

Background

The term 'youth-led' emphasises the control young people have in defining the direction of their interventions and indicates that young people are at the centre of their initiatives (Baker, 2015). This approach represents a paradigm shift, viewing young people as social actors who can make important decisions which impact on their lives rather than simply being guided by decisions made by those in positions of authority (Silva, 2002). The objective of a youth-led approach is to provide young people with the opportunity to influence the final service or product they use to ensure that it meets their needs (Cass, 2010). By providing young people with a space in which they feel comfortable and an environment in which they feel they can express themselves freely is crucial when undertaking projects adopting the youth-led approach (Cass, 2010).

Rationale

My Tomorrow is the West Midlands region's youth-led campaign which aims to reveal the often-unseen realities of young people's lives to spark conversations between communities that can build understanding and lead to collaborative, positive action (WMVRP, 2024). It is the aim of this research to understand what a youth-led approach is, the extent to which this has/is being implemented, using the My Tomorrow campaign as a case study.



Significance

United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child

Article 12: Children and young people have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions considered.
Article 13: Children and young people have the right to get and to share information, if the information is not damaging to them or others.
Article 17: Children and young people have the right to receive, seek and give information.

Objectives

The research aims to explore the WMVRP's My Tomorrow Campaign, as a case study, viewed through a social harm lens and will be discussed within the context of existing literature on youth led approaches. The social harm approach (also known as zemiology), provides an alternative approach which goes beyond criminology in focusing on harm rather than crime. Social harms include those that are preventable at the individual, group, organizational, and institutional levels. The 'social' in social harm refers to the possibility that the harm could have been prevented by the actions of human beings, in the context of a youth-led approach in the WMVRP's My Tomorrow Campaign (Billingham and Urwin-Rogers, 2022). The research will explore any discrepancies between the intent, wording, and actions of the youth-led approach in the context of the WMVRP My Tomorrow Campaign. This will enable the researcher to understand what, how, and whom the youth-led approach works, and provide recommendations for the campaign going forward and any future youth-led research.

Research Questions:

1. Explore the circumstances and context for a youth-led approach in the context of the My Tomorrow campaign.
2. Identify mechanisms used to deliver the youth-led approach within the campaign, from the outset of the idea, the design, implementation, and sustainability.
3. Evidence 'where' and 'how' the youth-led approach has been implemented from the outset of the idea, the design, implementation, and sustainability.
4. Use evidence to inform understanding for whom the youth-led approach works/does not work, and why.
5. Understand the role of barriers and enablers in the campaign's development so far.
6. Test to see if the campaign is operating as intended to-date (from an individual, organisational and community perspective).
 - a. Is the campaign acting as a counter narrative to the 'bad' / 'negative' messages about young people?
 - b. Increase the visibility of young people and the good that they are doing within the community.
 - c. Has the campaign helped young people to be involved in policy making and change?

Research Design

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a wide range of participants who have been involved in the development of the My Tomorrow campaign. Through networking opportunities, key organisations involved in the campaign in some capacity, including the WMVRP, Youth Assembly, Positive Youth Foundation, and the West Midlands Combined Youth Authority, have been identified. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as they combine a pre-determined set of open questions to prompt relevant discussion whilst also providing the opportunity for exploration of other relevant themes in more detail. The qualitative data will be then thematically analysed to identify common themes, topics, ideas and patterns of meaning.

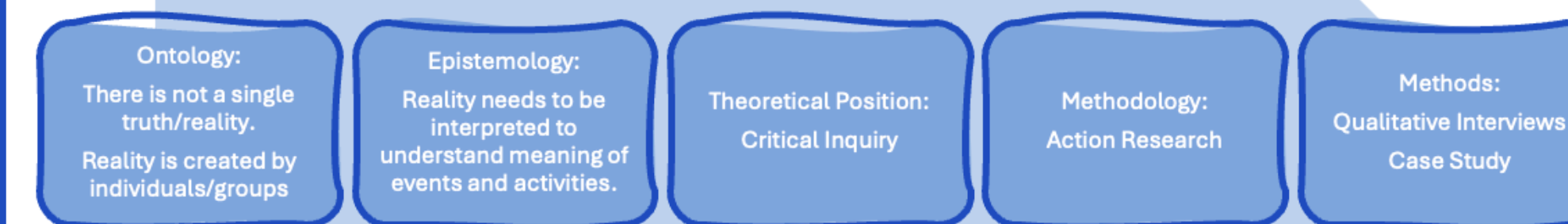
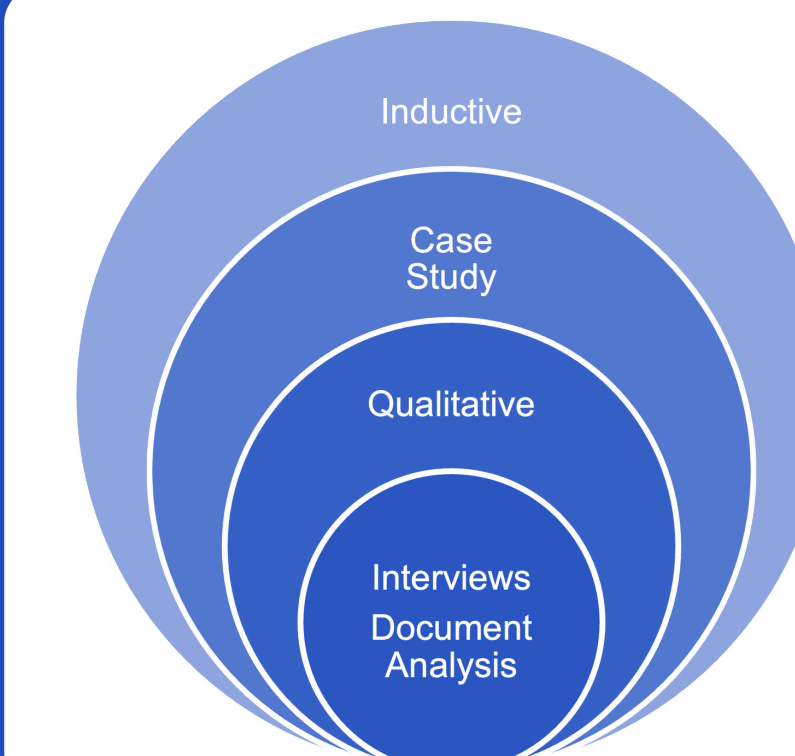
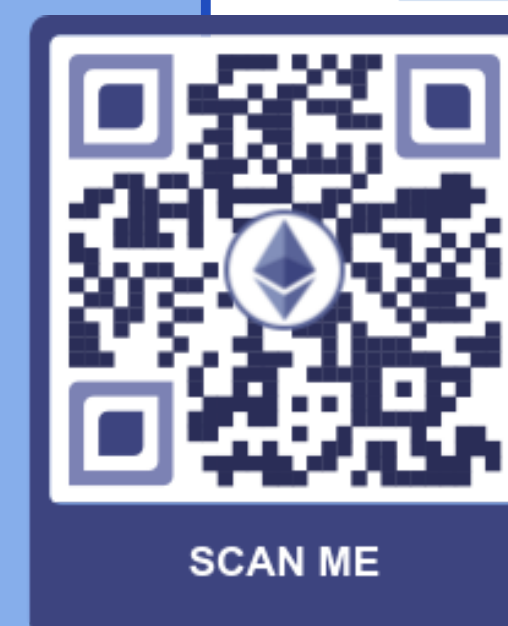
Case Study

This research uses a single case study format in order to conduct an in-depth and focused research project. Related to this, the My Tomorrow Campaign has been chosen since it was established during the research' scoping phase. This enabled thorough analysis of the relevant documentation relating to the campaign, to inform primary data collection.

EXPLORING YOUTH-LED APPROACHES TO VIOLENCE REDUCTION

A CASE STUDY OF THE WEST MIDLANDS VIOLENCE REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP'S (WMVRP) MY TOMORROW CAMPAIGN

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Participants Needed!

Scan the QR code for more information about taking part via a Participant Information Sheet.



Key Message!

"Those with the greatest local knowledge about youth are youth themselves" (London et al., 2003: 10). This valuable perspective can be ascertained only from young people themselves; their lived experiences generate solutions to problems that could not be developed without the input of their own experiences.

References:

- Baker, M (2015). Fostering a Critical Consciousness for Social and Political Change: A Case Study of Youth-led Organizing in The Netherlands. Social Policy for Development (SPD).
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- Fenn, A.C (2024a). Community-Led Approaches to Violence Prevention. Beyond Futures: Festival of Research and Innovation. University of Wolverhampton, 16-18 July 2024.
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