



PERCEPTIONS



"Journey" Exhibition & Workshop



Collaborative Partners

Oriel Science and St. Joseph's Cathedral Primary School, Swansea



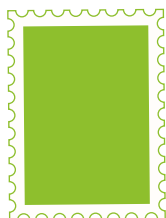
Audience

Children aged 9-10 from St. Joseph's Cathedral Primary School, Swansea, South Wales



Purpose/Aim

The aim of this activity was to utilise creative approaches of research to bring to the fore the previously unheard perceptions of children on migration. This activity brought together interdisciplinary actors (artists, social researchers, teachers, and families) to experiment and co-create artistic resources to initiate conversations on migration and community amongst the broader public. The creative approaches enabled the children to symbolically represent their attitudes and understandings of migration, reaching beyond language and grasping the more-than-rational



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Description of the Activity

Exhibition: Previously, the children had worked with artists to create two artworks. This event gave them the opportunity to view and reflect on their work in the exhibition space:

"Cast Hands" - pairs of children's hands holding on to each other which have been cast in plaster (produced earlier under the lead of Cerian Appleby as a part of Creative Schools Scheme, in collaboration with creative practitioners Mandy Lane and Bill Taylor-Beales).

"Living Bricks" - As a part of the earlier 'Journey' project, all pupils were invited to work with their parents to create a brick.

Workshop: Following the reflection on their artwork and the history of migration in Swansea, the children were asked to design a postcard depicting "migration" and what it involves. The children were asked to write a note to their past selves, reflecting the challenges they may have faced and the things they would need to bring with them to Swansea.



Figure 1 The Children of St. Joseph's Cathedral School, Swansea



Figure 2 The children reflecting on "Living Bricks"

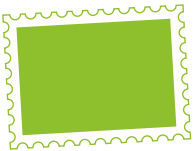


Figure 3 Children making postcards

Techniques

This activity used imaginative, arts-based strategies to stimulate the conversations about perceptions of migration.

The artworks facilitated exploration of the experiences and emotions migrants may face on arrival in a new community, enabling greater reflection and empathy.

Drawing postcards on "migration" simplified the topic, enabling the children to symbolically represent their principal perceptions of the highly complex theme, producing new, alternative insights, unsettling taken-for-granted narratives.

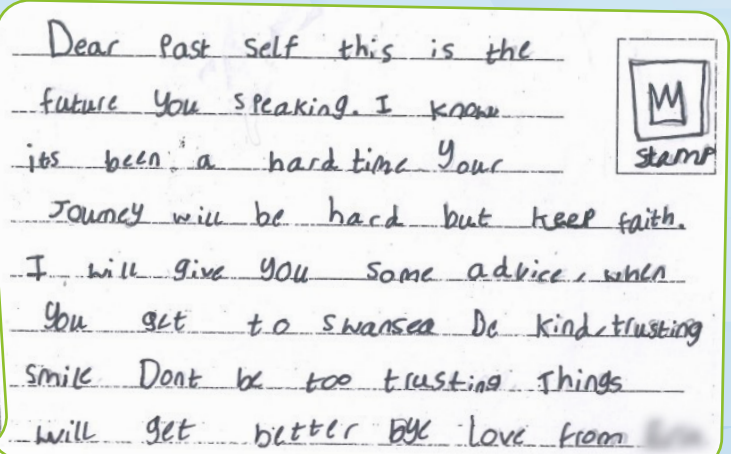
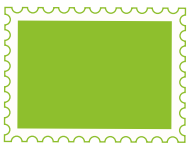


Figure 4 Postcard expressing the many worries of migration



Key Concepts

Uncertainty – In their messages the children empathised with the many **Losses** and uncertainties facing migrants: fear of finding employment, learning a new language, and finding belonging in a new community.

Hope – Despite these fears, all the children expressed hope for the future, repeatedly stating that their situation will improve over **Time**.

Faith – Religious faith was crucial to the children's hope for the future. They all included religious items (Bible, rosary) in their travel essentials. Faith was also the basis for finding belonging in a new **Community**.



Figure 5 Children making postcards

To my past self
Be brave and trust your instincts. Don't
think everyone will be kind and trustworthy
Don't lose hope. Make sure to get a job. Don't be
nervous, be confident. Even though times are tough the
you're there and the more you "blend in" you will
see that you will be more confident with your
surrounding. Stay safe! From _____



Figure 6 Postcard offering advice to "blend in" to the community



Figure 7 Children discussing key themes at the workshop

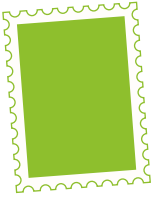


Figure 8 Children designing their Postcards

Outcomes

The children, their families, teachers, artists and social researchers involved in this activity co-created three material artworks: Cast Hands, Living Bricks and the postcards.

All of these resources capture the perceptions of the children and their families of historical and present migration to Swansea, highlighting previously unheard voices. Due to the creative approaches employed, these perceptions are not limited by language, but grasp the immaterial, intersubjective and more-than-rational.

As well as valuable resources for future educational opportunities, these artworks are evidence of what can be achieved through creative interventions.

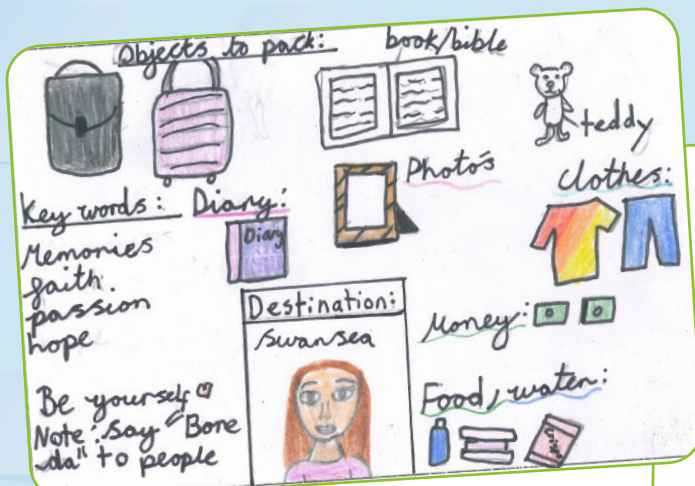


Figure 9 Postcard emphasising the importance of speaking Welsh

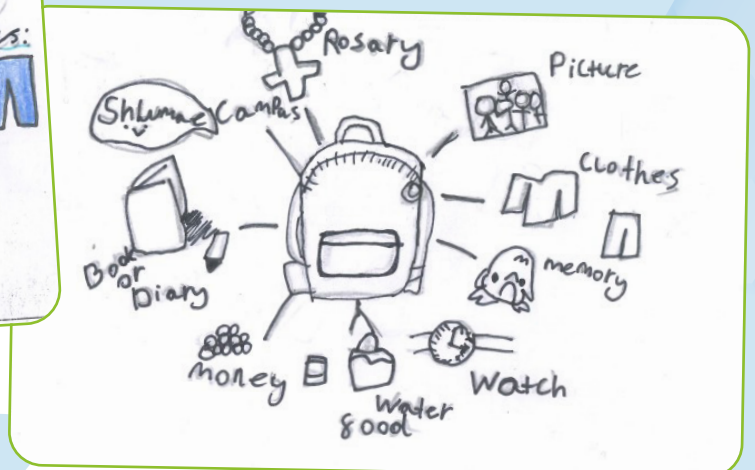


Figure 10 Postcard showing all the items migrants need to bring with them on their journey, especially items relating to faith

Impact

Through mobilising existing local community links, this activity delivered whole community impact by working with young people and their families to imagine and represent their visions of migration. This activity enhanced the capacity of local schools to nurture talents, face common challenges and innovate. This activity involves a broad range of people, highlighting previously unheard voices in discussions on migration, destabilising existing narratives.

Through the **artwork**, the children were able to explore and openly discuss the heritage of their school, cathedral, and local community. The creative approach utilised in this activity encouraged research ownership, enabling them to identify and empathise with the wider themes of migration and community, facilitating wider behavioural change.

The **postcards** produced during this activity will be sent to other primary schools as a tangible teaching resource to further explore themes on migration and community, reaching new audiences by encouraging collaborations. This will enable the transnational circulation of ideas about and positive perceptions of migration that encourage diversity.

As well as showing the perceptions of migration held by young people, the postcards also serve as evidence of the knowledge and understanding of migration gained after the creative activity. The children enjoyed the creativity of the activity; the exploration, experimentation and making-together of materials, which can be integrated into the school curriculum and used as educational resources. Finally, all the postcards demonstrate a change in attitudes and values, exhibiting empathy and an increased capacity for tolerance towards migrants from all backgrounds.

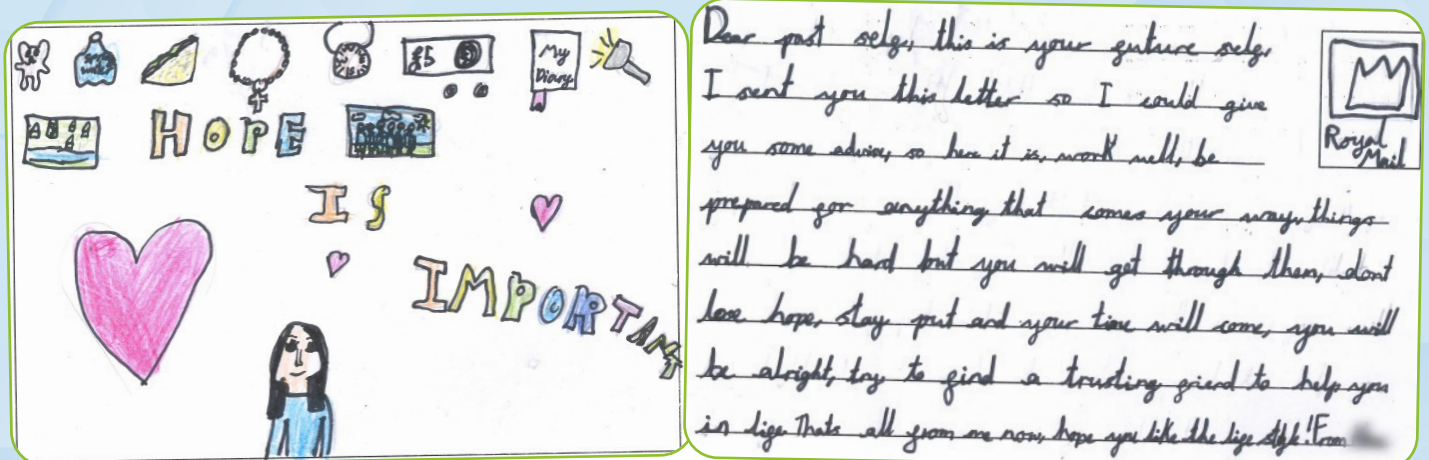


Figure 11 Postcard emphasising the importance of hope



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