

## **Youth and Informal Education**

### **Main activities and events of the SIG in the past year.**

The SIG ran two successful webinar events in September - 1) Youth Work, Music Production and Measurement, and 2) Thinking Critically About impact, Evaluation and Accountability in Youth Work. The SIG has had a special issue of Educational Review accepted on youth activism and climate change which followed the BERA hot topic session and has involved participants from that day. The SIG had scheduled a conference in April 2020 on Challenging Heteronormativity through Youth Work at University of Birmingham that unfortunately had to be cancelled as a result of the pandemic.

### **What are the key issues currently affecting your Special Interest Area?**

The main issues in our area include: - impact measurement in youth work and informal education (a continuing issue) - the recent release of the first new National Curriculum for Youth Work in England by the National Youth Agency - statutory funding for youth work, including the government's delays in delivering the promised £500M Youth Improvement Fund as well as lobbying efforts in the sector - arrangements related to Covid-19 and the use of youth work to support children and young people outside of formal educational institutions and the family (including the rise of detached youth work) - inequalities affecting young people and educational responses to them, from formal and non-formal educators. The nature of inequalities, and our understanding of them, are likely to be fast changing as 1) the impacts of school disruption related to Covid-19 is felt, and 2) the economic impacts of Covid-19 develop in terms of employer demand for labour, educational transitions are restructured and policy (notably fiscal and welfare policy) responses to Covid-19 develop. - changes to the arrangements for training youth workers, notably the shifts away from HEIs as providers for training towards lower level qualifications provided by private agencies

### **Are there any particular developments for your SIG on the horizon, e.g. newsletters, publications, blogs, events, projects?**

We have planned a blog and two podcasts following up from the webinar events in September 2020. The blog should be submitted in December, while the recording of the podcasts is scheduled for December and January respectively. The special issue of Educational Review that follows on from the Hot Topic session on youth activism and climate change we hope to be released this year (the publications and editorial will come out this year, but the timing of the formal release of the special issue is in the hands of the editors of Educational Review). We expect to propose two symposia for the annual conference on 1) educator's responses to youth post-Covid-19, and 2) the new National Curriculum for Youth Work in England We also have plans for a webinar on the role of HEIs in youth work training, held in partnership with the Professional Association of Lecturers in Youth and Community Work.

### **What other organizations does your SIG collaborate with?**

Professional Association of Lecturers in Youth and Community Work

### **How has your SIG worked to encourage diversity amongst your membership? How do you plan to encourage diversity in the future?**

Running webinars has enabled the SIG to invite colleagues from across the four nations, and we would seek to continue to incorporate these ways of working if and when we move back towards face to face events over the coming 12 months.

We aim to run events that are inclusive in their themes, representation in marketing materials' language and imagery, and our stated commitments. In the coming year, we hope to continue to engage across dimensions of inequality affecting young people - as per the sadly cancelled event Challenging Heteronormativity through Youth Work. We will work to plan future such events, especially focused on the theme of youth inequalities post-Covid19. We will seek to encourage participation, including abstracts and papers, from diverse scholars.

Firstly, thanks to the office for all their work this year of all years - adapting quickly and building a great platform for webinar events. I would encourage BERA to think carefully about how to use the platform they have now built for events - both incorporating streaming or online into face to face events, but also lowering the barriers for education practitioners or other research users to access research events and material at low or better no cost. I think there are expanded possibilities for BERA's regular scholarly activity to fulfill a more public role beyond the academy.

The support this year has been great - it would be great if in due course we can have clear guidelines emerge on the points about public inclusion raised in 8.