Hannah Walters, Amanda Ptolomey and Donna MacLellan, University of Glasgow PhD researchers, collectively known as Girlhood Gang, hosted their first conference on 5 September 2018: Young Women and Girls in Contemporary Scotland and Beyond. Held in Glasgow Women’s Library and Olympia Social Research Hub, the conference was attended by 60 academics, students, practitioners, activists, volunteers, and young women, all with an interest in contemporary girlhood.

The event opened with a keynote by Dr Susan Batchelor, Senior Lecturer in the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Glasgow and based in the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research (SCCJR). Next, Amanda Ptolomey chaired a plenary panel discussion featuring Dr Victoria Cann (University of East Anglia), Dr Phillippa Wiseman (University of Glasgow), Dr Dawn Mannay (Cardiff University) and Julia Zauner (The Empower Project). Panellists discussed their own experiences of working with young women and girls in both the community and academia, considering questions surrounding the integration of theory and practice. The audience then heard from Julia Zauner who introduced the Empower Project, followed by a presentation from Dr Patrycja Kupiec and Naziyah Mahmood (Young Women Lead) about the work of YWCA – Scotland, the Young Women’s Movement. After lunch, delegates attended a variety of parallel panel and workshop sessions. The event concluded with a closing keynote from Dr Geetha Marcus, Lecturer in Education in the School of Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Glasgow.
List of panel speakers and workshop facilitators: Dr Victoria Cann, University of East Anglia; Mairi Gordon, Hannah Brisbane, Bethan Chalmers and Susie McGuinness, Girlguiding Scotland; Dr Phillipa Wiseman, University of Glasgow; Alice Carr, MScR student, University of Edinburgh; Dr Daniela Sime, University of Strathclyde; Becca McSheaffrey, Glasgow Film Theatre; Dr Amy Calder, YouthLink Scotland; Eve Livingston, Freelance journalist and writer specialising in policy, politics and inequalities; Dr Annie Crowley, University of Glasgow (SCCJR); Professor Lisa McDaid, University of Glasgow; Jenn Glinski, University of Glasgow; Dr Dawn Mannay, Cardiff University; Dr Jennifer M. Jones, Educator and digital media practitioner; Jennie Cook, Radio presenter events host, voice over artist and DJ; Dr Lisa Kelly, University of Glasgow.

FEEDBACK FROM CONFERENCE

Feedback from the conference was gathered in two ways: (1) at the end of the event day, delegates were asked to write their comments and reflections on flipchart paper; and (2) one week after the event, delegates were asked by email to complete an online evaluation survey. Overall feedback was positive and delegates were keen to see another event of this nature in the future.

Comments and Reflections

Warm and welcoming atmosphere that made it easy to share view and opinions. Felt very comfortable and collaborative.

It was really interesting to hear people talking about theories as opposed to their practical experiences of working with young women and girls.

Excellent range of talks and activities.

I found the sessions I attended to be informative and a good mix of theory and practice.

Wonderful supportive environment. Free and accessible! Thanks so much.

Hearing research, policy and practice evidence on girlhood studies on one place.

Thanks girl gang ♀♡ and sponsors!!

Great to hear about current work from a diverse group of participants, from different sectors, at different career stages.

Great to hear from the other speakers, learned a lot and the conference had a great atmosphere that was collegiate and supportive, was also useful to have a mix of academic staff, students and practitioners. Venue was also great and organising team really helpful.
Suggested Improvements

Including more practitioners in the panel discussion on theory into practice, more time for discussion.

It was a great event and a pleasure to be part of. It was very academic though, perhaps I missed that in the advertising and marketing materials?!

Not much to improve, but definitely a repeat would be good.

The event was a bit longer than most I attend these days but there were so many interesting sessions!

It would be great if this event could be repeated, perhaps annually with different guiding themes.

Make it bigger so more people can come!

I really enjoyed the event, I was only sorry I couldn't stay for the whole day.

ACHIEVING CONFERENCE AIMS

The aim of the conference was to create a space to learn and share ideas from theory and practice with young women and girls. 57.1% of those who completed the survey thought that this aim was completely achieved.

1. The aim of this conference was to ‘create a space to learn and share ideas from theory and practice’ do you think this aim was achieved? 0 - not at all 10 - completely achieved

7 out of 7 people answered this question

(Screenshot image from Type Form evaluation email report)
MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

Details of the conference and the call for papers were posted on a variety of media platforms and sent to multiple mailing lists, including:

- Girlhood Gang’s twitter;
- SCCJR mailing list;
- University of Glasgow’s School of Education mailing list;
- University of Glasgow’s School of Social and Political Sciences mailing list;
- University of Glasgow’s School of Education webpage; and
- University of Glasgow’s School of Social and Political Sciences webpage.

The call for papers had 28,881 impressions on twitter (this means it appeared on 28,881 timelines). Tweets surrounding the event have appeared on 130.5k timelines (averaging 1.7k per day).

MEETING THE AIMS OF INITIAL SCCJR APPLICATION

We applied to SCCJR PGR-led activity fund in February 2018, requesting £700 to: ‘facilitate a full-day seminar in June 2018 at Glasgow Women’s Library, entitled Young Women and Girls in Contemporary Scotland. We were successful in our funding bid in March 2018, and quickly began planning the event. Initial marketing of the event was welcomed warmly in the academic community and thanks to the primary financial support of SCCJR we were able to confidently approach other departments within the University of Glasgow and secure additional funding from CR&DALL, University of Glasgow’s School of Education, MacFie Bequest, and the University of Glasgow’s Sociology Small Grant Scheme. Our total funding allowed us to facilitate a free and accessible event for 60 people, with lunch, tea and coffee included. We were also able to cover the travel expenses of three key speakers.

Event Planning and Development

During the course of the event planning we made a few changes to the initial SCCJR proposal to reflect the growth and development of the event:

(i) We changed the title of the event to ‘Young Women and Girls in Contemporary Scotland and Beyond’ to include the broad range of topic areas and geographical spread of our invited guests and speakers;
(ii) We moved the date of the event from June to September to allow for appropriate organisation, suitable marketing and attendance planning; and
As a result of the high response to our call for papers and to give more time for workshop and panel presentations, we altered the format of the event slightly. This meant that creative methods, such as zine making, did not feature as heavily on the event day as we initially anticipated. For that reason, we were unable to do the ‘follow on’ zine exhibition that was suggested as a possible ancillary event within our original application. This is something that can be considered for future events.

MAKING OUR WORK VISIBLE

Throughout the planning of the event we wished to ‘make our work visible’, giving people the chance to see the amount of time, energy and commitment that goes into an event of this size and nature. Hannah Walters created this ‘making work visible’ collage that was proudly displayed on the projector screen during the introduction of the conference and is included within this report to give members of the SCCJR PGR-led activity fund the opportunity to see the storyboard of Girlhood Gang’s first event.

THANK YOU SCCJR FOR MAKING THIS EVENT POSSIBLE

Hannah Walters, Amanda Ptolomey, and Donna MacLellan