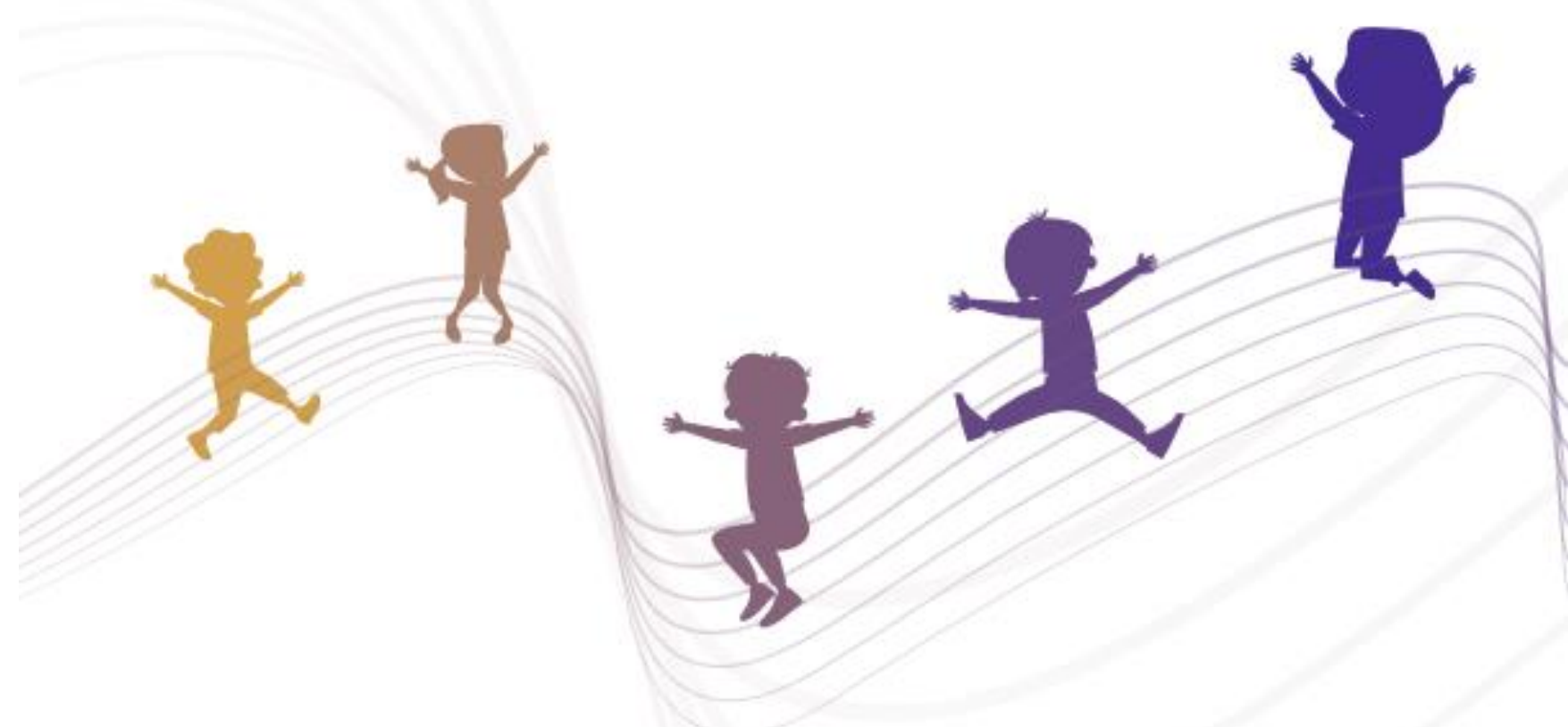


Music Elicitation Research, Training, and Intervention Pilot

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Using music enables marginalized young people both to speak and be heard
“Share three music tracks which help you tell parts of your life story”



Using music to hear life stories from young men in prison and under probation supervision (with SOC related offences) in Albania

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Data analysis suggested that there were a range of adverse childhood experiences that impacted on young people. These ranged from abuse/violence/neglect as well as the loss of a significant supportive figure, such as a key parent, through death, estrangement, or migration. Several participants discussed the impact of such losses on their security and family collective. This may have impacted on their desire to instead identify with an extra-familial peer group in place of the lost family security. The craving of love from both mothers and fathers was discussed vividly at times, aided by the use of emotive song or rap lyrics.

Masculinity Pressures

I became a little like the man of the house (Probation Interview)

The data was analysed with a focus on masculinities in order to understand the specific gendered experiences of the participants. A predominant theme was the ways in which masculinity pressures were experienced by the participants. These included the ways in which boys felt a pressure to be 'the man of the house', financially support, as well as protect the females in their families. It appears these conventional masculinity pressures were heightened in fractured families, displaced due to death or migration. Arguably this heightened pressure on boys at an age where they had little recourse to enact traditional masculine responsibilities, resulting in the development of 'protest masculinity' (Connell, 2005; Levell 2022).

Fractured Families; Migration

My parents were not present in my life because when I was 6 years old, they migrated. I felt lonely (Prison Participant)

Early experiences of migration were discussed in several interviews as having had a significant impact on young men's experiences of childhood. One participant had been trafficked to Germany as a child, given counterfeit papers and a family, in order to reside illegally. He discussed how he stayed for two years and then returned. Another man shared his experience of being sent to live in Italy as a minor without his family but begging to return to be with his mother. We also heard stories where the young men had been left in Albania without their immediate family who had migrated. It appeared the families fractured by migration to Western Europe were common, however in the music elicitation research we heard testimony of the impact that this has on young boys who felt grief at the loss of the key adult supporters.

Jeta e Rruges: Street Life

The street is better than the house, regardless that its actually the opposite, we grew up there (Probation participant)

In the RAYS music elicitation pilot we were able to access information about the way in which 'Jeta e Rruges: Street Life' is experienced by urban young men. The young men who could be considered 'at risk' or formerly involved in Serious Organised Crime (SOC) did not label it as such, but rather saw it as part of a trans-local street hustle. Many of the descriptions were akin to what is known in the UK as being 'on-road'. It was described as engaging in group solidarity with male peer groups, referred to as 'the boys (Nacut)'. This gendered solidarity operated in a way which had 'neighbourhood rules', akin to a 'code of the street' (Anderson, 1999). Low level criminality including youth violence and the drug trade was discussed, and framed as increasingly *getting into trouble*.

Aspirations and hopes for the future; Becoming Someone

The best would be to become somebody in life (Probation Participant)

An interesting pattern arose in the research data, which was around the aspirations of the participants. For some there were concrete hopes, such as being able to leave Albania and work abroad (particularly for those in prison who did not see a way forward in Albania with the stigma of criminality). There were also aspirations of university and further study, as well as being financially independent and developing a respectable career, for instance as a teacher or even a judge. A deeper theme that arose however was the concept of 'becoming somebody', both as an individual and as a family. This can be linked into prior research around the importance of 'mattering' to young people involved in youth offending. Billingham and Irwin-Rogers (2021b) explored this concept in the UK among young people involved in serious youth violence. They suggested that using the concept of 'mattering' can be used as a way to understand why some young people engage in serious youth violence, and the ways in which certain state criminalization tactics can result in 'anti-mattering'. Exploring how young people perceive the ways that they do (or do not) 'matter' enables a deeper understanding of how young people's experiences of trauma and marginalization impact on their sense of place in the world.

An infographic titled "MUSIC ELICITATION" with a blue header. It features several icons: a hand holding a speaker, an anchor, a person with a speech bubble, a book, and a bridge. Text boxes describe findings: "RESEARCH WITH MARGINALISED GROUPS FOUND:", "MUSIC CAN FUNCTION AS AN ANCHOR TO MEMORIES" (Participants described music as a tool they used in the past for coping, solace, and support...), "MUSIC ELICITATION CAN BE AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION TOOL" (Using song lyrics, music videos, or the general feel of a track, can help people articulate difficult feelings or memories.), "MUSIC ELICITATION AS A NARRATIVE TOOL" (Music elicitation as an unstructured interview tool enables participants to curate the interview space and chapter their story using the tracks to separate their narratives.), and "MUSIC CAN FORM A BRIDGE OF UNDERSTANDING" (Co-listening can be a powerful shared experience. It creates a common ground and puts the participant in the position of curator, host, and expert in the room.). A footer contains a citation: "Levell, J. (2022). 'These songs were the ones that made me, nobody asked me this question before'. Music Elicitation with ex-gang involved men about their experiences of childhood domestic violence and abuse. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 18, 1-24. https://doi.org/10.1177/15480759221102000".

Music Elicitation Intervention Pilot

The professional training was conducted in July 2022 and was evaluated until February 2023. In the 6 months post-training music elicitation has been used in a range of contexts, including by teachers, social workers, and NGO staff. It been used for outreach with extremely vulnerable and marginalised young people, victims of human trafficking, abuse, sexual exploitation, and domestic violence and abuse.

"I used this method for the first time with a 10th grader in a village school where I work. He seemed lost in his world inside and outside the school and did not interact with others. One day I invited him in my office and started talking in general. He talked for different things, but he did not say any word about his problem. Then I asked him what he liked to do in his free time, and he answered that he liked music listening. I asked him whether we could hear a song and he could tell me what he felt while he heard it. While the song started, the boy started crying. Little by little he started talking about his problem. He was concerned about his behavior and its consequences especially to his mother"

