



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth



P 4 PLAY

Making children's rights mainstream: Taking children's participation into account when (re)designing a public play space.

Child in the City Seminar, 19-20 May, 2022, Cascais, Portugal, Rianne Jansens

Supervisors: Dr. Helen Lynch UCC Dept of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, Ireland, Associate Prof. Maria Prellwitz and Dr. Alexandra Olofsson LTU, Dept of Health, Education and Technology, Sweden.
Advisors: Dr. Linda O'Sullivan DCEDIY and Mary Brereton, Hub na nÓg, Ireland



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 861257

Presentation outline



P 4 PLAY

- Introduction to myself and my PhD
- Background: Children's right to share their views and children's right to play
- Aim and purpose: Opportunity to mainstream the application of children's rights in local policy planning
- Desired outcome: Enhancing all children's participation in designing public playspace

Children's **participation**:

“individuals or groups of children having the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and, where necessary, the support to freely **express their views**, to be heard and to contribute to decision making on matters affecting them, their views **given due weight** in accordance with their age and maturity.”

Art.12-13-15-17 and GC 12



P 4 PLAY

Children's right to rest, leisure, **play**, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts:

Children's play is "**any behaviour, activity or process initiated, controlled and structured** by children themselves; it takes place whenever and wherever opportunities arise. Caregivers may **contribute to the creation of environments** in which play takes place, but play itself is non-compulsory, driven by intrinsic motivation."

Art. 31 and GC17



Children's participation



- Adult-driven process (Bae, 2009; Lundy, 2007; Horgan et al., 2017)
- A voice based approach (Bae, 2009; Clark et al., 2006; Horgan, 2017)
- Not often outside formal institutions like schools (Nolas, 2015)
- Giving due weight is not well operationalised, impact on policy making processes is unclear (Clark et al., 2006; Lundy, 2007)
- Not relating the topics of discussion to everyday occupations (Clark et al., 2006; Davey et al., 2011; Horgan et al., 2017; Tuukkanen et al., 2013)

Children's right to play



P 4 PLAY

- No agreement on definition of play (Lynch et al., 2018)
- Art 31 and GC 17 not fully understood (McKendrick et al., 2018)
- Play for the sake of play and play like activities (Besio et al., 2017)
- Lack of inclusive playspaces in community setting, the lack of environmental support (Prellwitz et al., 2007; Moore et al., 2020; Woolley, 2013)
- Children's experiences and perspectives on play are not enough known and represented (Lynch et al., 2018; Wenger et al., 2021)

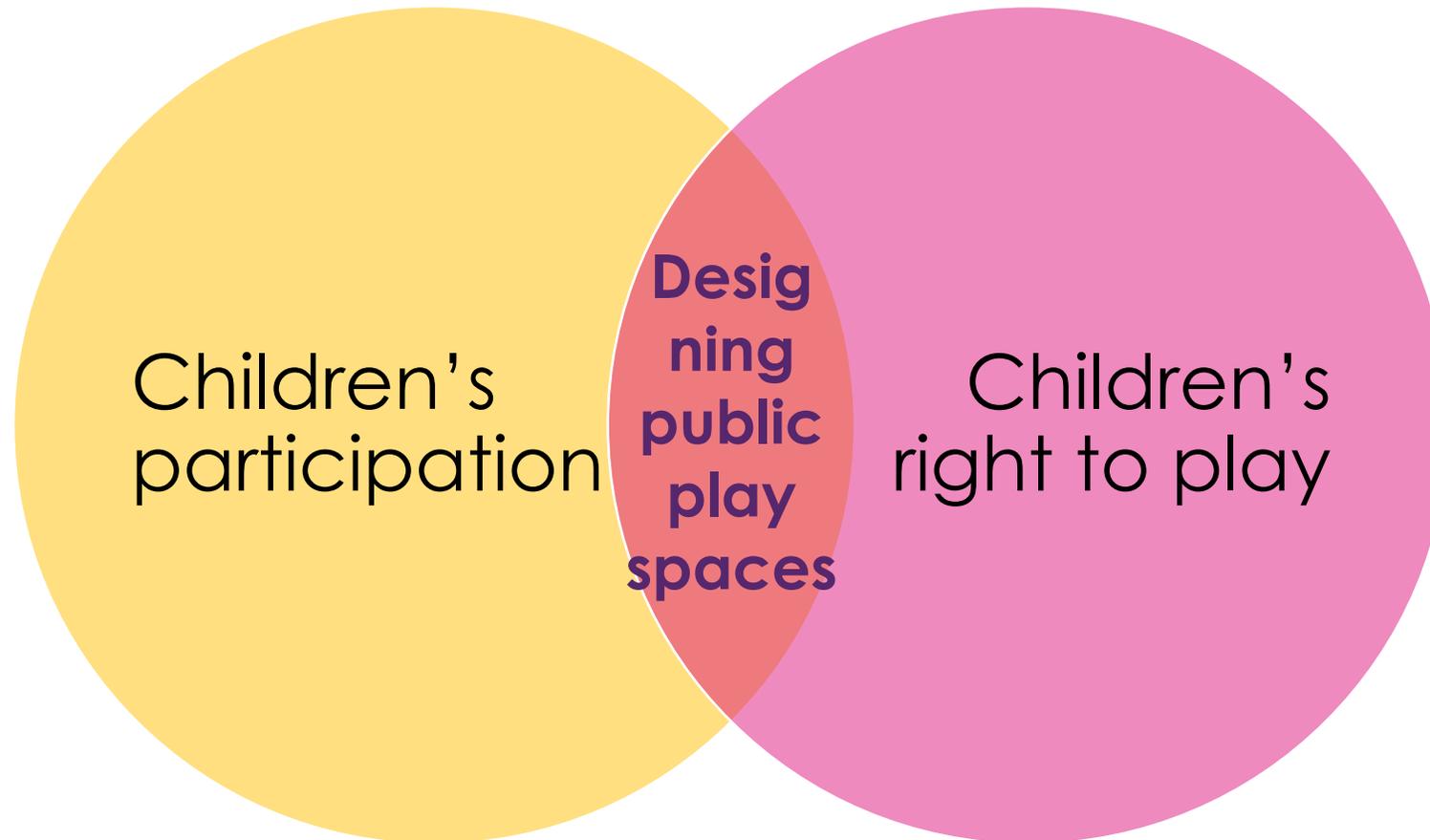


Key message:

Designing public playspaces = major opportunity to mainstream the application of children's rights in local policy planning



P 4 PLAY



Public playspaces



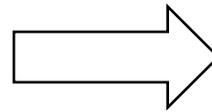
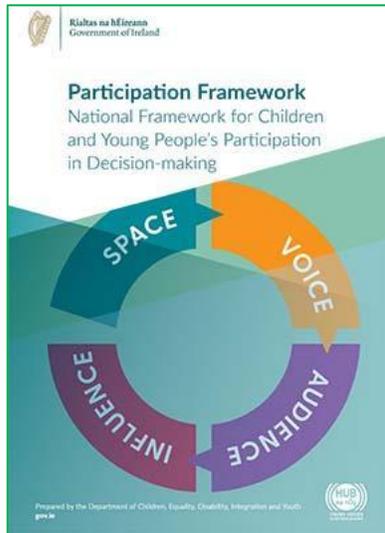
P 4 PLAY

- “A **good playspace** therefore needs to be designed to provide good quality play experiences, and to provide affordances for varied forms of free play that incorporate challenge, stimulation, personal preferences, and fun.” (Lynch et al., 2020; Woolley et al., 2013).
- **Planners** have attention for children but the everydayness of their doing seems not to be understood well (Horton et al., 2006), research about rural areas is scarce (Freeman, 2020).
- **Municipalities** are confronted with a lack of policy and guidelines to value play and to create appropriate play facilities (Davey et al., 2011).
- Designing an inclusive public playspace **requires knowledge** from childhood, from disability, from play, from design and demands collaboration with stakeholders at all stages (Woolley, 2013).
- Limited availability and understanding of designing **inclusive** playgrounds (Lynch et al., in Encarnação, et al., 2018)

First phase of PhD: Review of existing guidelines



P 4 PLAY



Possible outcomes:

Different guidelines for (re)design of public playspaces

→ strategies for enhancing children's participation

Second phase of PhD: Review of experiences in Irish municipalities



P 4 PLAY



Possible outcomes:

Suggestions/strategies on how children's participation is currently done and can be incorporated in guidelines on (re)design of public playspaces.

Third phase of PhD: Children's experiences and perspectives



P 4 PLAY



What do **young children and children with disabilities** need to share their views in a (re)designing process of their municipalities' playspace?

Possible outcomes:

Strategies for participation of young children and children with disabilities in (re)designing a public playspace.

Key concepts in my project



P 4 PLAY

Application of UN
CRC in children's
daily lives

Foregrounding
seldom heard
children as
community
members

Supporting local
policymakers in
operationalising
children's rights

Literature describes benefits of children's participation and play



P 4 PLAY

Children's participation

feelings of empowerment and social worth

a sense of fitting-in and belonging

consciousness and practice in democratic citizenship

Children's play

Fundamental benefits for different aspects of upgrowing

Children involved in designing playspaces results in more playing

Improved social participation among children with different backgrounds

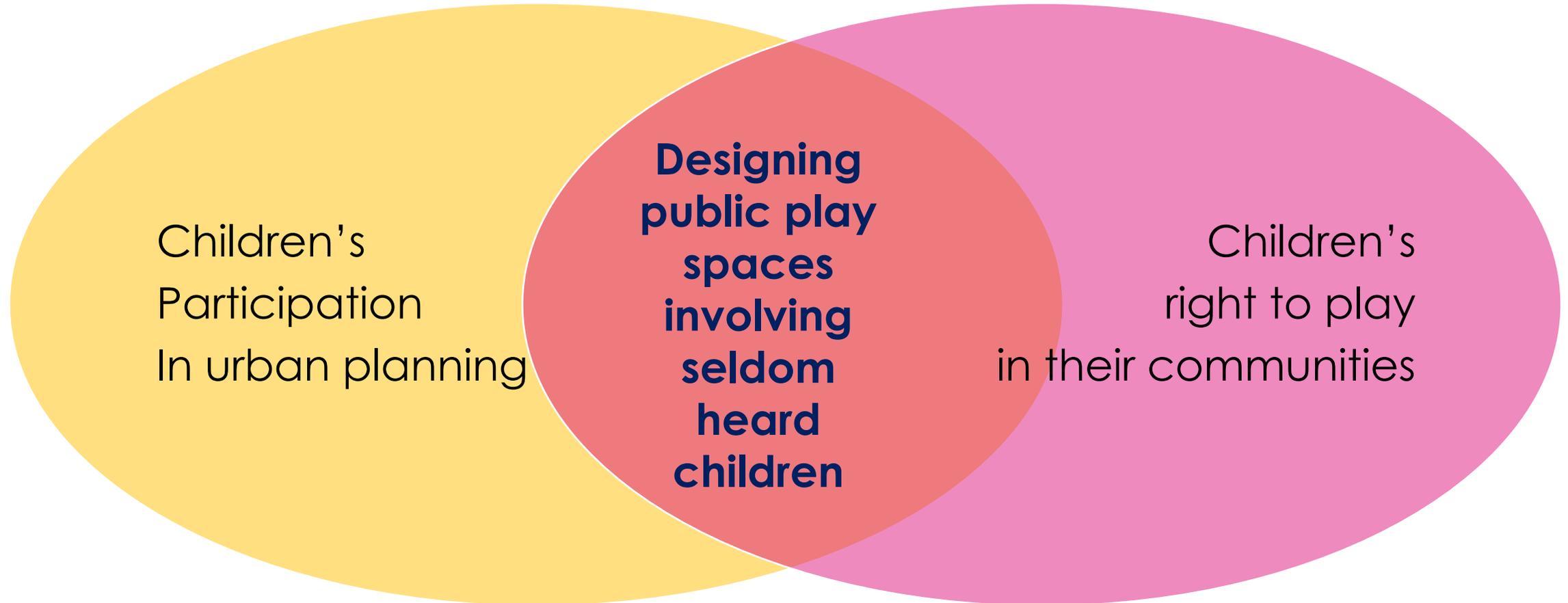
Adults providing children time and space for play report it back as rewarding



Contribution to an evident opportunity to mainstream the application of children's rights in local policy planning



P 4 PLAY



Thank you for your attention



P 4 PLAY



Rianne Jansens RJansens@ucc.ie

Rianne.Jansens@ltu.se

Dr. Helen Lynch

Dr. Maria Prellwitz

Dr. Alexandra Olofsson

Dr. Linda O'Sullivan

Mary Brereton

www.p4play.eu/project/research-esr-5



EU Horizon 2020 Research and innovation programme
Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action agreement No 861257



References



P 4 PLAY

- Bae, B. (2009). Children's right to participate—challenges in everyday interactions. *European early childhood education research journal*, 17(3), 391-406.
- Besio, S., Bulgarelli, D., & Stancheva-Popkostadinova, V. (2017). Play development in children with disabilities. *De Gruyter Open Poland*.
- Clark, A., & Percy-Smith, B. (2006). Beyond consultation: Participatory practices in everyday spaces. *Children Youth and Environments*, 16(2), 1-9.
- [Council of Europe Children's Rights Division and Youth Department. \(2021\). Listen-Act-Change. CoE's handbook on children's participation for professionals working for and with children. https://rm.coe.int/publication-handbook-on-children-s-participation-eng/1680a14539](https://rm.coe.int/publication-handbook-on-children-s-participation-eng/1680a14539)
- Davey, C., & Lundy, L. (2011). Towards greater recognition of the right to play: An analysis of article 31 of the UNCRC. *Children & Society*, 25(1), 3-14.
- Encarnação, P., Ray-Kaesler, S., & Bianquin, N. (2018). *Guidelines for supporting children with disabilities' play: Methodologies, tools, and contexts*. Sciendo. <https://content.sciendo.com/view/title/540318?rskey=YrPGeD&result=15>
- Freeman, C. (2020). Twenty-five years of children's geographies: a planner's perspective. *Children's Geographies*, 18(1), 110-121.
- Horgan, D. (2017). Consultations with children and young people and their impact on policy in Ireland. *Social Inclusion*, 5(3), 104-112
- Horgan, D., Forde, C., Martin, S., & Parkes, A. (2017). Children's participation: Moving from the performative to the social. *Children's Geographies*, 15(3), 274-288.
- Horton, J., & Krafft, P. (2006). What else? Some more ways of thinking and doing 'Children's Geographies'. *Children's geographies*, 4(01), 69-95.
- Government Ireland (2021). Participation Framework. <https://hubnanog.ie/>
- Jansson, M., & Ramberg, U. (2012). Implementation and effects of user participation in playground management: a comparative study of two Swedish municipalities. *Managing Leisure*, 17(1), 1-13.
- Lynch, H., Moore, A., & Prellwitz, M. (2018). From policy to play provision: Universal design and the challenges of inclusive play. *Children, Youth and Environments*, 28(2), 12-34.
- Lynch, H., Moore, A., Edwards, C., & Horgan, L. (2020). Advancing play participation for all: The challenge of addressing play diversity and inclusion in community parks and playgrounds. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 83(2), 107-117.
- Lundy, L. (2007). 'Voice' is not enough: conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. *British educational research journal*, 33(6), 927-942.

References



P 4 PLAY

- McKendrick, J. H., Loebach, J., & Casey, T. (2018). Realizing article 31 through general comment no. 17: Overcoming challenges and the quest for an optimum play environment. *Children, Youth and Environments*, 28(2), 1-11.
- Moore, A., Lynch, H., & Boyle, B. (2020). Can universal design support outdoor play, social participation, and inclusion in public playgrounds? A scoping review. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 1-22.
- Nicholson, J., Shimpi, P. M., Kurnik, J., Carducci, C., & Jevgjovikj, M. (2014). Listening to children's perspectives on play across the lifespan: Children's right to inform adults' discussions of contemporary play. *International Journal of Play*, 3(2), 136-156.
- Nolas, S. M. (2015). Children's participation, childhood publics and social change: a review. *Children & Society*, 29(2), 157-167.
- Prellwitz, M., & Skär, L. (2007). Usability of playgrounds for children with different abilities. *Occupational therapy international*, 14(3), 144-155.
- Schoeppich, A., Koller, D., & McLaren, C. (2021). Children's Right to Participate in Playground Development: A Critical Review. *Children, Youth and Environments*, 31(3), 1-25.
- Thomas, N. (2007). Towards a theory of children's participation. *Int'l J. Child. Rts.*, 15, 199.
- Tuukkanen, T., Kankaanranta, M., & Wilska, T. A. (2013). Children's life world as a perspective on their citizenship: The case of the Finnish Children's Parliament. *Childhood*, 20(1), 131-147.
- United Nations Human Rights Office of the Higher Commissioner. (1989). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>
- UN CRC image [Defending the Rights of Children - Childhood Education International \(acei.org\)](https://www.acei.org)
- Woolley, H. (2013). Now being social: The barrier of designing outdoor play spaces for disabled children. *Children & Society*, 27(6), 448-458.
- Wenger, I., Schulze, C., Lundström, U., & Prellwitz, M. (2021). Children's perceptions of playing on inclusive playgrounds: A qualitative study. *Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 28(2), 136-146.
- Woolley, H., & Lowe, A. (2013). Exploring the relationship between design approach and play value of outdoor play spaces. *Landscape Research*, 38(1), 53-74.