

Building a Human Rights Bridge out of Poverty



The story so far...

poverty... WAGES

Me... what's the point?

the less Universal Credit I get

Universal Credit

Life... everything is a STRUGGLE

...don't live in poverty...

Family Life

...support me

I live on the basics..

Social worker

... I don't have the money "to cover the cracks"

... it's about buying this...

University Declaration of Human Rights

Communities & nations

PEACE..

.. THIS happens..

.. THAT'S just a loophole for terrorists!

poverty in Britain..

Rights..

.. people in poverty are treated as less than human

... injustice & inequality

... yes.. well.. "poverty" eh? ..

... Discrimination...

This must STOP

Human rights education liberates --

Power & participation!

.. it gives us help to raise our voices..

There should be transparency

Spending decisions

Dignity & Safety

When it comes to government policy

.. underpinned by this

Who 'owns' our rights?..

WE DO!

.. no-one should suffer discrimination

Me

MY Rights

... politically driven myths --

Express: Asylum seekers take your jobs

Sun: Using "Rights" to break the law!

.. let's keep the population in the dark

.. must challenge demonisation

Even when we know our rights...

MY LIFE MY RIGHTS

.. the system can get in the way..

System GLUE

we shouldn't need to fight through this

The digital divide..

.. everything is done online

.. but we don't have access to laptops or the internet

Asylum Seeker

info for asylum seekers

The drive for real change..

.. lived experience

Tackling poverty & inequality

Background & day to day experiences

.. together..

When it comes to public policy...

poverty..

.. the root causes must be addressed

HUMAN RIGHTS

We need a fair & square system..

without this power imbalance

Power

power should

Yes, we need the basics...

.. but we should be able to flourish & succeed..

Food Shelter work

Me!

Enjoying life having fun

.. there is more to life than 'getting-by'

Too often, Asylum seekers in hostile environments..

.. the Home Office

.. this isolates me..

The Story so far

ATD Fourth World UK, University of Essex Human Rights Centre, Amnesty International UK, Just Fair, RAPAR, Thrive Teeside, Bevan Foundation and the Social Rights Alliance England are working together to:

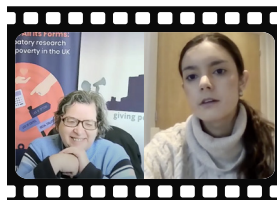
- Build and re-establish connections between people working on poverty & human rights across the four nations of the UK.
- Gain new skills and develop existing ones, enabling people to carry out their work, networking, advocating, and campaigning in a more effective manner.
- Increase confidence in carrying out work on poverty & human rights.
- Develop understanding of the relationships between poverty & human rights in the UK.
- Start the participatory processes to gather data and identify the key issues for the 7th review of the UK by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which will take place between late-2020 and mid-2022.

21st January 2021

Event 1: "Bringing together lived and learnt experience"

The first event of the Building a Human Rights Bridge out of Poverty series on 21st January "Bringing together lived and learnt experience" saw over 50+ participants from across the four nations of the UK coming together to share, reflect and learn from each other.

The event was chaired by Claire Cunliffe, [Equalities and Human Rights Commission](#) in Wales, and hosted [Just Fair's](#) Campaigns and Advocacy Lead, Misha Nayak-Oliver in conversation with [ATD Fourth World UK Activist](#), Patricia Bailey on poverty and human rights. Patricia drew on her lived experience of in-work poverty and the impact of poverty on the right to family life to question Misha about how people in poverty can defend their rights.



Video #1

youtu.be/dgGAQu4u9Ug
Misha Nayak Oliver,
Just Fair & Patricia Bailey,
ATD Fourth World

A second panel included: a member of [RAPAR](#) (Refugee and Asylum Participatory Action Research) who spoke about the [Status Now 4 All](#) network which is calling for 'Indefinite Leave To Remain'

for people who are undocumented, destitute, and those in the legal process: Nikki Hewson, [ATD Fourth World UK](#), who spoke about the impact of poverty on family life and how she defends human rights through parent-to-parent advocacy; and Kait Laughlin, educator, researcher and anti-poverty campaigner, who spoke about accessible human rights education on poverty. The full videos of their presentations can be accessed on YouTube.



Video #2

youtu.be/1Sw7HEtVCLA
Nikki Hewson,
ATD Fourth World



Video #3

youtu.be/OrDIV3ppv0o
A member of RAPAR

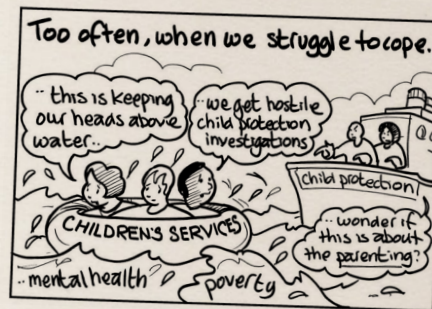
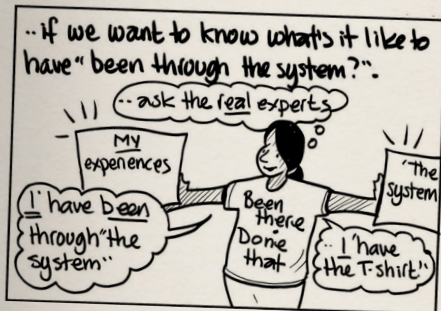


Video #4

youtu.be/QISa7Tf02T8
Kait Laughlin

The session was captured by cartoonist Graham Ogilvie whose cartoons are used in this document to illustrate issues explored.

21st January Event 1: "Bringing together lived and learnt experience"



Wednesday 10th February 2021

Event 2: "Good Practice in Local Advocacy"

Wednesday 10th February saw the second event in the Building a Human Rights Bridge out of Poverty series "Good Practice in Local Advocacy". The event brought together activists and communities to showcase good practice in local advocacy on poverty and human rights. 8 speakers from different projects and organisations across the four nations, gave short presentations about their work followed by interactive workshops.

The event provided the organisations working on these projects with an opportunity to share information about their great work fighting poverty. It created space for participants to network and build connections between projects and activists and it inspired us all to develop campaigns and actions that are creative and that centre those with lived experience.

The event was divided into two sessions, with four organisations sharing their experiences in each part. Both sessions began with a short plenary where each organisation provided a short overview of their work, chaired by Koldo Casla, from [University of Essex](#). The event then broke into four workshops with participants hearing from an organisation in greater detail, alongside having an opportunity to network and share ideas. This note will provide a quick overview of what was discussed in each workshop and provide more details on how participants can contact some of the great organisations we heard from at the event.

Workshop Summaries



Right to work: Right to welfare

by Participation and Practice of Rights (PPR)

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Taking the PANEL approach to housing

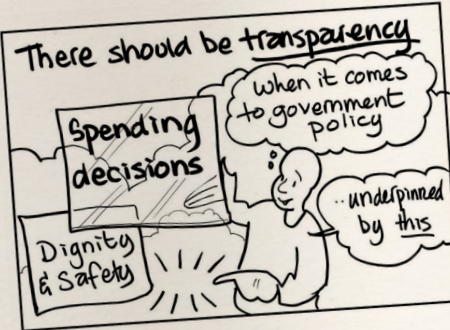
by Making Rights Real

p7

Do your duty for equality

by Poverty 2 Solutions

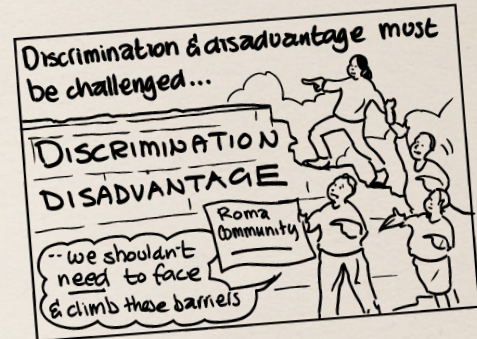
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Roma Champions for Roma Families

by Law for Life & Roma Support Group

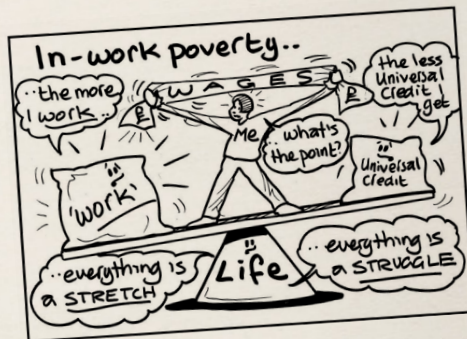
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A Journey Through Transition

by Hart Gables

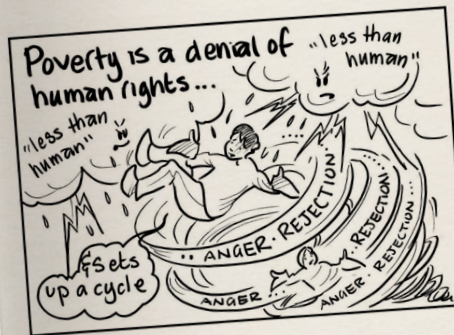
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Stop School/ Hunger Dysgu Nid Llwg

by Trenfu Cymunedol Cymru/ Together Creating Communities (TCC)

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Digital Access as a Human Right

by BetterConNEcted

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Even when we know our rights...

...the system can get in the way...



You Want me to do what?! - Place, Power and Participation: on equitable participation in human rights activism

by RAPAR

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Too often, Asylum seekers live in hostile environments...



Participation and Practice of Rights (PPR): Right to work: Right to welfare

This workshop provided participants with an opportunity to hear more about PPR's Right to work: Right to welfare (R2W) campaign. The R2W campaign uses human rights to challenge decision making systems which deliberately drive people into poverty, in particular around the social security system. The workshop reflected on the successes of the campaign and shared some of the lessons PPR had learned through it. They argued that there had been four key components to the success of the campaign:

1. Building an evidence base and proposals for change

PPR built a considerable evidence base as to the failings of the social security system through undertaking peer to peer interviews across Belfast. Through this work PPR developed practical solutions that could be implemented in Northern Ireland to mitigate the worst effects of welfare reform. Despite the quality of the work this brought about limited change.

2. Organising where people are at

PPR set about trying to build people's faith in the social security system and provide people with practical support so that they could receive all the support they were entitled to. PPR and their allies submitted multiple Freedom of Information

requests to see what criteria was being used in determining people's eligibility for support. This was used to develop a toolkit that could be used to support people as they navigated the system, with support also being provided when benefit assessments took place. These interventions were highly successful in supporting individuals but the numbers of people who could be supported through this form of support was quite limited.

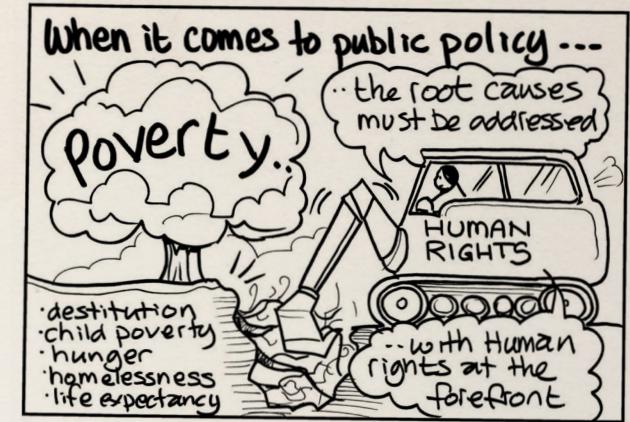
3. Direct Action

PPR supported a series of direct-action activities across Northern Ireland. These included protests at Job Centres and at the offices of private companies that had been contracted to undertake welfare assessments. These actions had helped build a buzz around the campaign and paved the way for conversations with politicians and civil servants.

4. Political engagement

As a result of their work PPR were successful in raising the issues surrounding welfare reform in Northern Ireland with the group invited for meetings with senior civil servants and with leading politicians. As a result of this work the then Minister for Communities Carál Ní Chuilín agreed to pilot a human right's checklist when undertaking welfare assessment, and already there is evidence that this is leading to a reduction in rejected applications.

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The Right to Work: Right to Welfare (R2W) group have been active since the summer of 2012, when a group of experienced PPR activists began organising with people who were out of work and on benefits at the Social Security office in Corporation Street, Belfast.

Participation and Practice of Rights (PPR)

Twitter: [PPR_Org](#)

Website: www.pprproject.org/about-ppr

Making Rights Real: Taking the PANEL approach to housing

Making Rights Real, a newly formed charity in Scotland delivered an inspiring presentation on work undertaken between 2015-19 to realise the fundamental human right to housing for a community in Edinburgh.

The Housing Rights in Practice project was a partnership between residents in the area, the [Scottish Human Rights Commission \(SHRC\)](#), Scotland's national human rights institution; and [Participation and the Practice of Rights \(PPR\)](#), a leading human rights organisation in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

The project supported the community, to realise their right to adequate housing by using the [PANEL](#) approach (participation, accountability, non-discrimination, empowerment, and the law) and the [FAIR](#) principles (facts, analysis, identifying rights, review). By using this human rights approach they were able to challenge the severe damp and maintenance issues which were violating residents' rights to adequate housing.

**PANEL stands for
Participation, Accountability,
Non discrimination and Equality,
Empowerment, Legality)**

As a result, the Council invested £2.3million in the building which led to the following positive impacts:

- Reduced fuel poverty
- Improved housing conditions
- Improved mental and physical health reported
- Improved 'sense of community'

Making Rights Real was created following this success in order to build on the experience and learning from this project.

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**MAKING
RIGHTS
REAL**



Making Rights Real is a new Scottish charity that aims to shift how grassroots communities access and understand human rights. We aim to use human rights as practical tools, to support marginalised communities achieve sustainable social and economic change.

Making Rights Real
Twitter: [@Rights_Real](#)
Email: clare@claremacgillivray.org

Poverty 2 Solutions: Do your duty for equality

Making the case for addressing rising levels of inequality in partnership with people with lived experiences of poverty.

This interactive workshop focussed on the [Poverty 2 Solutions](#) journey to date, our campaign [Do Your Duty for Equality](#), our experiences and successes of working in a participatory way and investigated the terms - participatory, co-production and collaborative working practices

Key points to emerge from the workshop:

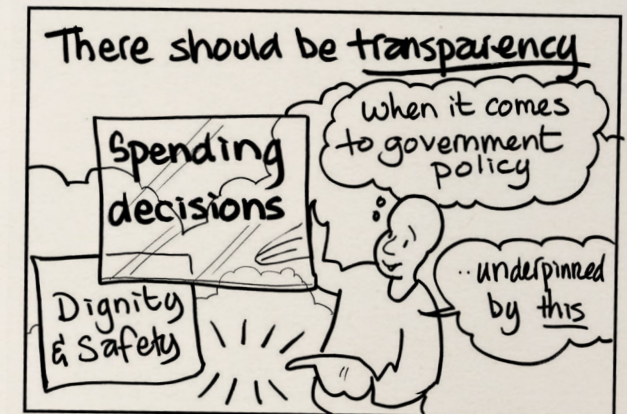
- Politicians have their own definition of participatory approaches
- It can be quite difficult to fully understanding meaningful participation and participatory ways of working
- It is vital that this area of expertise is valued and forms part of the debate in order to affect change

- Some good practice and learning throughout the UK which must be captured and acted upon ([Poverty Truth Community](#) / [Together Creating Communities](#))
- Important to build the capacity of the community and ensure real empowerment happens, bearing in mind that MPs work for the communities they represent

On our blog:

www.poverty2solutions.org/newsupdates/2021/2/10/our-presentation-for-building-a-human-rights-bridge-out-of-poverty-good-practice-in-local-advocacy

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Poverty2Solutions are a coalition of three groups rooted in their communities and led by people with direct experience of poverty. It is an awardwinning coalition of three groups: ATD Fourth World, Dole Animators and Thrive Teesside, working to generate solutions to poverty and inequality grounded in their own lived experiences of socio-economic disadvantage.

Poverty 2 Solutions
Twitter: [@Poverty2Sols](#)
Website: www.poverty2solutions.org
Email: traceyherrington@thrive-teesside.org.uk

Law for Life & Roma Support Group: Roma Champions for Roma Families

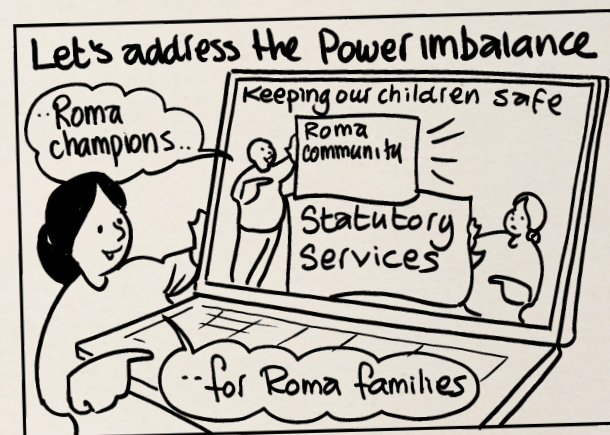
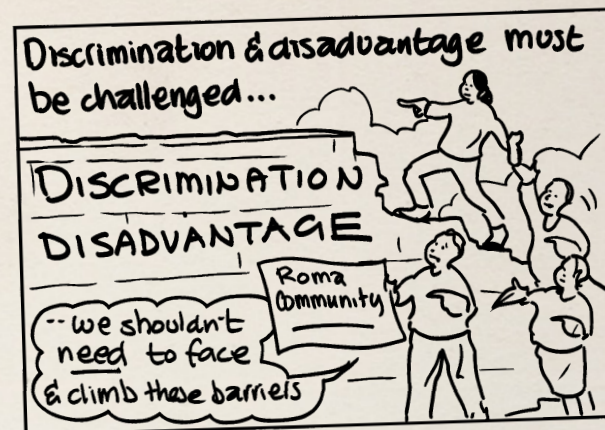
In 2018 Law for Life worked in partnership with three Roma organisations to address a significant need for knowledge and understanding about the legal framework of child protection amongst Roma parents in the UK. They produced a multimedia toolkit explaining the legal framework of child protection. The toolkit consisted of a [Survival guide to child protection](#) for Roma parents, a [short film](#) “Keeping our children safe” and community training.

The workshop explored the history of the Roma community in the UK, the barriers that Roma parents face (such as limited literacy or English, limited formal education, and historical disadvantage and discrimination in their countries of origin and the UK). Through a process of myth-busting the workshop exposed an increasing number of Roma children being looked after by Social Services.

The workshop focused on the film [Keeping Our Children Safe](#) as a creative advocacy tool. Participants felt this film was effective for a number of reasons; the use of Roma champions, speaking in Romanes along with English subtitled, the information was simplified and accessible ensuring that viewers could relate to the advice; the role of Roma community leaders put the lived experience of the community at centre of the film and thereby challenged the power imbalance that exists between the Roma community and statutory services in the UK.

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lawforlife **ROMA**
SUPPORT GROUP



Law for Life: the Foundation for Public Legal Education is an education and information charity that aims to increase access to justice by providing everyone with an awareness of their legal rights together with the confidence and skills to assert them.

Law for Life
Twitter: @lfl_Advicenow
Website: www.lawforlife.org.uk
Email: Dada.Felja@lawforlife.org.uk

Since 1998 the Roma Support Group has worked with thousands of Roma families, offering them a variety of services, engaging the Roma community in all aspects of running and managing the organisation and promoting an understanding of Roma culture in the UK.

Roma Support Group
Twitter: @RomaSupport
Website: www.romasupportgroup.org.uk
Email: Mihai@romasupportgroup.org.uk

Trenfu Cymunedol Cymru/ Together Creating Communities (TCC): Stop School/ Hunger Dysgu Nid Llwg

TCC is a community organising organisation that works with communities across north east Wales to tackle social injustice by supporting diverse communities to gain the power they need to enact change. TCC has recently had success with its [Stop School Hunger / Dysgu Nid Llwg](#) campaign which Kay Polley of TCC joined us to reflect on and to share experiences.

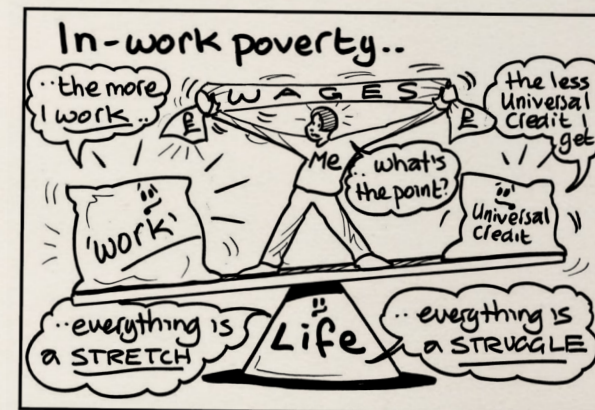
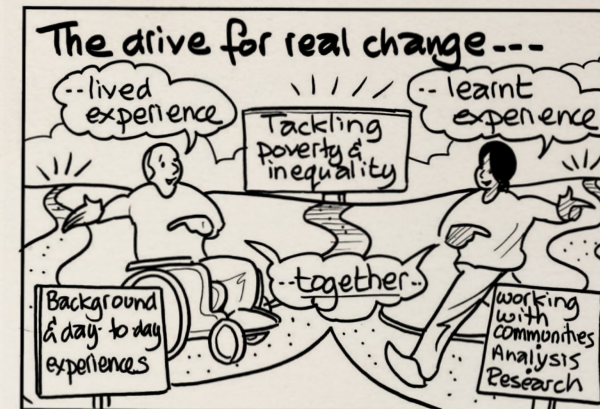
Kay began her session talking about the role of power within communities and set out how TCC aims to empower people to bring about change. She set out the mechanism by which TCC attempted to do this and identified the Stop School Hunger campaign as an example of how powerful their approach can be.

Kay shared a video charting the development of the campaign. We learned that the issue of children going hungry at lunchtime as they had used their

Free School Meals allowance to buy breakfast due to their families not being able to afford food at home, was first raised by a Teaching Assistant who worked at a local school. TCC's community members decided that this was an issue that the group should pursue further, and so further research was undertaken within the community to understand the extent of the problem and to develop solutions.

Based on this work TCC developed a campaign to provide an extra £1 on the Free School Meal allowance so that children could buy breakfast. TCC worked with local and national partners to develop the campaign and engaged with officials and politicians to push for change. This campaign has been successful with the Welsh Government committing to a pilot project with the Welsh First Minister, Mark Drakeford attending a TCC meeting in person to share the news.

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TCC was founded in 1995. We tackle social injustice by supporting diverse communities to gain the power they need to enact change. We do this through community organising: bringing together local groups, so they can set their own agenda, take action, and improve their communities.

TCC

Twitter: [@TCCWales](#)

Email: www.tcc-wales.org.uk

Hart Gables:

A Journey Through Transition - An interactive exploration of a trans+ person's journey through social and medical transition

Every person who transitions has their own unique experience, many of those people face transphobia and discrimination at nearly every step of their transition.

'In many ways, trans people in the UK face huge levels of abuse and inequality right now. Two in five trans people have had a hate crime committed against them in the last year, and two in five trans young people have attempted suicide. One in eight trans people have been physically attacked by colleagues or customers at work. No wonder some trans people are scared to walk down the streets'

A trans+ person living in poverty faces an even tougher experience, here are some key points to think about.

- Cost of wigs/make up/clothing
- Top surgery is not available on the NHS
- Cost of GRC (Gender Recognition Certificate)
- Private healthcare is not an option, leading to a 4-year waiting list just to see a gender specialist
- More likely to use illegal hormones

Just as a person's transition process might be dictated by income, a person's income may very well change when they do transition.

Here is a few things to think about.

Employment may change

'1 in 8 trans employees have been physically attacked by customers or staff'

'only 3% of UK employers have an equality procedure that openly welcomes trans+ people to apply for jobs and 1 in 3 employers admitted that they are less likely to employ a trans person for a role'

Marital status and joint income and home may change

'28% of trans people have suffered from domestic abuse from a partner'

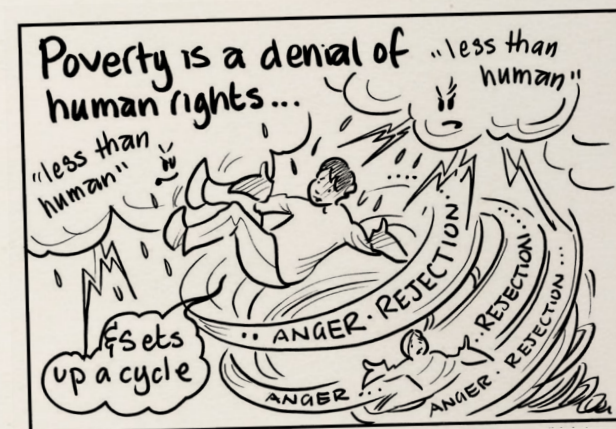
Rejection from family can and does create homelessness

'A quarter of trans people have experienced homelessness'

'One in four were discriminated against when looking for a house or flat to rent or buy'

If you are interested in taking part in any of our training courses to further your knowledge, please check out our training website

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Hart Gables is a support service for those who identify as LGBT+ across the Tees Valley area. We work to ensure that all LGBT+ people are given equal life chances and have services that meet their needs. We do this through supporting the local community and working with partner organisations to create a robust action plan and ensure its implementation.

Hart Gables

Twitter: @HartGables

Website: www.lgbtadvance.org.uk

Email: info@hartgables.org.uk

RAPAR:

You Want me to do what?! - Place, Power and Participation: on equitable participation in human rights activism

The session began with sharing a paragraph, which sums up the role that power can play in dynamics of social change, in positive and negative ways, but in particular with the interaction between power and participation.

“Power differences between people are real. They operate formally and informally, and they complicate the processes of participation. We, human beings, generate, reproduce, accentuate, question, challenge and can even alter those power relations.”

What power is held, by whom and when, depends on a combination of our behaviours, and the resources, regulations, policies, practices, and customs - the context - that surrounds our interactions in that time and space, either as individuals, groups, public bodies, or private companies...”

To discuss what this means in reality and for peoples' lives, the paragraph was broken into five chunks, for the group to discuss. Those are clipped below with some key elements of the discussion attached.

1. The power differences between people are real

What power differences do we witness and experience, in our own lives or in our work?

Participants shared the example of simply getting past a doorman on the way into a government building or organisation. We talked about how power only exists in relation to something else - it is a force that only becomes real when expressed or exerted.

2. Power differences operate formally and informally. They complicate the process of participation.

How do power differences operate formally and informally?

Participants shared examples of how this occurs. For example, in accommodation run by private companies like Serco or G4S there are no locks on the doors meaning male guards can walk in on women at any moment: this is a continual and assiduous use of informal power.

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RAPAR
WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE
EQUAL HUMAN RIGHTS



We talked about the dynamic when people with lived experience of an issue are part of a meeting or process - and everyone in the room introduces themselves with their job title: this 'brands' people and reduces their skills and experience down to this one thing.

We talked about how people who are involved in making research happen decide the questions to be researched. Therefore, it is very important to find ways to involve the people with lived experience of the phenomenon being researched to decide what research questions should be posed in the first and for them to be influentially involved right the way through the process.

We discussed how civil servants adopt a posture of needing to always be convinced of any argument rather than taking a stance that they are there to respond to the concerns of civil society.

The issue of race and racism came up and how racism is used to wield power over people - how the negative connotations and dehumanising effects of racism marginalise people and keep them from becoming powerful.

We talked about the lack of transparency and accountability in many government decision making spaces. The example of the hidden nature of decision making in family courts leaves power with judges who are not being scrutinised and leaves family members feeling powerless. Both the criminal justice system and immigration systems

are structured to deliberately fragment between different population groups, and decision-making systems are put into silos that are not cross referenced, leaving those who are vested with power often not accountable or transparent.

We talked about how if you have money you can disrupt power relations and alter decisions: the class base of power/powerlessness underpins other axes of oppression

3. We, human beings, CAN generate... reproduce... accentuate... question... challenge... and even ALTER those Power Relations - how?

On this question we discussed how we can make a more joined up civil society as well as create spaces where organisations can come together and build - or release - power collectively.

We also heard -

Don't do what they expect you to do; powerful groups and people expect you to work in a certain way; don't play to the script!

Abandon the investment of your emotional life in being upset about the fact that those who use power to exploit and oppress don't care about us. Redirect our energies to changing those situations rather than wasting any energy on being upset about it.

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RAPAR (Refugee and Asylum Seeker Participatory Action Research) is a Manchester-based human rights organisation working with people, both locally and further afield, who are at risk of having their rights denied.

RAPAR
Twitter: @raparuk
Website: www.rapar.co.uk
Email: admin@rapar.org.uk

Better ConNEcted: Digital Access as a Human Right

BetterConNEcted grew as a response to local needs, in the North East of England, during the first Covid-19 lockdown in 2020. Local organisations and individuals were identifying a range of problems around digital access and they co-produced a campaign. Through a process (ironically over Zoom) the group explored issues using a poverty tree analysis to ensure root causes were identified; identified potential target audiences for the campaign by exploring who was affected, who was motivated and who had influence in the field, and they developed a vision statement framing digital access as a Human Rights issues. The campaign has 4 strands looking at culture change, practical solutions, local authorities, and accessibility (barriers to realising rights).

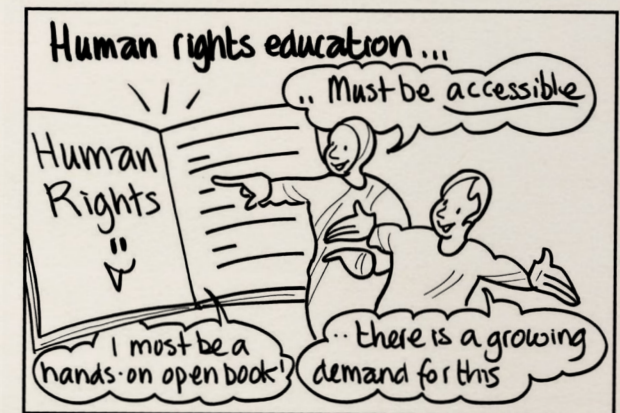
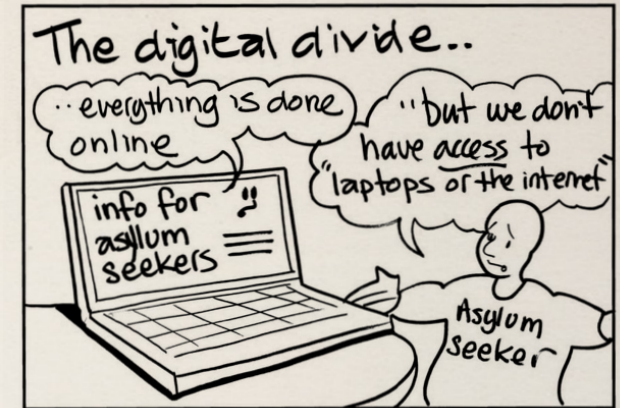
The workshop explored what we mean by digital inclusion: the experiences of physical access, the need for knowledge skills and support to use digital devices, particular needs of specific communities that are more complex or unseen, and the significance of shame as a barrier asking

for help. The group also discussed how digital inclusion and human rights are linked: as digital exclusion exacerbates existing inequalities, digital access is a necessity to realise rights to education, health, social inclusion, immigration rights, access to information.

The Better ConNEcted campaign sees value in using a Rights-Based approach as it provides a clear direction for what could otherwise be a broad campaign. It brings in a diverse group, focuses accountability on the right-bearers, and empowers rights claimers as they are able to fully participate in all of the campaign's process and actions. As one participant said:

“Digital inclusion is important for all my rights because if I can't access my rights, I can't exercise them and then if I can't exercise them, then what is the point in having rights?”

#RightsBridge



Better ConNEcted grew out of Just Fair's Social Rights Alliance North East project, funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Better ConNEcted imagines a North East where digital inclusion is a right enjoyed by all.

BetterConNEcted:

Twitter: @BetterConNEct20

Website: www.betterconnected.org.uk

Email: betterconnectedne@gmail.com

environment created by
... is violating human rights

Disconnection Exploited
Vulnerable conditions
Lack of public funds

Asylum seeker Migrant

...if we have "been through the system" ...
...ask the real experts

MY experiences
The system
I've been through the system
Been there Done that
I've got the T-shirt!

...this is keeping our heads above water...
...we get into child protection investigations
CHILDREN'S SERVICES
child protection!
...wonder if this is about the parenting?
...mental health? poverty

Rights
I must be a hands-on open book!
...there is a growing demand for this

are universal...
body
Rights
regardless of money, position & power

The UK should be doing so much better...
The UK £
the world's 6th largest economy...
POVERTY
...should not tolerate these levels...

Let's not recognize...
Let's ORGANIZE!
... & draw a line in the sand...
UK GOVT
...what can we abolish?
Protecting our rights

We are all affected by Covid-19
...but we are not equally impacted

Covid 19
Covid 19
Covid 19
Covid 19
Inequalities
Covid-19

We welcome different viewpoints & experiences...

viewpoint experiences
viewpoint experiences

We are...
Respectful
Supportive
Friendly
...to each other!

We let everyone have a voice
MY VOICE!!
SHARING
my voice...
...being attentive people who are at ease...
...we

We value everyone's contribution...
my contribution
my contribution
my contribution
...equally!...

We take care of our own needs
Needs

We will not take screenshots of participants...
...or share direct quotes
...hello Peter!
...or use names on social media
support people to freely & fully participate

use the expertise...
The Session
My bit

How can we use rights...
Poverty
Poverty
Poverty
Poverty
RIGHT
...to tackle poverty?

"Building a Human Rights Bridge out of Poverty" Partner Organisations:

ATD Fourth World

Twitter: [@ATDFourthWorld](#)

Website: www.atd-uk.org

Amnesty International UK

Twitter: [@AmnestyUK](#)

Website: www.amnesty.org.uk

University of Essex- Human Rights Centre

Twitter: [@EssexHRC](#)

Website: www.essex.ac.uk/hrc

Just Fair

Twitter: [@JustFairUK](#)

Website: www.justfair.org.uk

RAPAR

Twitter: [@raparuk](#)

Website: www.rapar.co.uk

Thrive Teesside

Twitter: [@ThriveTeesside](#)

Website: www.thrive-teesside.org.uk

Bevan Foundation

Twitter: [@BevanFoundation](#)

Website: www.bevanfoundation.org

Social Rights Alliance England

Twitter: [@SRA_England](#)

Web: www.socialrightsalliance.org.uk

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