z loves acting. She reads from the 'Louise' interview with M.. The other girls don't want to read.

Z and M are reading from Louise. The extract is about talking to your mum. 'I wouldn't let her tell me anything'. Ali asks the girls whether they agree and they also feel embarrassed. No-one wants to discuss it. M. asks to read another extract. Youth worker says she and her mum avoid talking about things.

Ali is asking the girls if they can talk to their mums. M. (youth worker) says its hard to talk to her mum because she is very dramatic in her reactions. M. (YP) has picked up a jar comment that Ali wrote and they discuss it.

They talk about whether girls actually like 'girly' things. A. talks about how she used to like pink and now she likes black and her brother likes pink. M (YP) reads another comment and they talk about the stereotype of a dumb blond. They read some more jar comments.

They play a game and laugh a lot and close by each saying one word about the session: Interesting, nice, cool, amazing, fun, disgusting. Ali - good fun, time flies. They talk about what they would like to talk about in future sessions. M (YP) really wants to talk about bodies / sex but none of the other girls do.