

# Child poverty and restorative practice

Child in the City Conference

November 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>, Leeds

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# Why child poverty?



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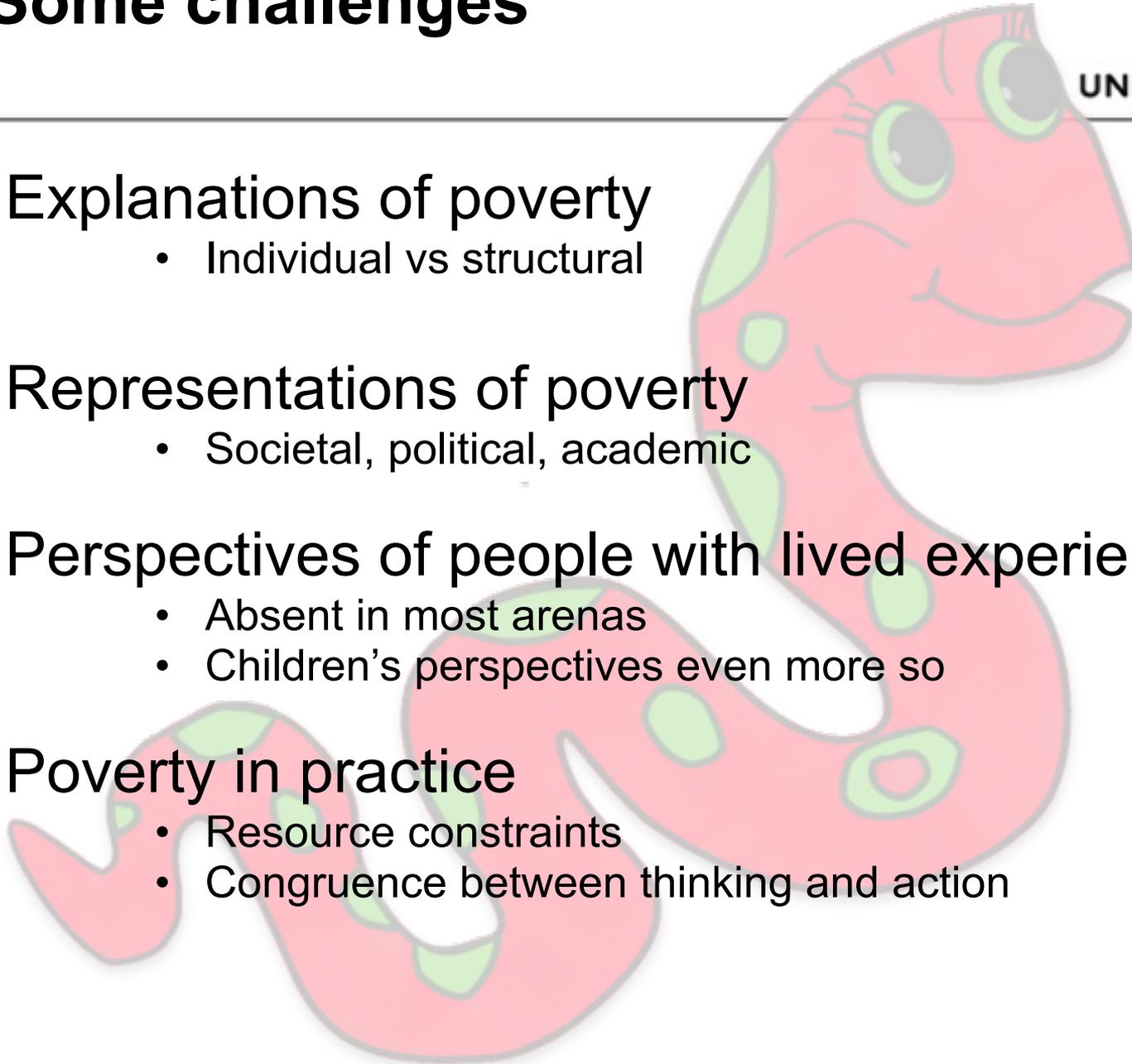
- Devastating impacts on children, families and societies
- Impact on children's 'having been', 'being' and 'becoming'
- Prominent on policy agendas (Sustainable Development Goal 1)
- Ethical obligation

# Some challenges



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- Explanations of poverty
  - Individual vs structural
- Representations of poverty
  - Societal, political, academic
- Perspectives of people with lived experience
  - Absent in most arenas
  - Children's perspectives even more so
- Poverty in practice
  - Resource constraints
  - Congruence between thinking and action



“The aim of restorative practices is to **develop community and to manage conflict and tensions** by **repairing harm and building relationships**. This statement identifies both proactive (building relationships and developing community) and reactive (repairing harm and restoring relationships) approaches.”

# Restorative practice



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- Emphasises structural perspective on poverty
- **Developing community:** acknowledge the knowledge and expertise in deprived communities
- **Manage conflict and tensions:** acknowledge the stress that deprivation causes within communities
- **Repairing harm:** acknowledge that existing structures create harm within communities
- **Building relationships:** actively seeking to redress this harm through non-exploitative partnership working

# Why restorative practice? Fair Shares and Families



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- Investigated how children and families perceive and approach sharing resources across the socio-economic spectrum
- Collaboration with The Children's Society and Leeds City Council
- Ethnography with eight families
- Longitudinal survey of 1,000 parent-child pairs

# Key findings: Fair Shares and Families



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- Children are active participants in family processes of resource acquisition and sharing
- Key dimensions of difference in approaches:
  - Knowledge about family resources
  - Influence over how resources are used
- These differences are **not** related to socio-economic status
- Lower income families have fewer resources – not lower aspirations or different behaviours
- Narratives which blame families (behaviours, aspirations) create double burden

# So what can we do?



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# Local implementation: A Different Take



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- Sought to promote the voices of children, young people and parents with experience of life on a low income
- Participatory methodology – bringing together academic, policy, practice, and experiential knowledge
- Two panels (Leeds and London) trained in peer research and media communication, co-produced resources and reports

# A Different Take



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- Methodology promoted a democratic approach to knowledge generation and action
- Useful tools for participants, organisations and researchers
- Resources (e.g. board games) continue to generate data and discussion
- Now built into the working practices of partners (CPAG and Leeds City Council)

# Restorative practice



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- Massive importance of including children:
  - Insightful responses
  - Hidden dimensions
  - Ethical duty
- Treating poverty as an injustice that we should and can address – not an individual failing
- Challenging the privileging adult agendas – social justice for children and young people
- We can use our power to take children, young people, and people with experience of poverty seriously and amplify their concerns

# The last word



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More snakes than ladders



## Acknowledgements



**Fair Shares and Families** (PI Gill Main, University of Leeds) was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, Grant Number ES/N015916/1

**A Different Take** (PI Gill Main, University of Leeds) was funded by the University of Leeds Impact Acceleration Account

**Barriers to Attendance** (PI Gill Main, University of Leeds) is funded by Leeds City Council

# Thank you!

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