

X1034 Assignment (25%)
Reflections on My Community Based Education (CBE) Experience

1) Tell us about the organisation – what it does, why was it set up, what are its aims?

I did my community based experience (CBE) at the Venchie Children and young People Project, a non-profit organisation, locally known as 'Venchie'. Venchie was originally set up in 1961 as new local adventure playground, by Edinburgh University settlement. from 1967 until 1998 Save the Children (STC) managed and funded Venchie; they then withdrew, in line with their new model - Global Program Strategy. Local people gathered to create a steering group; made up of parents call my businesses and representatives of the local community. They took over from STC to form the Venchie Management Association. From the original playground a building, new play structures and youth work programmes were built. Today, Venchie offers a playground, breakfast club, after school club, drama club and holiday club; for children and young people aged 5 to 16. Venchie offers its programmes to children and young people within the Craigmillar area and is open to the inclusion of all children who wish to participate. Venchie aims are to: provide children with the opportunity to have the best start in life; create positive relationships; not undermine children's outcome by inequality and poverty; make sure children are safe, physically and emotionally healthy. Overall, Venchie aims to create a quality of life for children; motivating, inspiring and supporting them in the hope they break free from the cycle of disadvantage (VCYPP 2016).

2) Why did you choose this organisation?

Before I started my CBE, I knew I wanted to offer my support to an organisation who would really feel the benefit from my presence. I searched on a volunteer website the organisations promote their need for volunteers. Venchie appeared; they were local and in need of volunteers. I also have previous experience within an after school club setting, however, in a

more affluent area. I believe that by choosing to volunteer at an organization which contrasts from my previous experience would allow me to develop knowledge of the attainment gap and how it affects children experiencing it first-hand. Venchie is currently experiencing a lack of financial funding, however comma the spirit and strength adventus itself is felt amongst the community; shown through their staff and children.

3) What did you do? What were your tasks when you were there?

I primarily worked at the after school club, working with children in primary two, three, four and five; as well as their February holiday club, which all ages of primary children. I would arrive at Venchie ten minutes before we were organised to walk to Niddrie Mill and St Francis RC Primary School, which are on a combined campus. I would collect the children from one primary school while the head care worker would collect the other children. Together, we would then set off to Venchie ensuring children practised road safety along the way. Once we were back in the building, I would help children hang up their bags and coats before they had the chance to play. While they played I would either supervise them or set out tables and chairs for snack. Once snack was ready, staff members and I made sure children follow through with hygienic practice before eating e.g. washing their hands. During snack there will be items to challenge children's eating habits. It was important for me to encourage them to eat different foods: for example, children would have the choice between half a plain or cinnamon and Raisin bagel; the majority of plain bagels would be taken leaving cinnamon and raisin. As children would want another half bagel, I would encourage them to eat the more exotic option that is left. I would put them on a tray and go around the table using emotive language to persuade them to try something different. This worked very efficiently as other children would encourage the fussier children to try something new. After snack I would then run activities for the children (usually arts and crafts) or they would choose to play outside, on the soft play or on the computers. I also worked within the February Holidays from eleven till three pm. The days were similar to the after school club; although there would be an activity in the morning too and instead of snack Venchie would

provide lunch for the children. At the end of the day, I would clean tables, put them away and tidy up any leftover mess. Finally, all members of staff would come together and go through an evaluation sheet.

4) Did the organisation reflect GIRFEC or **some of** the principles of inclusive practice?

(see Circle Framework) If yes, how? If no, why not?

Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC), is an important policy that focuses on the wellbeing of children. Venchie reflects the main principles of GIRFEC through SHANARRI; Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included. At the end of each session at Venchie, whether it is after school club or holiday club, all member of staff would have a discussion while filling out an evaluation sheet. The evaluation sheet is directly linked to shanarri as we would go through each section and give suggestion on how to improve future sessions based on each eight factors (SG 2019). For example, we would (if there were any) cases of exclusion and make sure the issue was addressed to the children at the next session and support the child who may not be feeling included at Venchies. Venchies also reflect principles of inclusive practice, especially factors to support inclusion, where each factor interlinks: environment, Routines and structures, Motivation and Skills (CC 2015). At Venchies, there are four areas: main hall, soft play/ sports hall, computer room and playground. In term of environment each area provides a place for children to excel. This leads on to routine and structure. Venchies have clear expectation and rules of the children's behaviour and respect; if these are not met staff are determined to work together with children to ensure they have a positive experience and impact at after school club. Venchie also shows their commitment to inclusive practice as the Venchies building is completely accessible to people with disabilities; and registered under the children (Scotland) Act by Edinburgh Registration and Inspection Department.

5a) Reflect on how the organisation supports / helps children, young people, families and schools *directly, if at all?*

Venchie helps families in the community primarily with childcare. This is especially important as it can allow parents to pick up shifts, work longer hours etc. The Breakfast Club works directly with the two local primary schools to select 12 children that have poor attendance; to improve their morning routine, self confidence and support struggling parents. Venchie have a minibus which picks the children up at their homes and takes them to Venchie centre. The children then get provided with a nutritious breakfast before walking with staff to school. This improves the motivation of parents and children to have/provide a good morning routine and feel prepared for the school day ahead. Venchie provides a safe space for children to grow learn and develop; and have fun. Children have the opportunity to socialise with a range of children which they maybe would not have at school. Children have the opportunity to develop a healthy lifestyle, interpersonal and cooperative skills, understanding of personal hygiene and most importantly respect for others. Venchie also provides a small food bank; food is usually offered to parents when they pick up their children after a session. The produce offered varies from day to day, although its aim is to contribute food to families in order to support a healthy lifestyle. Overall, Venchie provides children with opportunities, experiences, facilities and activities which they mean not be getting at home and outside of school.

- 6) What, in your view **OR** in the organisation's view, are the *3 most significant challenges* facing children, young people and/or their families today? Explain why with support from a range of evidence. (e.g. literature, policy, statistics, own observations)

Venchie sees health as a challenge to children today. This can be a result of families not being aware of meal preparation and healthy diet plans. This can contribute to children's bad eating habits, as there may be no motivation to eat a wide variety of foods. Families diets may also be impacted when they have to rely on food banks; if they are financially struggling. Trussell Trust suggest a 23% rise on last year as the food banks provided more than 210,000 packages to people in crisis in 2018-19 (TFN 2019). Education and poverty

are also significant challenges facing children and families. This can be seen through the Scottish index of multiple deprivation (SIMD), which takes into account; income, employment, health, education/skills, housing and crime of an area. The Craigmillar area has shown a high level of deprivation for many years. Although Castlebrae high school has improved since 2012, most of the Craigmillar area remains in the most deprived 20% in Scotland; with Niddrie remaining in the most deprived 5% (SG 2020).

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X1034 Assignment (25%)

Reflections on My Community Based Education (CBE) Experience

1) Tell us about the organisation – what it does, why was it set up, what are its aims?

As part of my CBE experience I was given the opportunity to work with an organisation called Fife Gingerbread. It is a local organisation which was set up in the year 1987 after many opened up across the UK by a woman in the year 1970. She struggled as a lone parent and believed there should be more support for people like herself. Therefore, over the years it has grown into a larger organisation as more volunteers offered to help improve the lives of others by giving them extra support doing daily activities like shopping, house chores, helping or teaching them how to look after their kids; due to some parents being teenagers, or just being a friend to talk to. They are now funded by donations and still to this day the biggest programme in Fife Gingerbread is volunteering this is because the free service people offer by offering their free time is extremely effective to those who need it most, this is the programme I was trained to which is where I gained my experience. (Vision, n.d.) "Better today's and brighter tomorrows for Fife's lone parents and families in need" their slogan represents the aim of the organisation which is to improve the life of families give them support on whatever they need even small things such as painting their house, if it is a struggle for them then Fife Gingerbread is there to help.

2) Why did you choose this organisation?

When choosing Fife Gingerbread as my organisation for CBE I researched into the organisation beforehand which helped me find out there was many different programmes they did within the company which would be beneficial to me as I would gain a lot of experience. The main 4 programmes which are run to help a variety of people such as children from all ages starting from new-borns right up until 16 years, teen parents which are typically from the age of 15 and upwards, and also adults. These programmes include, family approach; this team works with families to improve attendance in school for children by getting the parent involved in their learning, also by giving additional support in meetings for this if needed. Volunteer project is which I was involved with the most as it covers most

of the other programmes whenever you are needed, in this programme the overall aims are to gain confidence, socialise with a wide range of people which makes a difference to the more vulnerable people's lives by being a positive impact for them. Fife teen parent project is funded by "Big Lottery Young Start Fund, Children's Lottery Chance to Flourish, BBC Children in Need and Fife Council, teen parents are given the tools they require to effectively nurture and interact with their child, giving both the best chance of an improved future." (Fife Teen Parent Project, n.d.). Making it work project aims to help lone parents gain employment and overcome barriers such as anxiety, depression which impacts their ability to do this on their own, they help by getting them CV's created, work experience can be gained through themselves in the volunteering projects which in results gives them more confidence to get back into employment and provide a better quality life for themselves and their children.

3) What did you do? What were your tasks when you were there?

The overall aim for Fife Gingerbread is to make a positive impact on other's lives, therefore, to do this they take a bad situation and make it fun which made my overall experience very enjoyable. I got to experience all the different programmes and work with a wide variety of people in the organisation and also people that was there for extra support. Co-ordinators which as the staff members offering support to those who need it work in many different ways but the two main and effect ways they commonly used are one-to-one meetings when they go to someone's house and speak to them alone, or groups which allow them to influence each other to socialise with others and make friends. My first task was to help clear a church out of old toys and donate what was still useable to a charity shop called Barnardo's. Dinner time clubs were very popular with 2 almost every week it gives adults a chance to socialise, catch up with their co Ordinator and get some alone time whilst their children played with toys that were provided, whilst I was there I served food, played with the children, cleared dishes and cleaned them, and also spoke to those that were there on their own so they didn't feel left out. One which I was mostly involved in was the teen and parent groups where they provided activities such as book bugs, sensory play, and messy play which is all organised with snacks provided by the allocated staff member within the teen parent projects. All activities are done to give children which are less fortunate a chance to still have the same opportunities as other children. My job whilst at these baby groups was to get everyone involved and also help organise all the games and activities in time for people arriving.

4) Did the organisation reflect GIRFEC or some of the principles of inclusive practice? (see Circle Framework) If yes, how? If no, why not?



(GIRFEC – Aboyne Primary School, n.d.)

A main principle reflected by Fife Gingerbread for the teen parent project was nurtured, from my own observations they help teens that are unexperienced and also children themselves raise children of their own, and to give them tips on how to take care of them properly, for example what food to feed them, how to change a nappy and also how to interact with their child. When at the groups learning about these skills they provide snacks so they aren't hungry, fruit, vegetables are commonly provided which means they are making sure the health principle is covered and also making sure everyone is included in the activities and socialising with each other, by them doing then they then help each other as well. The teen parent project also organises separate groups which are at the same time every 2 weeks to give them structure and routine this allows them to have their say in what they enjoy, what they would like to change about the group and how their children feel about the groups, this allows everyone to voice their opinion which shows Fife Gingerbread respect them enough to listen to them and alter anything they possibly can for them to make it more enjoyable. In the Circle framework for secondary it explains it is important for routine as it makes people enjoy interacting with others more, also I believe the vulnerable people with anxiety and depression often need routine to give them peace of mind so this would be helpful for them. (Inclusive Learning and Collaborative Working Ideas in practice, n.d.)

5a) Reflect on how the organisation supports / helps children, young people, families and schools *directly, if at all?*

Fife Gingerbread help a variety of people in all different ways, indirectly and also directly. An example of direct support would be one to one meeting's, this could be meeting up for a coffee or at the home just where would suit the vulnerable person and feels most comfortable. They can support them by giving them advice, cleaning their home, decorating the home and also accompanying them in meetings. An indirect approach would be organising groups which help them socialise with other people which mean they have helped organise, but the vulnerable person does the work by moving out of their comfort zone and interacting with others they wouldn't usually have a chance to interact with. Being a charity means they get lots of donations such as clothes, toys, food and activity materials which help towards the groups they create, people benefit for these donations as they go straight to those who need it. They are given donations as some which as financially unstable cannot afford things such as washing products or even clothes and food. Even at groups where snacks or meals are provided, whatever is left over will be given out equally so that they are still getting nutritional benefits.

6) What, in your view OR in the organisation's view, are the 3 most significant challenges facing children, young people and/or their families today? Explain why with support from a range of evidence. (e.g. literature, policy, statistics, own observations)

In my opinion from my observations, I believe the 3 most significant challenges that families face today are poor mental health, poverty and daily life struggles, struggles such as death of a loved one, disciplining children properly when acting out and split families which all lead to additional stress as these are situations which are not planned for so when there happen some people find it difficult to adjust to these situations which is why they would need additional support and help from charities such as Fife Gingerbread. Fife Gingerbread look at these challenges and see what they can do to make these into a positive. The vulnerable people receiving support from fife gingerbread that have mental health issues which has commonly been the effect of a bad childhood where they have experienced abnormal experiences, this then has affected them later on in life which is why they have been referred to Fife Gingerbread. Poverty prevents families to do activities with their children that others are in a more financially stable situation to do whenever they like, therefore the group activities which Fife Gingerbread provide materials such as messy play allow the children to have the same opportunities.

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1) Tell us about the organisation – what it does, why was it set up, what are its aims?

Who they are and what they aim for

The BIG Project is a charity, established in 2002 by a coalition of local professionals and headed up by the CEC community safety department. The professionals came from diverse backgrounds; Police, social work, community education, local voluntary organisations and the church. When funding was secured this group was not able to continue to operate it. Instead, it was hosted by a local voluntary organisation, becoming an independent charity in 2004 and subsequently being housed in Broomhouse primary school.

The BIG Project supports and encourages children and young people aged between five and eighteen years. They aim to encourage children to develop new skills through novel experiences, improving their sense of self-worth and enabling them to think 'BIG' about their future (McLeod 2020, Personal communication).

Who works there

The club is run by a managing director, Youth and children workers and volunteers.

Why they were set up

Broomhouse is considered a deprived area of Edinburgh and Scotland. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD, 2020) ranks Broomhouse 804 out of 7000 in Scotland, where 1 indicates most deprived. There are few opportunities and services available to young people in Broomhouse and the local populace lack the motivation or funds to enable them to access these elsewhere. Domestic violence is common and most children and young people are around alcohol and drugs daily. Positive

role models are scarce and children find themselves without support or guidance, often relying on themselves. Parents and guardians can neglect to meet their child's basic needs and fail to set clear boundaries. Children living there often grow up in poverty, with low aspirations, comparatively poor health and an acceptance of their situation to the detriment of their future. The Big Project looks to counter this by offering a safe place for young people to go where they can have access to opportunities, make new friends, encounter positive role models and learn new skills (McLeod 2020, Personal communication).

What they do

The Big Project offers children and young people a place to go where they can feel safe and secure. There they have access to counsel and advice from adults they can look up to (McLeod 2020, Personal communication). They offer numerous activities, some of which are arts and crafts, sports, music, cooking, pamper sessions, team building activities, drama, and discussion groups. While at placement I saw how much the club means to the children and young people who attend. They return weekly with genuine excitement to participate in the activities. The adults have a good relationship with them, demonstrating care and compassion.

2) Why did you choose this organisation?

I chose the Big Project because I have only worked in affluent areas and have no experience working in areas of poverty. It was an opportunity to diversify my experience.

3) What did you do? What were your tasks when you were there?

Each session I was involved in an activity either on my own or with another volunteer.

The team and I prepared activities for the children such as arts and crafts; sport: bench ball, tennis, badminton, hockey (introduced a new way to play hockey),

basketball, handball, volleyball, skipping; games: board games, card games and Wii games; ceilidh dancing; messy play (slime); pamper with foot spa and makeup, decorating eye masks; team building activity; painting landscapes and making bath bombs.

For internet safety day I made up a quiz for the children which had questions about how to stay safe on the internet (see appendix F). The children were in groups and discussed how and why they should stay safe on the internet. We then compared our answers in order to solidify understanding. I thought about the skills I could offer and asked if I could lead an activity making bath bombs. For this activity, I made up a costing sheet and sent it to the club manager. He confirmed that I could lead this activity, so I organised what was needed and took in my own colours, moulds, toppings, surprise toys and fragrance oils. I made bath bombs with the children on my last evening of placement. This went down well - did this for the two sessions. We played a game called 'Guess the scent' and I taught them about why there is a chemical reaction when the bath bombs are submerged in water. Once I had carried out a demonstration the Children weighed out ingredients, selected colours, fragrance, toppings and chose a surprise toy to put inside their bath bomb. At the end, as a reflection, I asked if they enjoyed it and they all said they would like to do it again in future.

4) Did the organisation reflect GIRFEC or some of the principles of inclusive practice? (see Circle Framework) If yes, how? If no, why not?

The BIG Project used inclusive practice in several ways. The children and young people who attend are encouraged to voice their opinion about the activities they have taken part in and they are asked if there is anything they would like to do in the future at the BIG Project. The adults sometimes put out suggestions as children might not know what can be offered at the club. This gives the children a choice and makes sure they feel their opinions have value. One example of this being put into

practice is when the children asked for more cooking activities. Their request was considered and this year they have introduced more cooking activities such as pizza, baking and haggis.

The BIG Project has a consistent approach to encourage positive behaviour. They give 'shout outs' at the start of each session as a big group to specific children who showed positive behaviour the week before. These can be for things such as teamwork, good manners, effort, and encouraging their peers.

The BIG Project has a consistent format from start to finish. The children arrive and have group time, the adults' say what activities are on offer, the children choose, then there is a break all together before they choose their next activity. This approach is beneficial as it means the children always know what to expect and they feel secure, knowing what is happening next. The children are motivated by the encouragement from the adults. The adults highlight and praise effort as well as success in activities. This spurs the children on to try and not give up when faced with a challenge.

5a) Reflect on how the organisation supports / helps children, young people, families and schools *directly, if at all?*

The BIG Project has become a part of the Broomhouse community. The club offers a range of fun activities and encourages the children and young people to try new things. They provide activities the family may not be able to afford and it is a safe place for the children to go, keeping them off the streets. The adults at the club are positive role models with diverse skill sets and are all at different ages and stages of life, offering the children a variety of experience to learn from. Coming to the club supports the family; when the children are there it means the family can deal with situations at home that are sensitive to children.

6) What, in your view OR in the organisation's view, are the 3 *most significant challenges* facing children, young people and/or their families today? Explain

why with support from a range of evidence. (e.g. literature, policy, statistics, own observations)

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) measures the level of deprivation in an area where people live (Appendix G). It looks at specific domains such as income, education, health, employment, crime, housing, and access to services (the time it takes to get to a GP). The SIMD rates these domains as deciles from 1-10 with 1 meaning most deprived and 10 meaning least deprived. Deprivation can mean having a low income but it can also mean not having the chance to get a good education or having access to healthcare facilities. The SIMD ranks Broomhouse in the second decile for income, employment, education/skills, housing and crime, first decile for health and sixth for access to services (SIMD, 2020).

Poverty

In Broomhouse, poverty is due to families not being able to manage their money and therefore they budget poorly. They are likely to spend all their money at the beginning of the week and have little for the rest of the week for important things like food. At Christmas, families tend to spend more than they have which means getting themselves into debt (McLeod 2020, Personal communication). These choices are compounded by the average household earning being within the bottom 10% of income in Scotland (SIMD, 2020).

Poor nutrition

Families mostly eat ready-made meals and foods high in fat and sugar. This kind of food is not good for their health and can have an effect on their performance at school. The BIG Project saw a need here. They tried to help by offering cooking classes and found that parents/carers could not even prepare vegetables. They struggled to peel potatoes and ended up with cuts on their hands. This class changed from making meals to teaching them how to prepare for a meal (McLeod 2020, Personal communication). I checked the Broomhouse area and found that there are a few places offering cooking classes to interested families. At the BIG Project, they had fresh fruit for snack unless they had a cooking or baking session.

Low aspirations

The children and young people in Broomhouse most often follow in the footsteps of their parents/carers who are most likely on benefits. They do not know there is another path to take and do not know what choices they have (McLeod 2020, Personal communication). Only 6% of the area's population go on to further education (SIMD, 2020). Schoon and Parson (2002) found a link between social class and academic achievement. From their study, they found that young people from deprived areas had lower academic achievement and young people's aspirations are linked to their parent's aspirations. However, Frostick, Phillips, Renton, Moore (2015) found that young people from low socio-economic backgrounds do have high aspirations for their education and their future careers. While on placement I noticed that the children wanted to achieve. They worked well as a team while playing sports so they could win. When taking part in building a bridge using newspaper and Sellotape, which needed to be strong enough to hold heavy objects, they demonstrated their creativity and potential.

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Internet Safety Quiz

1. Can you name three different types of online dangers?
2. Can you name three places where dangers might occur?
3. Can you think of three things you can do to stay safe online?
4. I'm online and someone who I don't know asks to meet up. Is it OK to give him or her my address or phone number so we can get together?
5. I have a digital picture of myself and someone I met online wants to see it. Is it OK to send it to that person?
6. I'm in the middle of an online chat session and someone says something really mean. Should I:
 - 1) Say something mean back?
 - 2) Ask them to say sorry?
 - 3) Don't respond; Tell an adult if it bothers me?
7. My parents' and I have established rules as to what I can do on the Internet when I'm home, but I'm at a friend's house. Should I go by my parents' rules or do whatever my friend does?
8. I'm online and I get a message from my Internet service provider asking for my password. They say they need it to fix my account. Should I give it to them?

Appendix G

SIMD Map showing Broomhouse data

