



Hearing Girls' Voices: Girl-Kind North East's Story So Far

By Tessa Holland, Amanda McBride,
Sarah Ralph and Sarah Winkler-Reid



Introduction to Girl-Kind

We founded Girl-Kind North East in 2017. Held annually, Girl-Kind works with girls aged 11 – 18 to explore their experiences through workshops and a showcase event. The first workshop starts with one open question: what are your experiences of growing up as a girl in the North East of England? This is all it takes to open up a wealth of ideas. Working together in groups, the girls decide what topic or theme they want to focus on, and how they want to express it to others. All this leads up to the celebration event in October for the UN's International Day of the Girl. At this Girl-Kind Celebration Day, the girls present the work they have created to family, friends and special guests who have the power to influence change.

Prior to founding Girl-Kind, we had conducted research on girls' lives in Britain. We encountered girls as active, skilled and critical meaning-makers. However, negative representations of girls pervade the UK mainstream media and beyond. Girls are frequently framed as 'pathological consumers', ingesting a 'bad diet' of media images. Our aim in founding Girl-Kind was not to make assumptions about the role of media in girls' lives but to find out what matters from the girls themselves.

Where a girl lives also has consequences. The 2016 report 'The State of Girls Rights in the UK' by children's development organisation Plan International UK found that 'a girl's location is critical' across many different aspects of her life. Both the 2016 report – and 2020 follow up – demonstrated that the North East is among the most challenging places to be a girl. Girls in the North East face the greatest struggles based on statistical analysis of life expectancy, reproductive health and educational outcomes.

Structural inequalities impact on girls' lives, their access to resources, opportunities, and rights. At the same time, they are more than what limits them. We sought to create a space where girls could explore what it is like growing up in the region, without framing the reality of their lived experience as problematic from the outset.

We started Girl-Kind in 2017 working with two schools and about 40 girls. The first year represented a challenge in finding schools willing to participate and securing their involvement.

As the profile of the project has grown, it is now more common for us to be approached by schools wishing to take part. In 2019 we worked with 10 schools and youth groups. Each year so far, we have more than doubled the girls we have been able to work with, and in our three-years over 300 different girls have participated in Girl-Kind activities.

This growth has shown the real demand for a project of this kind. In the context of shrunken youth services, and the pressures on schools to focus on attainment metrics with reduced budgets, we have provided a dedicated space for girls to explore their selves, relationships and everyday lives. Each year we have been awed by the enthusiasm, originality and incisiveness by which Girl-Kinders have talked about and represented their experiences of growing up as a girl today in the North East.

Girl-Kind's development has been achieved through the work of a fantastic team. Tessa Holland (Newcastle University) and Amanda McBride (Northumbria University) were vital in co-running Girl-Kind 2018 and 2019, and also co-authored this report. Our community worker partners Dianne Casey and Sarah Crutwell have expertly run Girl-Kind in the south of the region. Associate Professor Mel Gibson has also been an invaluable member of the team since 2018. Girl-Kind has been generously supported by funding from our universities and the UK Economic and Social Research Council.

Sarah Ralph
Northumbria University

Sarah Winkler-Reid
Newcastle University



"Growing up as a girl in the UK is challenging. Despite significant legislation, gender-equal policies and the growing public awareness of the barriers facing women and girls thanks to movements such as #MeToo, girls in the UK are still subjected to harassment, discrimination, fear and the limiting gender norms and stereotypes that perpetuate cycles of inequality for all.

The work of organisations such as Girl-Kind North East has never been more vital. As youth services across the country continue to shrink, girls continue to call for safe, accessible spaces to connect with their peers, to learn about their rights, and be supported to take action on the issues they feel passionately about.

I am privileged to have witnessed the work of Girl-Kind in action, not only seeing the impact, but feeling the swell of positivity, excitement and passion in the room when young women are coming together to celebrate a journey that truly matters to them. From creative song-writing, to dance, to art, activism is powerful when it is girl-led and girl-owned. Girl-Kind continues to demonstrate that when young women are given the tools and support they need, they can truly change the world."

Nikki Giant

UK Girls' Rights Strategy and Development Manager
Plan International UK

The Foundations of Girl-Kind

The Girl-Kind programme was developed from our research on girls' lives and growing up in Britain.

Sarah Winkler-Reid's social anthropological research challenges negative representation of young people. Drawing on 14-months fieldwork in a London secondary school – observing and interacting with young people in lessons, lunch and break-times – she focuses on how young people create their adult-free social realms. Through their actions, young people create and maintain numerous relationships, and a peer hierarchy – an impressive achievement. By connecting, breaking and reforming relationships, young people tenaciously shape each other into acceptable persons, as well as offering each other love and supportⁱ.

This ethnographic view enables her to address social anxieties about youth and social change, for example concern about negative body image and sexualisationⁱⁱ. Bodily dissatisfaction among girls' is often explained with a media cause-and-effect model focusing on media consumption by individual girls. Sarah's research shows how body and beauty ideals take shape in girls' everyday lives as part of the pervasive evaluations they subject each other to. Interventions which insist on the media cause and effect modelⁱⁱⁱ replicate the problem by treating girls as passive recipients. Instead Sarah argues for a holistic approach for working with young people, that values them as experts in their own lives.

An interdisciplinary researcher on gender, girls' culture and the media, Sarah Ralph's on-going research considers the way media products are utilised within familial and close peer relationships and everyday social interactions. For example, her detailed qualitative study of mothers' and daughters' shared relations to film-stars demonstrates the roles stars play as a 'currency of communication' in two-way familial relations, particularly as daughters' transition to adulthood^{iv}. She argues for a move towards an 'action'-centred exploration of the ways media products are used and function within social interactions between girls and women, over the life cycle of their personal relationships^v.

Continuing to explore these themes, her more recent research examines the use and function of girls' collaborative media-making, and the possibility of girl-made media being utilised as a tool for social action when shared with other young women in their communities.

Building from our respective research, we developed the Girl-Kind approach. We argue that adult-defined assumptions obscure the reality of young people's lives, and problem-centred interventions reduce young people's agency – their ability to act on their own behalf. In a Girl-Kind supportive environment, girls develop their ideas and enact their solutions, building confidence in their ability to sustain themselves and each other. This ethos informs everything we do.



ⁱWinklerReid, S. (2016). Friendship, bitching, and the making of ethical selves: what it means to be a good friend among girls in a London school. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 22(1), 166-182.
ⁱⁱWinkler Reid, S. (2014). 'She's not a slag because she only had sex once': Sexual ethics in a London secondary school. *Journal of Moral Education*, 43(2), 183-197.
ⁱⁱⁱWinklerReid, S. (2017). "Looking Good" and "Good Looking" in School: Beauty Ideals, Appearance, and Enskilled Vision among Girls in a London Secondary School. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 48(3), 284-300.
^{iv}Ralph, S. (2015). Using stars, not just 'reading' them: the roles and functions of film stars in mother-daughter relations. *Celebrity Studies*, 6(1), 23-38.
^vRalph, S. (2015). 'A Place for Talking about Female Stars': Exploring Versatility, Femininity and 'Fantasy' in Mother-Daughter Talk on Film Stars. In *The Politics of Being a Woman* (pp. 91-111). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

The Girl-Kind Programme

Currently, the main Girl-Kind programme runs annually between September and early December in a series of workshops, culminating in a Celebration Day held in October for UN International Day of the Girl. The schools and youth groups we work with decide on their own cohort: from the group size (be it eight or 40) or the age of the girls involved. They also provide a physical space for the workshop, and schools offer a place in the school day outside their normal timetable for the girls to take part. The programme is in four phases:



What Girl-Kind has Achieved

In this section we would like to illustrate what Girl-Kind has achieved over its first three years. Since 2017 we have asked each girl who has participated to complete a qualitative and quantitative evaluation of their experience of Girl-Kind. An analysis of this three-year data is collated in the graphs on these pages and as a word cloud on page 5. Qualitative responses from the girls are presented on page 6. In preparation for this report we conducted interviews with selected Girl-Kind participants, teachers, and a representative of an organisation we have partnered with. These are presented as case studies across this section.

CASE STUDY: Alicia, Girl-Kind 2017, making films and gaining confidence

'I felt like 'It is my time to shine'...because I am not going to keep my ideas in a bag and just throw them away.'

This is how Alicia remembers her Girl-Kind workshops. Part of our 2017 cohort from Sacred Heart Catholic High School, she and her friends used their time to develop a display about their experiences of cat-calling. Alicia says that through Girl-Kind, she gained a 'totally different perspective' on issues facing women:

I think Girl-Kind is a really...good experience for especially young women. I literally didn't know there was a women's day for women! I didn't..I didn't really care. But now I am like: We are really powerful and we don't really show that! We don't showcase our power, and we don't showcase that we go through these things [such as cat-calling].

As part of the Girl-Kind programme, Alicia attended a 'Film-in-a-Day' workshop, run in partnership with Newcastle's Young Women's Film Academy (YWFA)^{vi}. Alicia and the other girls worked together to formulate, story-board and shoot the short film *Cleo* which was screened at the celebration event. During this workshop, Alicia worked a film camera for the first time.

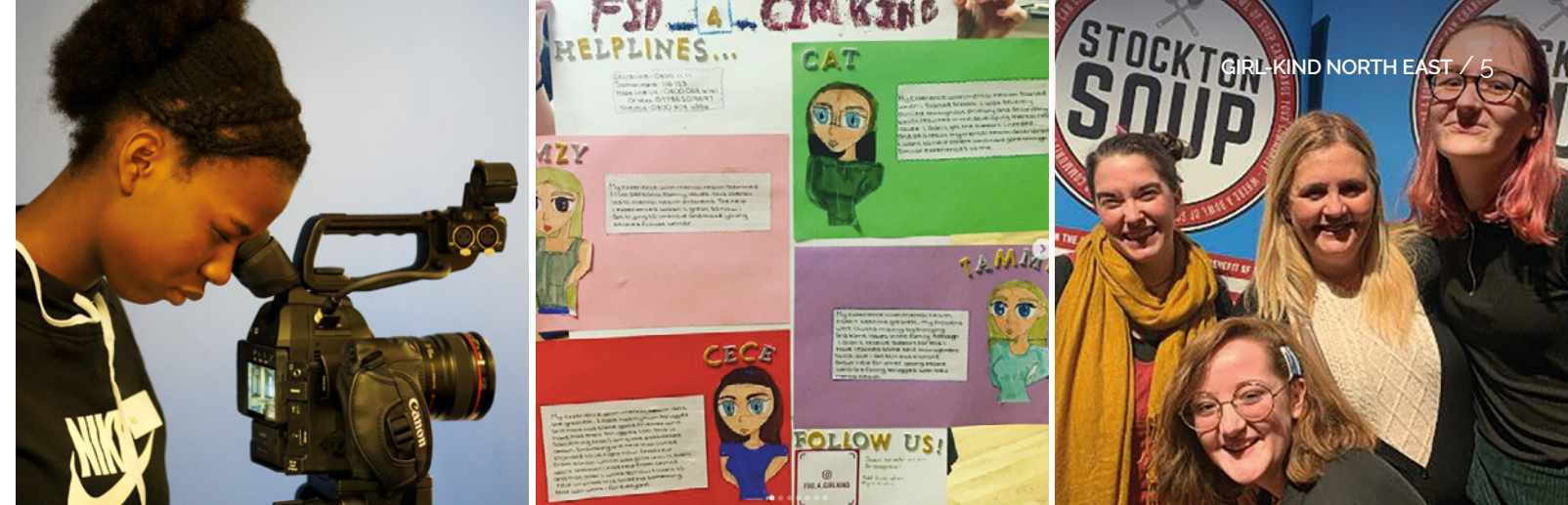
Following this experience, Alicia started attending YWFA regularly and now studies film at A-Level:

[Going to the YWFA] was the best decision I have made because I made it on my own! My friends didn't want to go, but I convinced them that this would be a good opportunity... Then we went...and I was filled with joy, because...I was able to do things I wasn't able to do at home.

She links her time with Girl-Kind to her growing independence and confidence, helping her challenge those all too common doubts:

Usually ...loads of thoughts will go through my head: '...I can't do this.' 'You are not supposed to do that!' 'You can't talk.' 'You are not allowed to do this!' and stuff like that. But ever since I went to Girl-Kind I am able to open up more, and just tell people. And even talk to older people.

^{vi} Cleo, the film made by 2017 Girl-Kinders, can be found on our website www.girlkind.co.uk



(L-R): Alicia during the 'Film-in-a-Day' workshop – page 4, materials made by FSD 4 GirlKind – page 5, Liv and India from Tees Youth Our Youth with our Teesside partners Dianne and Sarah – page 6.

CASE STUDY: Emily, Caitlyn, Chloe and Tamzin, Girl-Kind 2019, encouraging young people to seek help for their mental health

Focusing on young women's mental health difficulties FSD 4 GirlKind (@fsd_4_girlkind) is an online support community, set up by Emily, Caitlyn, Chloe and Tamzin, pupils at Framwellgate School, as part of their Girl-Kind project:

Chloe: [Our theme was] mental health and how that affects people ...All four of us had experiences in that sort of..field, so we thought if we put all of our experiences together it would..work.

Emily: *It would work to like encourage other people to.. not only accept that they could need help – but to get it. And we could help to then help that.*

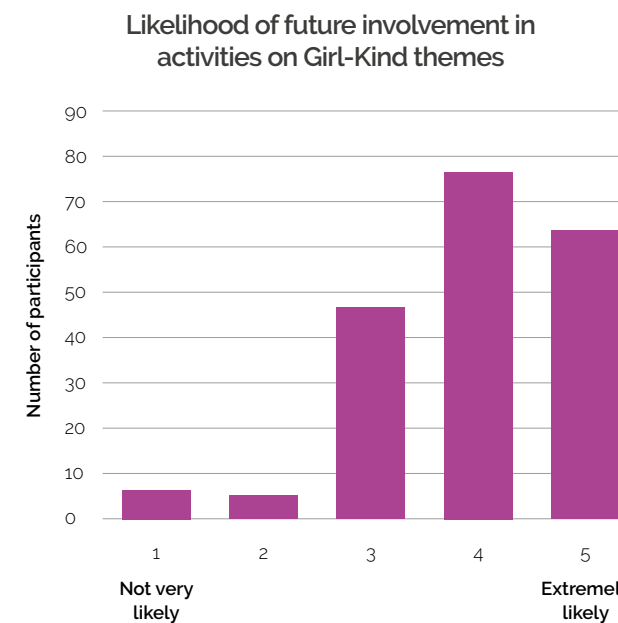
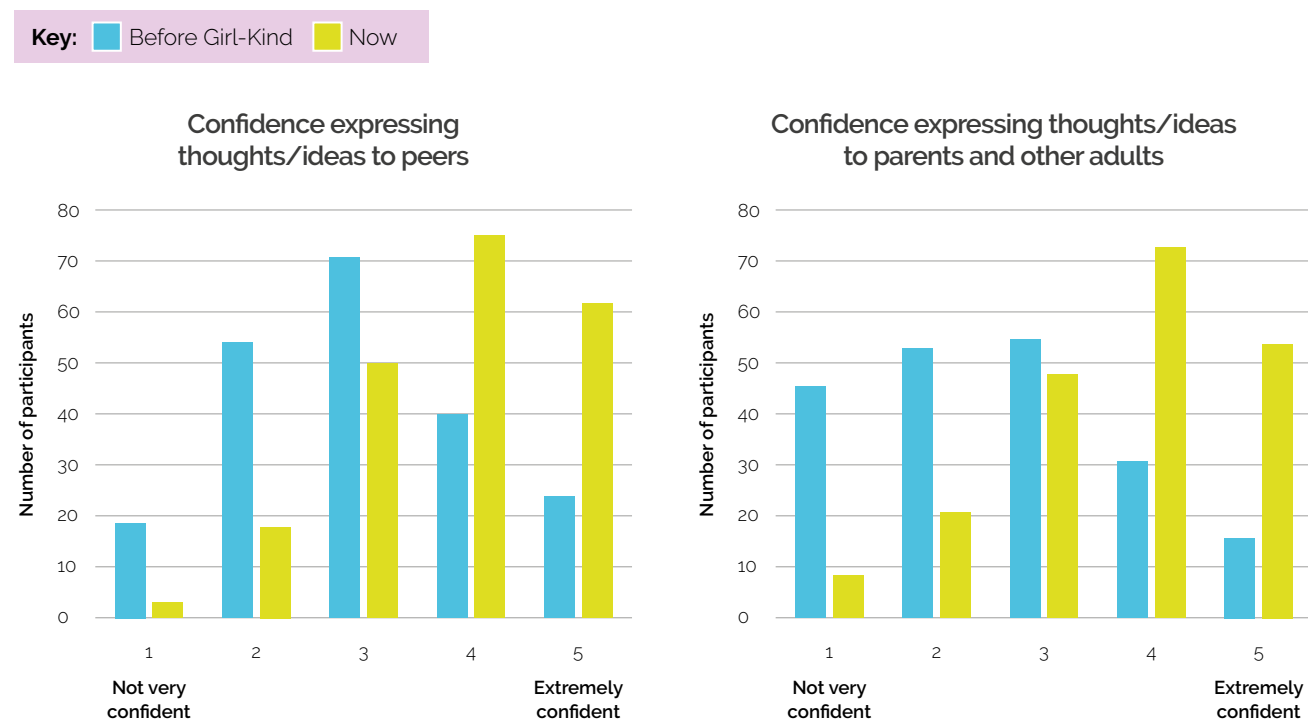
Caitlyn: We really wanted to help girls our age and younger, because we have had these experiences now and before, and it is kind of what we know...by making an Instagram page that was positive for mental health...it would take away from the big thing that social media is really negative and has bad impacts, when we could make it a good impact with somewhere where a lot of young girls would actually see it.

When they joined Girl-Kind this group of friends were nervous about working with people they didn't know, but by celebration day, their confidence had grown such that they felt able to discuss with the Lord Mayor of Newcastle 'how rubbish' young people's mental health services are. Encouraged by this conversation, the group has recently written to their MP to highlight these issues.

The group feel their Girl-Kind project has encouraged self-belief – helping them talk more openly about their problems with peers and with professionals and develop confidence in their academic abilities/potential:

Caitlyn: When I am in class, I feel a lot more comfortable. Because before Girl-Kind I thought that everyone was judging me and talking about me. But now I don't have all that paranoia. It helps me to concentrate, I have been getting better grades as a result. It's been good.

Emily: I would say schoolwork as well, I have been starting to do it more...because I sort of realised I might actually pass something.



CASE STUDY: Liv and India, Girl-Kind 2019, creating a safe space for young Teessiders to explore their experiences

Based in Teesside, Liv and India met Girl-Kind facilitators Dianne Casey and Sarah Crutwell through Tees Women Poets and became Girl-Kind's first youth group cohort. Their focus on life chances led them to develop a giant snakes and ladders board highlighting the 'postcode lottery', that where you are from shapes your life chances. This was showcased at the Celebration Day:

Liv: *It was really amazing seeing everyone else's projects and everyone coming together. And it was fun to showcase what we did and participate...[The game] was a simple idea, but it was really fun to create and have that space.*

In developing their ideas, the girls became aware of the lack of provision for young people in their area and started work on plans to plug that gap:

Liv: *From Girl-Kind it became predominant that there wasn't much for 16-25 year old's to do much with what they actually wanted to do, and strive to establish issues and create debates. Like how we create a safe environment to not be put down or be in the restrictions of the school would be good.*

Winning funding from Stockton Soup, they have established Tees Youth Our Youth, which offers a space for young adults 15+ to talk about issues facing the community and express their views creatively. Taking part in Girl-Kind has changed Liv's outlook on feminism, activism and taking part in these kinds of projects:

Liv: *It is something that will make a difference. There is an impact even if you don't see it, like it impacts you in making them consciously, it will have an impact on someone there as well.*

Girl's Reflections

It's really fun, it's a safe place – there's glitter, cake and feminists – what more would you want?

Girl-Kinders are a diverse group. They come from across the North East region, from different schools, communities and backgrounds. They are different ages, with diverse passions and interests, as reflected in the variety of the projects they produce. What the girls have in common is their Girl-Kind experience and their embrace of its ethos; despite their differences, feedback from girls is remarkably similar and highlights how Girl-Kind creates a space for creative, fun and confidence-boosting work.

- The Girl-Kind workshops are designed to create an open, trusting and respectful environment to share thoughts, feelings and ideas. Girls' feedback highlights the importance of Girl-Kind as 'a safe, judgement-free space':
- *"Everyone understands you, doesn't judge you and it is a safe space."*
 - *"I enjoyed just having conversations about things you're going through without being judged."*
- It is within this atmosphere that friendships can be made and strengthened, with girls discussing issues close to their heart and developing creative interventions to raise awareness of these issues. Bonding with friends and making new friends, including those from different year-groups in school, is central to many girls' accounts of their workshop time:
- *"Because it's a great chance to make new friends and grow out of our comfort zones."*
 - *"I know now that I can share things with friends."*

- While the workshops allow girls to connect and share with those in their school, the Girl-Kind Celebration Day offers the chance to mix with those from different schools and backgrounds. For many this opportunity to discuss ideas and learn from each other's projects was a highlight, and further activities that would enable them to interact with girls from other schools featured in many girls' suggestions for future Girl-Kind events.
- Both the workshops and Celebration Day contribute to the girls' awareness of, and solidarity with, other girls including those around the world. The realisation that many of their difficulties are shared by their peers was particularly valued, providing the opportunity to support and feel supported:
- *"It made me more aware of what others around me face daily."*
 - *"I know that everyone's there for each other and not to worry about judge-y people."*
- A number of girls reported they had increased confidence following their Girl-Kind experience, and that taking part in Girl-Kind had helped them to find their voice and make it heard:
- *"Taking part in Girl-Kind is an amazing thing because you build your confidence in a fun way."*
 - *"It gives you a chance to use your voice, it's a lot of fun and allows you to engage with others about your opinions."*
- This was further evidenced when they reflected on what has changed for them personally as a result of Girl-Kind:
- *"Speaking up about more what I believe in."*
 - *"My courage to challenge sexist beliefs."*

Teacher's Reflections

"The girls ...saw us as people rather than as teachers".

Teachers play an essential part in Girl-Kind, organising time and space within school for the workshops, gathering the cohorts and accompanying the girls in workshops and to the Girl-Kind Celebration Day. Although Girl-Kind is extra work for already busy teachers, those leading it within each school embraced the programme.

- When we interviewed teachers, they raised similar concerns about the challenges girls are experiencing. An important issue they highlighted was low confidence and mental health issues:
- *"We're aware in school... (and it's nationwide) that mental health is more of a problem for young people than ever before."*
 - *"There is a confidence issue with a lot of the girls... they feel like: 'That is for somebody else, that is not for me' or 'I am not clever enough to do that' or 'That is for the posh kids:'"*
- Regional perceptions feed into this issue:
- *"There are girls who could be amazing lawyers, who... think 'Well, I can't go and be a lawyer, because you have to go to London to do that', and they don't realise that there are some amazing, amazing places in the North East to do it."*
 - *"I don't think many girls do necessarily think about going away to university or really believe that that's something that they're able to access."*

- Equally consistently, teachers commented that Girl-Kind opens up a constructive space for girls to explore these issues safely and provides an opportunity for "a deeper conversation":
- *"I think it not being run by teachers ...and knowing that it was a confidential space, where everything was going to stay within the room, made them feel a lot more comfortable as a result."*
 - *"The craft element was lovely, it was a really nice surprise actually! ...I think that relaxed them into it. They felt a little bit more in their comfort zone in that it distracted them enough to be able to talk about issues as well."*
- Girl-Kind also provides an opportunity for teachers to engage with their pupils differently:
- *"We don't often get the chance to do anything like that, because we are very exams-focussed, and every hour counts...So from a teaching point of view it was really exciting... it allowed us to be creative, and be a little bit silly, and just have those one-to-one conversations with them."*

CASE STUDY: Alex Fairlamb, Girl-Kind Teaching lead, using Girl-Kind as a support strategy in school



Alex has been involved with Girl-Kind since its inception. She is an Associate Assistant Headteacher at St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic College, Lead Practitioner of History, and a Specialist Leader in Education. In 2018, Alex became Teaching Lead for Girl-Kind, bringing teacher and school expertise to the project.

Alex has now steered three cohorts of St Wilfred girls through the Girl-Kind programme and one of the first things she noticed was that:

"Girls felt a lot more empowered to share their opinion. They felt more confident to do so, and they felt that they could express themselves in different ways and they felt like they could be celebrated for their different talents."

Alex said parents also noticed changes in their daughters:

I remember one girl, it was the second year, her mum wrote a wonderful email just saying how amazing an impact it had on the confidence of her daughter, and how much she valued the experience, and she herself loved the day. So parental kind of feedback on it is incredibly positive.

Alex has observed that "girls who were normally quite reticent to get involved became more involved in things". For example, taking part in school and community initiatives, organisations and social action.

Over time, the Girl-Kind programme has become incorporated into the school's pastoral structures and been used to promote, and evidence change.

It is now integrated as kind of a support mechanism for girls who we feel would benefit from it – perhaps were vulnerable, or need to engage more in the school community, or perhaps are withdrawn. The fact that we now use that as a strategy is really great!

Saint Wilfrid's Roman Catholic College sits within a wider education trust and the success of Girl-Kind has been used to support new learning approaches across partner schools.

We also looked at project-based learning as a potential strategy for the [Northern Saints Catholic Education] Trust, and Girl-Kind was one of the projects where we were like 'Oh, actually we are already doing it!'... The evidence that comes from the Girl-Kind one has proved that when done right, it can be really, really positive.

Girl-Kind Screen Takeover

In May 2019, a one-off 'Screen Takeover' for 60 Girl-Kinders involved a workshop in the Tyneside pop-up space, followed by a special Tyneside Cinema screening of *The Queen of Katwe*, directed by Mira Nair, a biographical drama about Phiona Mutesi, a Ugandan girl who becomes a champion chess player.

The workshop and film explored questions of comfortable and uncomfortable spaces. Why do some places feel uncomfortable and exclusionary while others feel comfortable and including? And what can we do about this? Girls wrote advice for what to do when you are feeling uncomfortable, and we collated this into a booklet they took away with them. We plan to run another Screen Takeover with Tyneside Cinema, screening social realist coming of age film *Rocks*, directed by Sarah Gavron.

CASE STUDY: Rachel Pronger, Film Programme Co-ordinator, Tyneside Cinema



Girl-Kind first partnered with the Tyneside Cinema in 2018, bringing girls to a double-screening of *Whispers* (made by Girl-Kinders)^{vi}, and *The Bread Winner*, directed by Nora Twomey, an animation about an Afghan girl who supports her family after her father is imprisoned.

It was a really great first event and it was really exciting just to feel the energy of Girl-Kind as an organisation. It instantly felt like Ito us at the Tyneside!, 'Okay, this could really work!'

The 'Screen Takeover' idea grew out of conversations between Rachel and Girl-Kind's Sarah Ralph:

A lot of films about teenage girls are 15+ certificate.. You get lots of films that are aimed at younger and older girls, but there is a real gap around the exact Girl-Kind age, which is 12, 13, 14 ... So we lose our audience a little bit in their early teens, and picking them up again is a real struggle.

The challenge was on: could Girl-Kind generate a sense of ownership within a potentially intimidating space of a cinema to a crowd of excited teenage girls?

Film-in-a-Day Workshop

The Girl-Kind programme includes a 'Film-in-a-Day' workshop in conjunction with local charity Young Women's Film Academy (YWFA). Each year, 12 girls from a range of schools come together to develop and film a short film that reflects an aspect of their shared lived experiences.

This offers girls a chance to experience film-making and become familiar with film equipment. Interested girls can go on to develop their skills at the YWFA, which offers free, continuous, bi-weekly film-making sessions in Newcastle for young women who would not normally be able to access this provision. The short-films we make are then premiered at the Girl-Kind celebration day. *Cleo* (2017), *Whispers* (2018), and *Misjudged* (2019) can all be viewed on our website www.girlkind.co.uk/girl-made-media

It is a problem with any kind of diversity and access initiative.. We are not set out like a multiplex, so it can be quite a challenging.

In 2019, in conjunction with Tyne and Wear Museums' Women of Tyneside project, Girl-Kind used the Tyneside's pop-up space for a workshop titled Out of Your Comfort Zone?, followed by a public screening of the girl-centric film, *Queen of Katwe*.

It worked really well.. a lot of people, especially front of house staff, were quite excited to see that it was happening.. It made me realise how little we do cater to that audience.

And what is nice is that there is now awareness in the building of Girl-Kind. When..we were talking about 'Rocks' [my colleague] got in touch with me right away: 'Do you think Girl-Kind would be interested in this?'

It is definitely a relationship that we lat the Tyneside Cinema! want to keep going as far as we can.. there is more that we can work on together, and I will certainly use that network..in a really great way I think.

^{vi} Whispers, the film made by 2018 Girl-Kinders, can be found on our website www.girlkind.co.uk

What Next for Girl-Kind?

When we founded Girl-Kind in 2017, we had no idea that it would take off in the way it has, or that the demand for it would be so great. We have been astounded and thrilled by the success of the programme and its reception. We are also aware Girl-Kind have reached the limits of our existing capacity as it is currently organised and funded. This report has been part of a process of reflection, as we take stock of what we have achieved and plan our next steps.

In order to carefully think through what the future of Girl-Kind will look like; we decided to take a hiatus from running the main programme in 2020. We plan to emerge in 2021 in a new organisational form, with strong roots, an increased reach across the North East and staying true to our Girl-Kind ethos.

We are really excited about the next chapter in the Girl-Kind story and hope you will be part of it with us.

Thank Yous!

- Bethan Kitchen
 - Christine Vibrans
 - Circus Central
 - Clara Shield
 - Courtney Dixon
 - Danielle Giddins
 - David Gleeson
 - Delphi Ross
 - Diane Richardson
 - Eleanor Sharp
 - Eve Forrest
 - Gemma Molyneux
 - Gender and Society Research Hub
 - Gieneva Bartolome
- Ian Shovlin
 - Kim Smith
 - Lisa Hardisty
 - Lottie Rhodes
 - Lucy Jowett
 - Lucy Wood
 - Martha Hill
 - Multi-Disciplinary Design Innovation Masters, cohort 2019 – 2020
 - Olivia Smith
 - Penny Kelly
 - Steve Taylor
 - Sunil Rodger
 - Tom Lawson

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Who We Are

Girl-Kind co-founders



Sarah Ralph is Senior Lecturer in Media and Cultural Studies at Northumbria University. Her work, on the topic of media audiences, gender and celebrity, and gendered youth cultures, has been published in journals including *Participations*, *Celebrity Studies* and *Critical Studies in Television*. She is a Trustee of the Young Women's Film Academy based in Newcastle. E: sarah.ralph@northumbria.ac.uk



Sarah Winkler-Reid is a Lecturer in Social Anthropology at Newcastle University. From the perspective of young people's lives, she has published articles on value, care and success in school, race and humour, bodily dissatisfaction, sexual ethics, and friendship. Her work has been published in journals including *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, *Sociological Review* and *Ethnos*. E: sarah.winkler-reid@newcastle.ac.uk

Girl-Kind Team

Tessa Holland is a Research Associate with Girl-Kind at Newcastle University. After some years working as a jeweller, she applied to do an Anthropology MSc, which then led to a PhD in Human Geography. All these elements combine in her current research exploring different ways of knowing – particularly forms of knowledge learnt, used and generated through crafted and creative practice.

Amanda McBride has recently completed her PhD in Social Sciences at Northumbria University. Her research looks at gender, pleasure and the night time economy with a particular focus on young women's friendships and beauty work. She has been involved with Girl-Kind since 2017 and a research assistant since 2018.

Mel Gibson is an Associate Professor at Northumbria University specialising in teaching, research and outreach relating to comics, graphic novels, picture books and fiction for children. Her additional interest in memories of comics and comic-reading is shown by her book *Remembered Reading: Memory, Comics and Post-War Constructions of British Girlhood*, published in 2015.

Sarah Crutwell is a writer, spoken word poet, & workshop facilitator based in Teesside. With a background in theatre and a strong intersectional feminist values, Sarah's work aims to address the 'things we lower our voices to talk about' and explores area's such as mental health, sexuality, gender, ingrained sexism and a woman's right to choose.

Dianne Casey is a disabled Teesside published poet, women's rights activist.. young nanny that lives in a shoe! Her writing is honest and from the heart with a punch of 'woman on a mission' attitude with Northern gusto, girl powering in Teesside for Girl-Kind NE, Co-creator of Tees Youth Our Youth.





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