

Youth Participation: HBSC Ireland

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Youth Participation in Ireland

- **Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989):** *“Children and young people should have their opinions taken into account in all major decisions affecting their lives”.*
- **The National Children’s Strategy (2000):** *“Children will have a voice in matters which affect them and their views will be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity”.*
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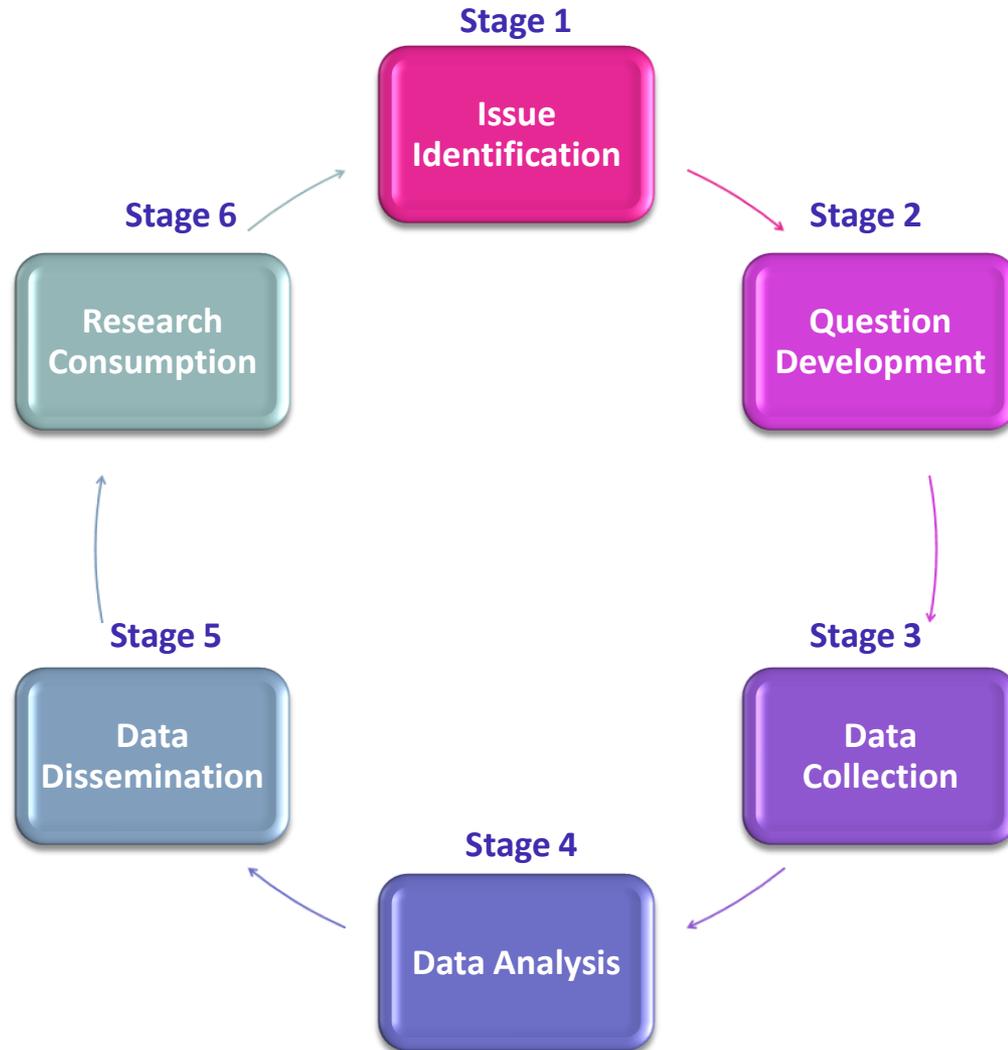
Rationale for Participation

- Rights based perspectives
- Data quality enhancement
- Stakeholder engagement
- Interpretation and dissemination
- Health Promoting Health Promotion
- Challenge to the distribution of power in research
- Long term relationship building is only one approach to citizen (child) participation

HBSC Ireland

- **HBSC Ireland** has been working on the development of a variety of research methodologies intended to facilitate active participation of young people in the research process. Youth participation has been employed in the Irish HBSC study with regard to **issue identification, data generation, devising research questions, data analysis, data interpretation** and **dissemination** through various workshops.
- This is a research method (PRP), a health promotion practice and a research area; we aim to explore if it ‘works’, how it ‘works’, and what the benefits, if any, are for child health and well-being and our research practice.

Research Cycle



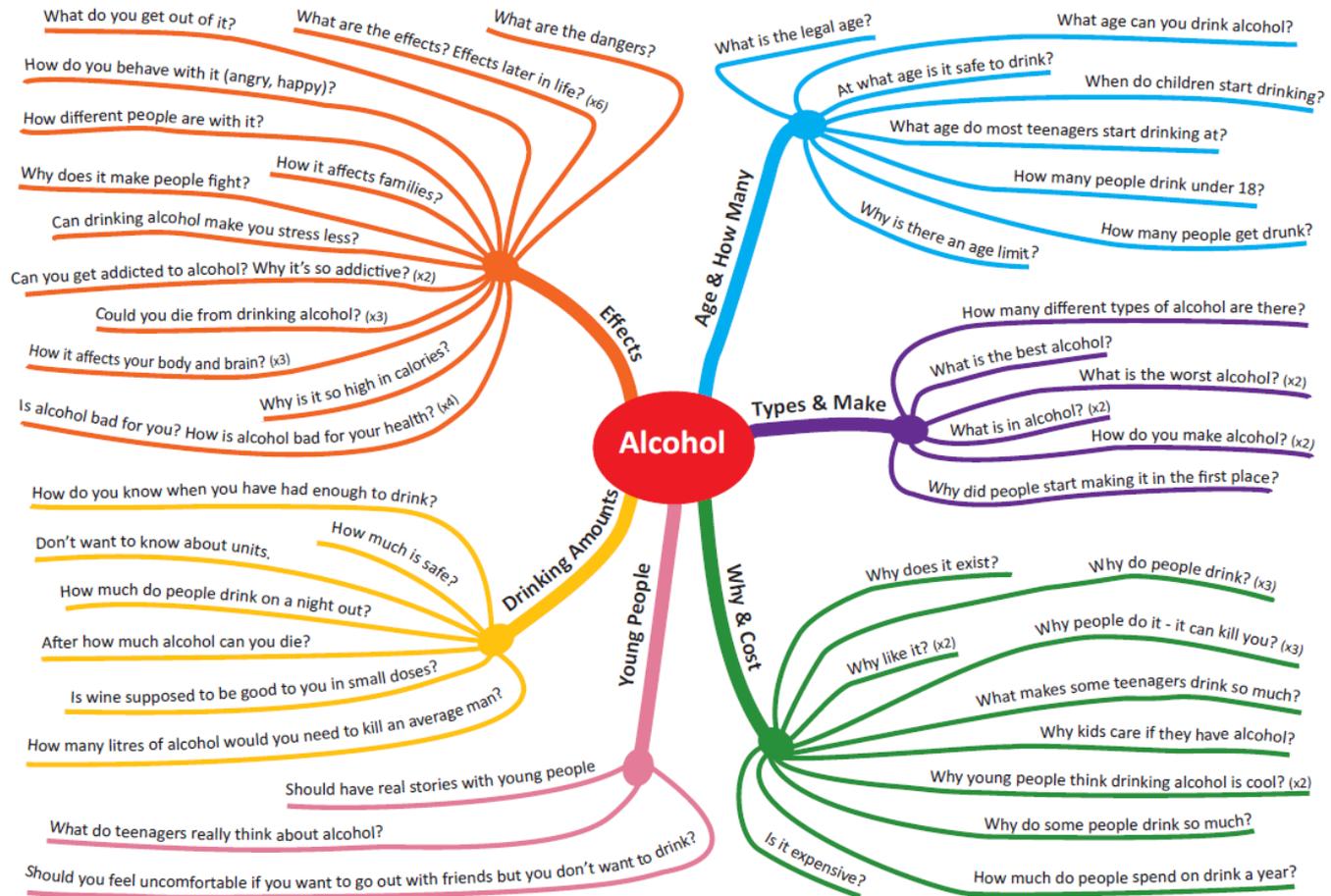
Ireland - participation

- Stages 1, 3-6 explored in multiple studies
- Using 3 stage group processes (PRP) with visual and written data
 - ▣ Generate data, categorise data and present data
- Examples
 - ▣ Indicator Development (well-being, HPS schools)
 - ▣ Data meaning and interpretation (**child report**, learning outcomes & sex education, **media input**)
- Stages 1-2 currently part of national partnership agreement with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Ireland.

(HBSC): What do children want to know?

Student groups picked their top 12 most interesting topics and wrote what they would like to know about that specific topic.

This diagram outlines what they would like to know about the topic of alcohol.



Accessing young people's opinions of the 2010 HBSC Ireland survey findings

- Twenty-five students (13-15 years) in a mixed-gender post-primary school participated in this workshop
- The participating young people were asked:
 - *'What is the most interesting finding in the report?'* and this resulted in 24 answers.
 - Twenty of these answers were collapsed into five themes: **substance use, eating habits, physical activity, bullying and 'other'**
 - *'What is the most surprising finding in the report?'* and resulted in 25 answers.
 - Twenty-two of these answers were collapsed into four themes: **substance use, bullying, sex and 'other'**
 - *'What do you think the youth health priorities should be as a result of these findings?'* and resulted in 25 answers.
 - Twenty-two of these answers were collapsed into five themes: **substance use, physical activity, eating habits, sexual health and 'other'**.

Young people's comments

B, 15 – “...older children's happiness levels are so high”

G, 13 – “...the amount of girls that drink and take drugs”

Girl, 15 – “...that a lot of people don't eat breakfast. It is the most important meal of the day”

B, 14 – “...the amount of people using drugs”

G, 15 – “...that boys smoke less than girls”

B,14 – “The amount of underage sex”

B, 14 – “...the lack of exercise people participate in as they get older”

G, 14 – “...that boys bully others more than girls”

HBSC & DCYA (research stages 1 & 2)

- An essential objective of the **HBSC** study is to liaise with various stakeholders and involve them in the research process. In particular young people have an important role to play in the research process and it is a priority of the HBSC study to involve them where possible.
- The **Department of Children & Youth Affairs (DCYA)** is responsible for ensuring the establishment and improvement of structures that provide children and young people with a voice on issues that affect their lives at local and national level.

Objectives of Partnership

- To support children and young people's participation in the HBSC cycle
- To document the participation process as the project is progressing with a view to establishing a model of good practice to inform both national and international literature in this field
- To honour the contribution of children and young people in the design, execution, dissemination and use of the HBSC Ireland study
- To contribute the perspectives and priorities of Irish children and young people to the development of the international HBSC network
- To advocate for the processes and outcomes of the partnership to inform and influence the development of the international HBSC network.

Method

- Separate participatory workshops carried out with primary and post-primary school children.
- 36 primary school children (8 to 12 years) mostly from Dublin but also neighbouring counties -recruited by teachers through youth participation officers.
- 24 post-primary school children (14 to 17 years) from a range of counties - recruited through Comhairle na nÓg.
- **Aim:** *to explore what school children consider important to understand about life for children in Ireland.*

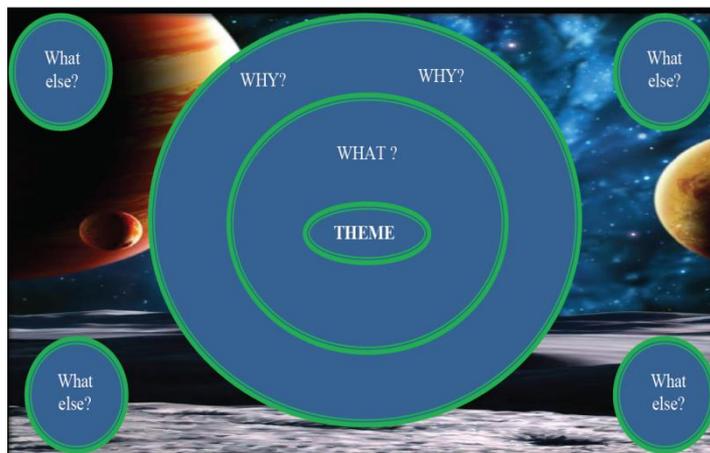
Method

- Asked the question: *“What would an alien from Mars like to know about you or your friends to understand what life is like for children in Ireland?”* (primary)

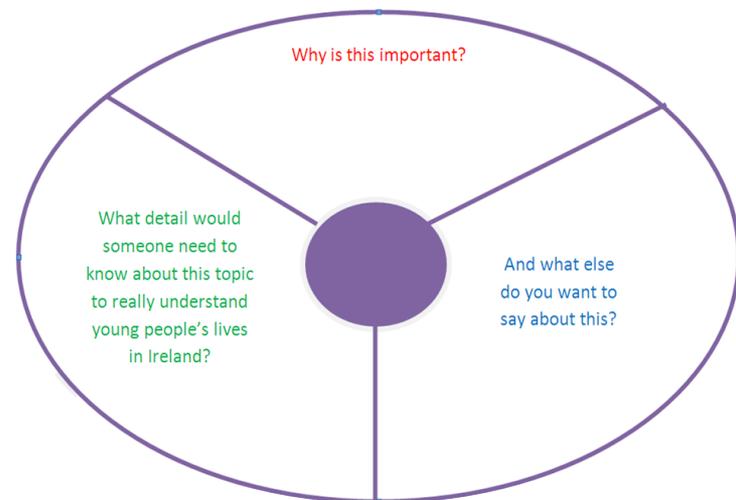
or

“What would somebody need to know about you or your friends to understand what life is like for young people in Ireland?” (post-primary).

- Answers written/drawn on post-its and grouped into themes.
- Themes explored further using a space/placemat poster format whereby all children could contribute.

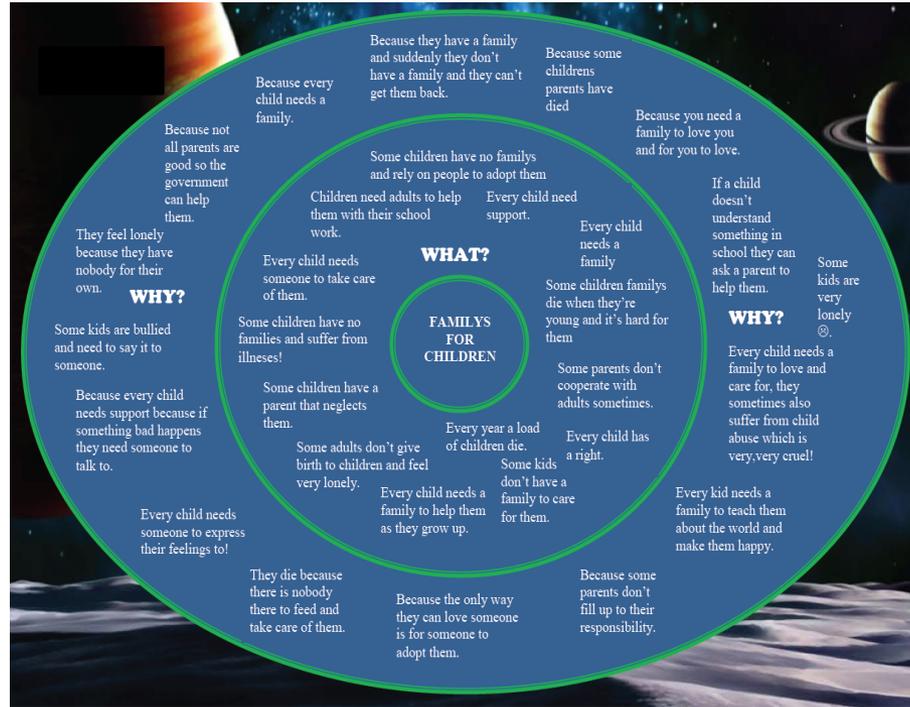


Primary



Post-primary

Outputs - Primary



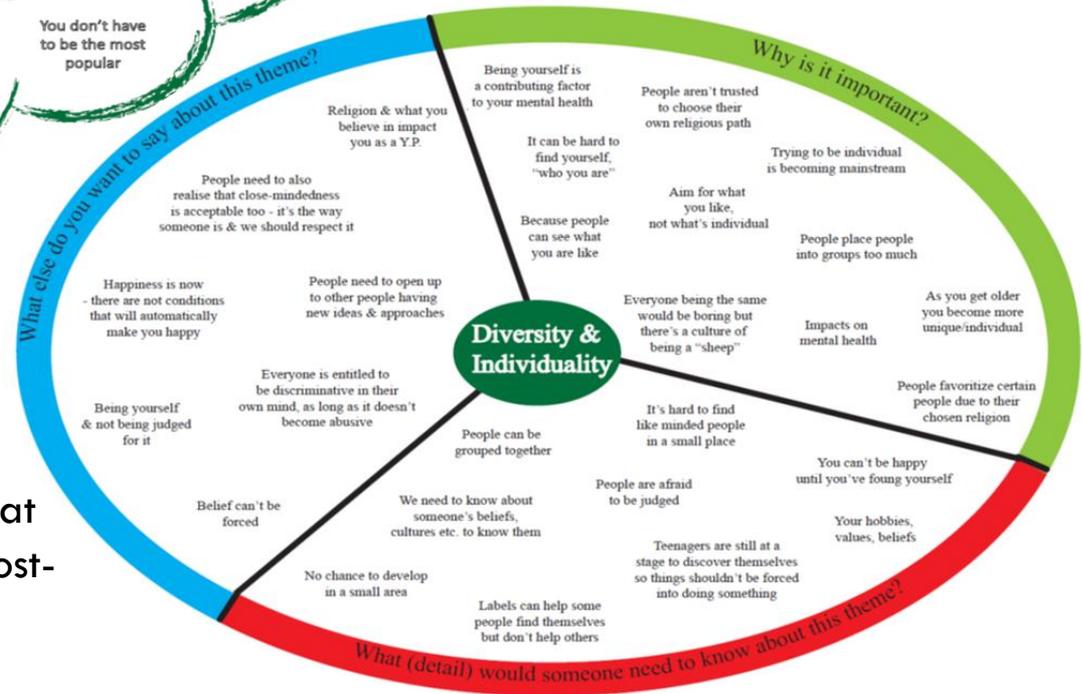
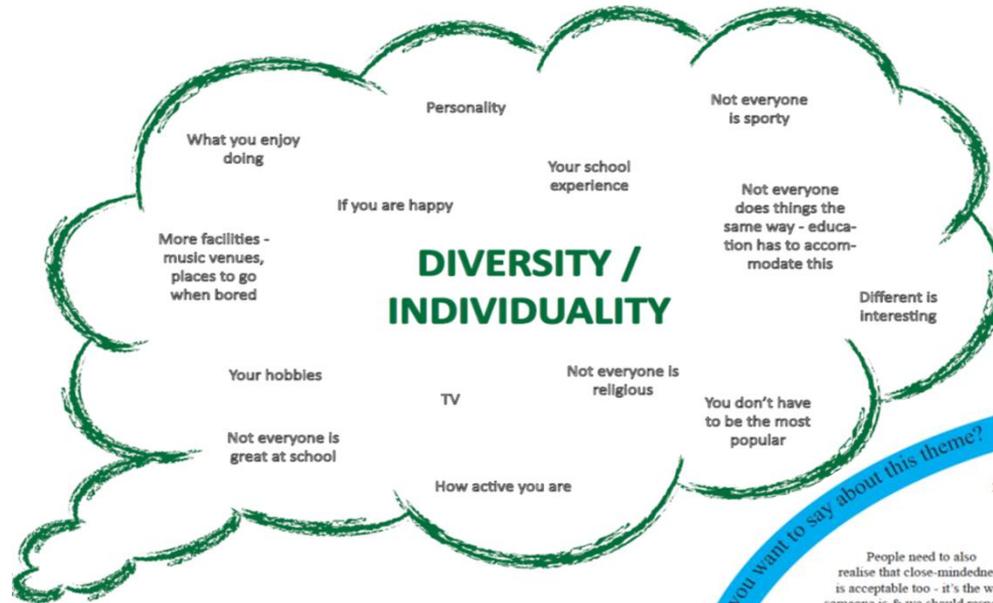
Themes: 37 → 24 → 6



Above: Example of the comments and ideas written by the primary school children on a space poster.

Right: An actual completed space poster from the primary school workshop.

Outputs – Post-primary



Above: An examples of post-it suggestions grouped into a theme.

Right: An example of the questions answered on this theme in the placemat poster by young people during the post-primary school workshop.

Findings

- Children's notes/comments were sorted into 3 additional categories according to:
 - ▣ what topics the HBSC study already contains;
 - ▣ what topics the HBSC study does not contain; and
 - ▣ what topics the HBSC study could potentially include.

Primary school themes with potential for future use in the HBSC study were:

- (1) Having fun - hobbies
- (2) Family time & care
- (3) Safety in home.

Post-primary themes with potential for future use in the HBSC study were:

- (1) Mental health
- (2) Cyber-bullying
- (3) Independence - trust
- (4) Diversity/individuality

HBSC Ireland

- **HBSC: What do children want to know? (2010).** (Doyle, P., Kelly, C., Cummins, G., Sixsmith, J., O'Higgins, S., Molcho, M. & Nic Gabhainn, S). **(Stage 6 – research consumption)**
 - Funded by the DOHC & the OMCYA. Children aged 10-18 years.

- **Accessing young people's opinions of the findings of the 2010 HBSC Survey (2012).** (Clarke, N., Kelly, C., Molcho, M., & Nic Gabhainn, S.). **(Stage 5 – data dissemination)**
 - Funded by the DOH. Students 13-15 years.

- **Primary-school children's views on life in Ireland / Post-primary-school children's views on life in Ireland (2012).** **(Stages 1 & 2 – issue identification and Q development)**
 - HBSC Ireland & DCYA. Young people 8-12 years/ 14-17 years.

Future plans

- Further workshops have been scheduled for April and June 2013 to focus on these specific issues identified.
- These workshops should allow children to work in smaller groups with the objective of generating questions that they feel would be useful in gathering accurate relevant information about children in Ireland.
- It is important that future HBSC studies are influenced by these findings.
- ***Research and Participation Protocols, articles, reports and abstracts available to all.***

Acknowledgements

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