

Institution: Manchester Metropolitan University		
Unit of Assessment: C21 Sociology		
Title of case study: Participatory Youth Practice: Using youth-informed research to transform youth justice practice		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2010–2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Hannah Smithson	Professor of Criminology & Youth Justice	2009–present
Deborah Jump	Senior Lecturer in Criminology	2015–present
Paul Gray	Senior Lecturer in Criminology	2011–present
Anna Jones	KTP Associate	2015–2019
Susan O'Shea	Senior Lecturer in Sociology	2016–present
Patrick Williams	Senior Lecturer in Criminology	2007–present
Rob Ralphs	Reader in Criminology	2009–present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2015–2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>The case study reports the award-winning impact of the Manchester Centre for Youth Studies (MCYS) and their work with the Greater Manchester Youth Justice University Partnership (GMYJUP) that led to the creation of a transformative new framework: Participatory Youth Practice (PYP). PYP is the first framework in the world to be co-created with justice-involved young people based on their lived experiences. PYP has had an impact on youth justice practice, on national and international youth strategies and, most importantly, on young people themselves. Over 250 practitioners have benefited from PYP training, resulting in improved professional practice in youth justice, gang involvement, and child sexual exploitation. The PYP methodology has informed strategy changes for Comic Relief, Local Authorities throughout the UK, and youth agencies in Australia and Columbia. It has doubled young people's engagement rates with service provision in programmes where it has been implemented and improved mental health amongst young people who have engaged with those programmes.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Led by Professor Hannah Smithson and supported by a team of 15 colleagues, MCYS is a world-leading, award-winning research centre, recognised for its ethos of promoting innovative youth-informed and youth-led research methodologies, with particular expertise in youth justice. The team in this case study have collectively produced over 115 outputs including 60 peer-reviewed journal articles since 2000. Smithson herself has worked in the field of youth justice for approximately 20 years, producing seminal work around youth gangs in the UK. Her research on gang labels established that young people tend to be excluded from research processes, thus eclipsing and devaluing their experiences and voices. Her 2013 paper in the <i>British Journal of Criminology</i> was based on one of the first qualitative UK projects to include young people's views and experiences in this particular field [1].</p> <p>In 2015, Smithson established the Manchester Centre for Youth Studies with significant investment from the University and quickly set about ensuring that their work was characterised by co-creation methodologies that prioritised the perspectives of young people (as reported in The Times Higher Education, March 2015). In November 2015, Smithson was awarded what became a ground-breaking Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) (G1) with the Youth Justice Board and each of the ten Greater Manchester Youth Justice Services, resulting in the Greater Manchester Youth Justice University Partnership (GMYJUP). GMYJUP is a unique model, linking effective practice, research capabilities, and collaborative approaches to delivering youth justice services across Greater Manchester. Unusually, the KTP was awarded GBP117,000 from <i>both</i> AHRC and ESRC in recognition of its unique participatory approach and its significance for emerging national agendas in relation to young people and criminal justice. Using innovative youth-led research methods developed by MCYS, such as the use of boxing, rap and grime lyric writing, and urban art,</p>		

GMJUP co-created the Participatory Youth Practice (PYP) framework with young people. PYP is based on eight key principles, including 'let young people participate', 'acknowledge young people's limited life chances', and 'develop young people's ambitions'. The principles guide youth justice workers in developing better ways to support young people and include them in decision-making. Led by findings from the KTP project, Smithson has explored the benefits and challenges of using participatory research methods with young people in criminal justice settings. Her investigation concludes that 'meaningful change' requires moving beyond a system characterised by top-down approaches, adult-devised assessment tools and a preoccupation with risk management to a system that provides young people with space, voice, audience and influence [2].

One of the participatory methods successfully deployed in the PYP framework was the use of boxing, as involvement in sport is commonly associated with a reduction in offending amongst young people. Jump has specialised in research around sport and desistance, particularly the role of boxing, since 2015. In earlier ethnographic work she explored the role of masculinity in boxing gyms in Northern England before focusing on desistance theory and the 'hooks' that are needed to support young offenders to make more positive life choices. This knowledge and experience comes together in her Bristol Policy Press monograph [3], where she discusses boxing as a tool for preventing and reducing young people's involvement in violent crime. Using findings from the KTP, Jump and Smithson's article in the *International Journal of Sport and Society* discusses the relationship between boxing and desistance from crime for the young people involved in the co-creation of PYP. They conclude that boxing is beneficial as an engagement tool and demonstrates the power of sport in working with young men at risk and/or currently entrenched in criminal justice system proceedings [4].

GMJUP and its focus on youth participation in justice settings has created a model of working that has extended beyond the initial KTP. 'Getting Out for Good', funded by Comic Relief in 2017 (G2) in partnership with Oldham's youth justice team, involved 90 young women (aged 14–24) identified as being at risk of serious gang-related youth violence, sexual exploitation and abuse. With a focus on youth-led methods including boxing, youth theatre and filmmaking, the young women helped their peers to reflect on pathways into and out of gang involvement, devising their own solutions through up-skilling and resilience building. The project has had positive outcomes on young women's mental health and has steered a wider UK advocacy strategy for young women at risk of sexual exploitation [5]. Continuing to adopt PYP principles and utilise sport in youth justice settings, the GMJUP successfully developed the Comic Relief-funded 'Kicking Crime into Touch' (KCIT) programme in 2018 (G3). KCIT provided weekly rugby sessions and strength and conditioning training for 40 young people aged 15–18. The project supported young people across Greater Manchester to desist from offending behaviour, while developing resilience and positive well-being.

3. References to the research

1. **Smithson, H., Ralphs, R. and Williams, P.** (2013) "Used and Abused: The Problematic Usage of Gang Terminology in the United Kingdom and Its Implications for Ethnic Minority Youth." *The British Journal of Criminology*, 53(1): 113–128.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azs046>
2. **Smithson, H., Jones, A. and Gray, P.** (2020) "“They Really Should Start Listening to You”: The Benefits and Challenges of Co-Producing a Participatory Framework of Youth Justice Practice." *Youth Justice*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473225420941598>
3. **Jump, D.** (2020) *The Criminology of Boxing, Violence and Desistance*. Bristol: Policy Press. ISBN: 978-1529203240.
4. **Jump, D. and Smithson, H.** (2020) "Dropping Your Guard: The Use of Boxing as a Means of Forming Desistance Narratives Amongst Young People in the Criminal Justice System." *International Journal of Sport and Society*. <https://doi.org/10.18848/2152-7857/CGP/v11i02/55-69>
5. **Jump, D., O'Shea, S. and Horan, R.** (2020) *Getting Out for Good Final Report*. Comic Relief.

A note on the references to research:

The use of co-designed participatory methods often means that impact is generated in a typically non-linear pathway throughout the conception, design and delivery of projects and therefore the majority of references selected for this case study appear quite late in the assessment cycle because they are the outputs that are most relevant to the impacts that are described.

Funding and Quality Indicators:

Overall funding of GBP667,000 from open competitive calls (AHRC, ESRC, Comic Relief) during the assessment period and an additional GBP300,000 award from the ESRC for the youth justice systems response to Covid-19.

G1. Positive Steps KTP (KTP010083). (2015–2017). AHRC/ESRC funded Knowledge Transfer Partnership, GBP117,000, PI: Smithson.

G2. Getting Out for Good - Comic Relief (Grant reference 2057330); two awards GBP286,479 (2016) and GBP150,000 (2019), PI: Jump.

G3. Kicking Crime into Touch (KCIT) - Comic Relief. (2018–2020). GBP100,000, PI: Smithson

G4. The Youth Justice System's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Implications and impacts for policy, practice and justice-involved children. ESRC (ES/V015737/1). (2020–2022). GBP306,704, PI: Smithson.

MCYS and Positive Steps won the Times Higher Education award for 'Knowledge Transfer Initiative of the Year in 2019'.

MCYS and Positive Steps KTP was shortlisted for the 'Best Societal Impact Award' at the 2020 KTP 'Best of the Best Awards'.

4. Details of the impact

The Greater Manchester Youth Justice Partnership (GMYJP) and the Participatory Youth Practice (PYP) framework have transformed youth justice services across the Greater Manchester region by prioritising young people within the criminal justice system, which has helped to tackle reoffending rates and improve life chances. The impact of the partnership on young people was recognised when it won the Times Higher Education award for 'Knowledge Transfer Initiative of the Year' in 2019. The KTP was rated 'Outstanding' by Innovate UK, and GMYJP was shortlisted for 'Organisation of the Year' at the 2018 Criminal Justice Alliance Awards. The project was a finalist in the 2020 KTP 'Best of the Best Awards' for societal impact. By reframing approaches to the development of policy and practice by including young people as active contributors with valuable insights, there has been an impact on youth justice practice, on national and international youth justice policy, and on young people themselves.

Impact on youth justice practice

GMYJUP research has had a demonstrable impact on the development of youth justice practice. PYP training has been delivered to over 250 Greater Manchester Youth Justice Service professionals. The roll-out of the framework has been supported through the development of a suite of resources (including training manuals and a film) that embeds PYP into practice. The Team Manager at Manchester Youth Justice Service reflected on his experience of using PYP: *'I find having conversations around the eight key areas of PYP really brings together what we do as a service. I use the same principles with my staff, getting them to take ownership of their team and the service we deliver, and having the confidence to say that we are a service that truly allows the kids to participate'* [A].

The testimonial also illustrates how these changes have directly affected the young people: *'through the PYP framework used by the Social Worker and YJ Case Manager all the push and pull factors that resulted in [the young person's] criminal exploitation have been replaced with positive pro-social alternatives, and the employment opportunity was the final tangible outcome that allowed this abused and neglected child to thrive and to feel a valued member of society and have the same opportunities as others'* [A]. Smithson's team have delivered training and supported the establishment of PYP in practice, helping to embed the framework into the Youth Justice Team's strategic plans [B], which means that PYP is now

'hard-wired' into a youth justice service provision that supports better outcomes for 1,500 young people across the region. The Director of Targeted Services, Positive Steps, Oldham, explained: *'Because of the work we've done around participation in youth justice, young people are being assessed in a different way, worked with in a different way and that is a direct result of this project'*. The PYP framework is used in a new standardised out-of-court assessment tool (OOCd) for young people across Greater Manchester. It takes a problem-solving approach to diverting young people out of the formal youth justice structure and therefore reduces the number of first-time entrants into the system. The tool has resulted in improvements in engagement. The Chair of the Greater Manchester Youth Justice Heads of Service underlines its importance: *'the OOCd Assessment tool is now embedded in practice, and feedback from colleagues is favourable. We know that improving engagement of young people with Youth Justice leads to much better outcomes, and the OOCd tool has doubled engagement rates with interventions over a period of 12 months'* [C].

PYP continues to have an impact on service quality and delivery outcomes. The Team Leader at Manchester Youth Justice Service confirms, *'Manchester's Quality Assurance Audit Moderator told me that our 'Outstanding' rated holistic interventions have the PYP Framework running through them. The PYP framework continues to be impactful!'* [C]. The Comic Relief funded 'Getting Out for Good' and 'Kicking Crime into Touch' projects in partnership with GMYJP are also having an impact on youth justice practice. 'Getting Out for Good' led to the creation of a bespoke mentoring service for young women at risk of sexual exploitation. For the first time in their history, Positive Steps are in a position to commission appropriate activities for vulnerable young women [D]. The Kicking Crime into Touch project toolkit, co-created with young people, led to the inclusion of rugby as a 'go to' intervention as part of Salford Youth Justice Service's provision for young people on Intensive Supervision and Surveillance orders [E].

Impact on national and international strategy and policy

The innovative nature of the GMYJUP model has influenced the approach of other local authorities and has quickly gathered national and international attention in youth justice circles including in Australia where it has been taken up by the University of New South Wales, Sydney. Representatives from the Cheshire Youth Justice Service Management Board have stated that *'GMYJUP is the first partnership of its kind. It provided us with a blueprint for how partnered working should and could look like'* [F]. As innovators of PYP, MCYS were invited to launch the Youth Justice Board's national 'Young People's Participation Strategy' at the Youth Justice Board Convention in November 2017, along with the former Director of YJB Cymru, the Youth Justice Board's Champion for the voice of the young person. Smithson has been invited to present the PYP work at the Youth Justice Board's national convention on three occasions between 2014 and 2017, and to the Standing Committee for Youth Justice in 2018 [G]. The 'Getting Out for Good' project's use of participatory methods is leading the methodological approach to phase 2 of the UK contingent of Comic Relief's national 'I Define Me' strategy. In partnership with four other UK partners, 'Getting Out for Good' has standardised the methodological approach to working with young women at risk of both sexual and criminal exploitation. This will pave the way for an advocacy approach for young people over the next three years, forming part of a national advocacy strategy for women and girls. The project team on 'Getting Out for Good', in partnership with Global Challenges Research Fund and colleagues in Bogota, Colombia, have also developed a co-production strategy around methodologies that were tried and tested in the UK on the 'Getting Out for Good' project. Jump has also completed an APPG report into the potential impact of boxing on youth crime. The report features a foreword by Chris Evans MP, chair of the APPG for Boxing. Jump has been invited to present evidence to the APPG on two separate occasions (most recently on 02/12/2020) [H].

Impact on young people themselves

Having worked with over 200 young people since 2015, MCYS' research activities have benefited many individual participants, helping them to generate new skills, complete accredited training, and realise many other self-reported and personal impacts. 'Getting Out

for Good' and 'Kicking Crime into Touch' have supported 90+ young people to achieve AQA qualifications – accredited by MCYS – in a variety of subjects, including leadership, mentoring, boxing, filmmaking, drama, rugby, and strength and conditioning. 62 young women attending 'Getting Out for Good' gained 240 AQA qualifications. Similarly, 23 young men have gained 46 qualifications through engagement with 'Kicking Crime into Touch' [I]. The projects have had considerable self-reported positive impacts on young people's lives, including improvements to self-esteem, mental health and wellbeing. 'Getting Out for Good' has had a positive impact on young women's mental and emotional health and wellbeing: standardised psychometric scores of nearly twice the national average in terms of poor emotional wellbeing are reduced by an average of three points after intervention of this programme. One young woman explained the personal effect that the project had realised: *'helping others is a massive satisfaction for me anyway, but my confidence has grown with it. So, I benefit from it and giving my help and experience to others, they also benefit'*. Another young woman spoke of an increase in self-confidence: *'I feel more confident to be able to do things, without feeling judged'*. Young men participating in 'Kicking Crime into Touch' also commented on the benefits on mental wellbeing: *'it makes me less stressed. Because you're just running away from your problems really, aren't you, but in rugby you get to tackle them head on'*. Another young man explained: *'it gets you active and helps with stress relief, and teaches you techniques and skills, and also conversational skills with people you might not have met before'*. The project also has a positive impact on engagement rates with youth justice services. Head of Salford Youth Justice Service, states that: *'we've seen a correlation between those who have really got involved with the rugby project and the completion of orders, licences and supervision periods'* [J].

The research projects and strategic interventions that employ PYP allow young people to participate in decisions about their lives, enabling them to have their rights respected and giving them a chance to make a positive contribution. Three different young women who participated in 'Getting Out for Good' said: *'meeting new people brought out a different side to me, and I was able to be myself around them'...* *'they've helped me feel stronger about myself and find out stuff that I'm actually good at'...* *'the staff here have been really helpful to me, they have an understanding of youth. They had boxing that really helped me. It's just great support really, you know that if there's anything you need you can go and talk to them and trust them with anything'*. This impact is brought to life in a powerful film that the young people who participated in the KTP created about their experiences. They wrote lyrics to explain the Participatory Youth Practice (PYP) framework and their experiences of the youth justice system, reflecting that *'young people like us, don't usually get these sorts of opportunities'* and *'no one ever really bothers asking us what we think'* [K].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- A. Testimonial Team Manager, Manchester Youth Justice Service; Manchester Youth Justice Service business plan; KTP final report; PYP training slides and evaluation.
- B. Salford and Manchester's 2019/2020 Participation Strategies.
- C. OOC Assessment Tool; Testimonial Head of Service GMYJS (including numbers of young people referred); Follow-up correspondence.
- D. Impact statement from Positive Steps; Testimonial from International Evaluation and Learning Manager, Comic Relief; Getting Out for Good film.
- E. Kicking Crime into Touch film.
- F. IDBS KEYPP Meeting Report from Leanne Dowse, UNSW; Testimonial from Cheshire Youth Justice Service Management Board.
- G. Testimonial from Director of the Alliance for Youth Justice (formerly SCYJ).
- H. Impact statement and strategy document from Comic Relief; APPG report.
- I. Getting Out for Good final report.
- J. Kicking Crime into Touch final report.
- K. Participatory Youth Practice film:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AljXXpOxi5Q&feature=emb_logo