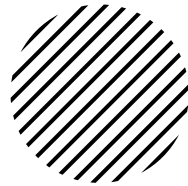




**"ECLECTIC RESILIENCE"  
IN CHILDHOOD:  
INTERDISCIPLINARY  
RESEARCH**

**Dr Wendy Sims-Schouten, UCL**

# Starting Points..



- *Against the backdrop of the rise in child refugees/migrants across the world, this **project** aims to advance understanding of the transformative potential of curating children’s stories and experiences in accessible and creative ways to disrupt, counter, and draw critical attention to the impact and legacy of displacement.*
- *‘Lived Memories’ & ‘Survivor Silence’ – focus on every day experiences of (former) child migrants/refugees and displaced children following arrival in their new country.*

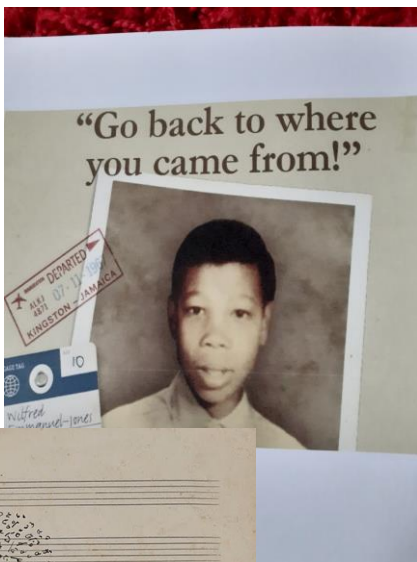
## How?

- By presenting **contemporary children**, as co-producers/researchers and experts, with **former child refugees/migrants' stories, memories and artefacts**, exposing the **lived experiences and legacies of two historic migration schemes (Kindertransport and Windrush)**.

- Centred on **'things'**, this project acknowledges **objects, stories and artefacts as carriers of complex sensory, material, cultural and social meanings generating multiple narratives and interpretations**. This recognition demands embracing an ***interdisciplinary outlook*** and adopting a multiplicity of research methods, including visual methods and participatory research.

Dear Madam,  
In connection with your letter of July 14, 1988 in the J'lem Post I am interested in the re-union.  
I left Berlin on abt. July 19, 1939 as a child of nearly 15 years old. We were a large group of all kinds of children all ages.  
My first stop was Great Enghoe Farm near Kent, where we were transferred to North Wales between Abergele and Colwynbay, we lived in a castle which is called GWSCH Castle. From there we were separated and put in different places in order to work for Agriculture Comsites. I changed a lot of ~~\*\*\*~~ places till in the end I landed in London in a place called Cazenove Road. All those nine years we worked on the land or in the House as DOMESTIC.  
The entire idea was to prepare ourselves for Palestine. On July 1948 I left with a small group to Palestine through France.  
I do not know whether this gives you a ~~\*\*\*~~ picture but I will try to find some photos and will forward them to you. I only know that no many photos are in my possession, as in war time and as small children we did not have a camera. All the same I will try.  
In the meantime, thank you,  
I remain





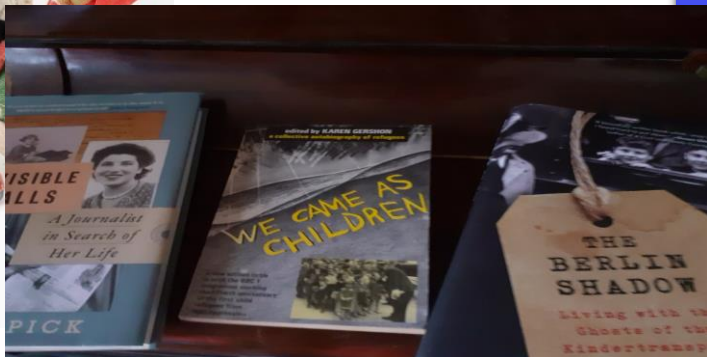
**"ECLECTIC"** - Exposing Children's Lived Experiences, Co-produced Through Immersive Collections



**This project centralises former and contemporary children's meaning-making and validating children's voice, agency.**



**Adopting a form of sensory ethnography,** this project provides opportunities for making sense of **deeply subjective, sensed, and embodied experiences.**





# JUST LIKE US...

The objects  
tell you that  
the children are  
just like us.

What stories do these objects tell you about these  
child migrants' lives?

This tells us that the  
child migrants are just  
like us. They are normal  
people who have had  
bad luck/experience.  
(misfortune)

The child migrants probably  
feel like they do not  
belong. They might be  
told to go back to where  
they come which is not  
possible because they had  
to escape for a  
reason.

objects?  
people were  
overwhelmed  
unprecedented  
sorry for  
them because  
they had to leave  
their family.  
the children  
wouldn't understand  
why they had

- feel like an  
outsider
- no where to go
- have no idea  
what people are  
saying.



Phone  
Charger



anxious

fee li  
scary

worried

Sad to leave

relieved  
(moved away  
from danger)

homesick

isolated

they would feel  
angry because  
they are being forced  
to move despite all  
the changes they  
are going through  
personally

lonely

uncomfortable

the older children  
have to feel responsible for  
the younger siblings/children

pressured



# FEELINGS & EMPATHY



watch



netball



charger

photo



I would feel  
anxious to go  
somewhere new and  
learn a different  
language

I think that the  
kids may have felt  
unwanted and scared  
moving to a whole new  
place where you don't  
speak the language or  
know anyone

I feel that they would  
feel left out and different  
to everyone else

If I had to move somewhere  
new I would feel overwhelmed  
curious of what is there

What would you take?

favourite  
clothes

clothes

favourite  
ring

phone

childhood  
teddy

grandma's  
pearl necklace

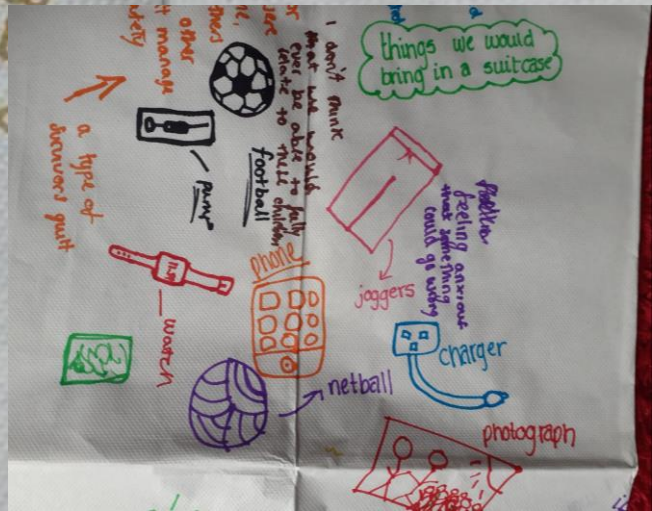
childhood  
teddy

phone



Hoppy

things we would  
bring with me.



Never  
feeling  
fully ~~over~~  
english

I would feel  
like my identity  
was being tested  
I would feel  
ashamed of  
where I originated  
from

things we would  
bring in a suitcase

feel  
that  
co



feeling guilty for  
the people that were  
left back at home,  
for example mothers  
fathers and even other  
children who didn't manage  
to make it to safety

I don't think  
that we would  
ever be able to fully  
relate to these children  
football



pump



a type of  
survivors guilt



# ○ Contemporary Children's Talk about Former Child Migrants/Refugees

- "Children our age, we always take things for granted. People do things like this and it's not very nice."
- "A memory, I'm just going to get over sad straightaway because like all I've got is a memory."
- "Scary because you've never- you don't have someone that you like always had around, also angry because you're being like forced to change something when you're already like changing physically. Puberty. Changing into a teenager."
- "And people are so selfish. Like, us British people are so proud to be British but our history is like actually nasty. It's just disgusting that people can be so selfish."



# ○ **WHY?**

- Immersive learning – counteracting ‘Othering’ and ‘Otherness’.
- Focus on ‘**belonging**’, rather than ‘migrants’.
- Curated by children, not adults – **children as constructors and co-constructors**.
- **Addressing Amnesia and Fragmented memories that are central in colonial and post-colonial empires and migration.**



# ○ References

- **Kidron, C. A.** (2009). Toward an Ethnography of Silence: The Lived Presence of the Past in the Everyday Life of Holocaust Trauma Survivors and Their Descendants in Israel. *Current Anthropology*, 50(1), 5-27. <https://doi.org/10.1086/595623>.
- **Sims-Schouten, W, Maynard, E and Pound, M** (2020). "I Hate having my Mental Health!" Making sense of mental health through coproduction and visual methods with young people with complex needs. *Journal of Youth Studies*
- **Sims-Schouten, W and Weindling, P.** (2022). "All emigrants are up to the physical, mental and moral standards required": A Tale of Two Child Rescue Schemes, *Journal of the History of Behavioral Sciences*.
- **Sims-Schouten, W., and Gilbert, P.** (2022). Revisiting 'resilience' in light of racism, 'othering' and resistance. *Race and Class: a journal of racism, empire and globalisation*.
- **Sims-Schouten, W.** (2021). "A Troublesome Girl is Pushed through" - Morality, Biological Determinism, Resistance, Resilience and the Canadian Child Migration Schemes (1883-1939), *History of the Human Sciences*.
- **Sims-Schouten, W.** (2020). *Safeguarding and Mental Health Support in Contemporary Childhood: How the Deserving/Undeserving Paradigm from the Past Overshadows the Present.* London: Routledge.
- <https://silo.tips/download/the-history-of-the-moluccans-in-the-netherlands-a-contested-past> (**Thesis Hieke van der Voort**).

