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The Value of the PAHRCA Methodology in Engaging People with Experience of Homelessness in a Long-term Research Project

Daniel Hoey & Laurie O'Donnell, Focus Ireland

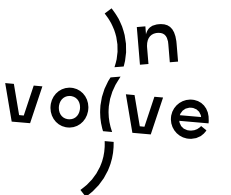
Background

Focus Ireland

- Housing & homelessness NGO in Ireland
- Evidence based advocacy for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness
- Robust, varied research programme (singles, youth, families, complex needs)

INVOLVE research project

- EU-funded study to explore political participation and trust in public services
- Civil society partnership between Universities, NGOs and marginalised groups
- Eight EU countries taking part: all working with different marginalised groups
- Ireland – working with 19 lone parents with experience of homelessness to investigate experiences of public services in the areas of childcare and housing
- Co-produce research & recommendations and influence policy change



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PAHRCA

The Methodological Framework



PAHRCA: The Methodological Framework



What is PAHRCA?

- Participatory Action Human Rights Capability Approach
- Methodological framework that brings together participatory, human rights and capability theory

PAHRCA: The Methodological Framework



Why and how it was developed?

- Developed in 2015 as part of RE-InVEST project (EU Horizon 2020)
- Key principle is to enable the voice of the most vulnerable to be directly heard in research

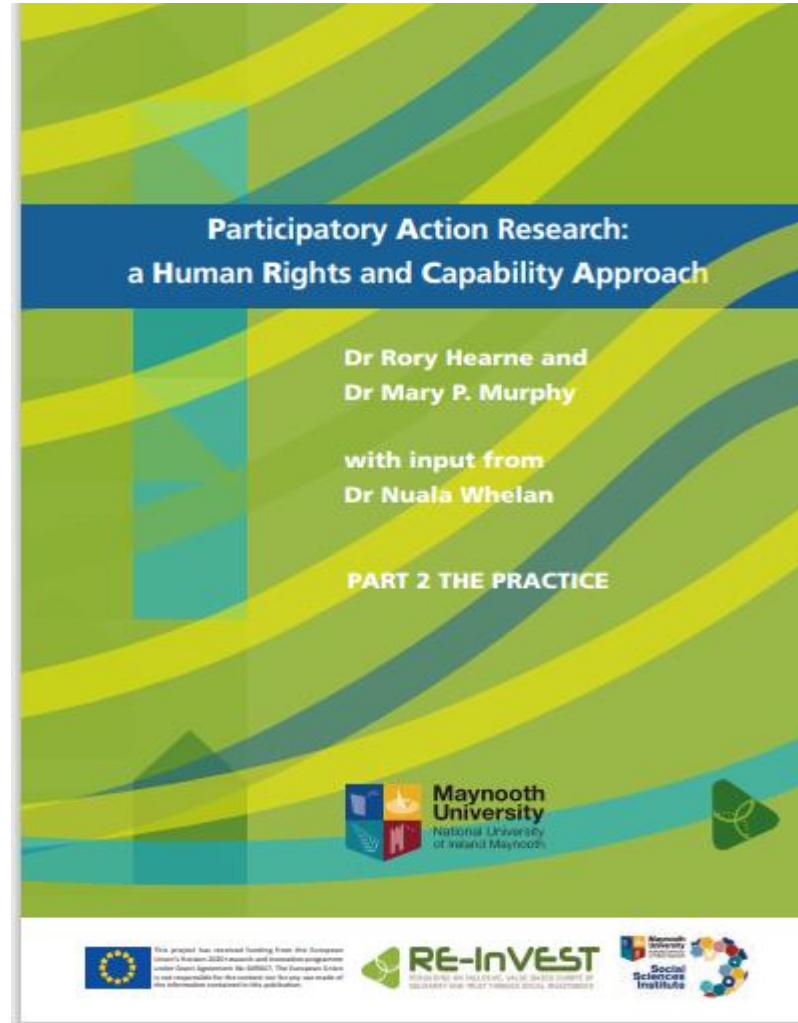
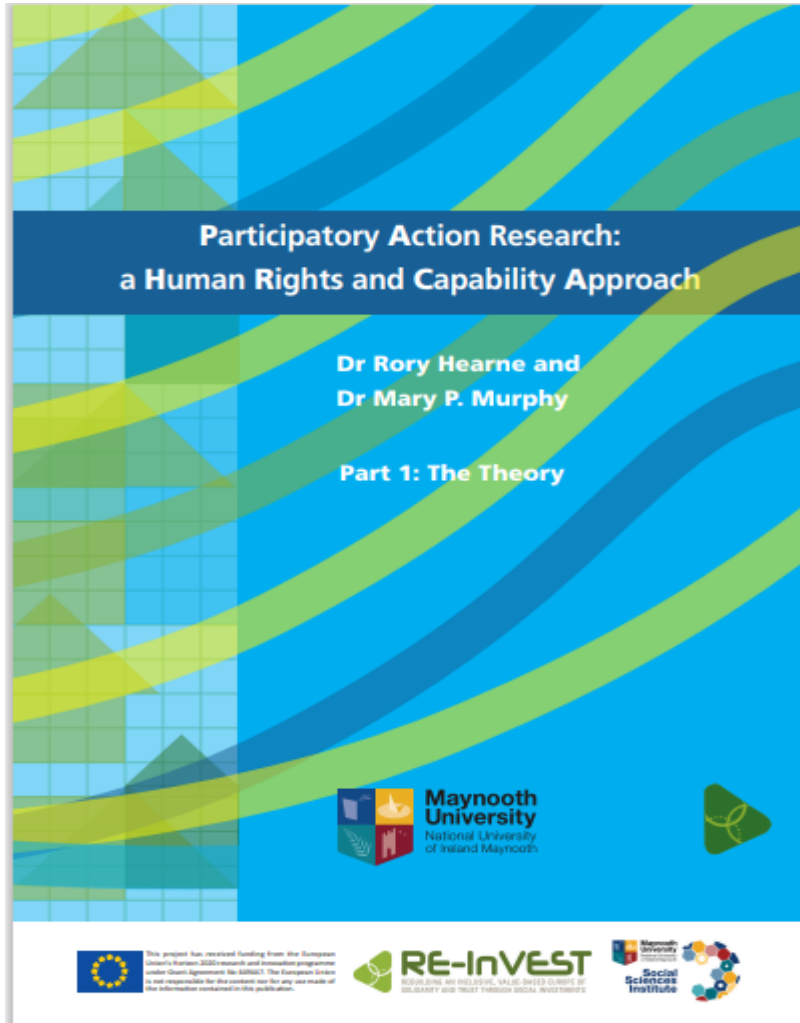
PAHRCA: The Methodological Framework



What it hopes to achieve

- Bring people into processes that involve them
- Co-construction of knowledge about vulnerability, poverty and social problems

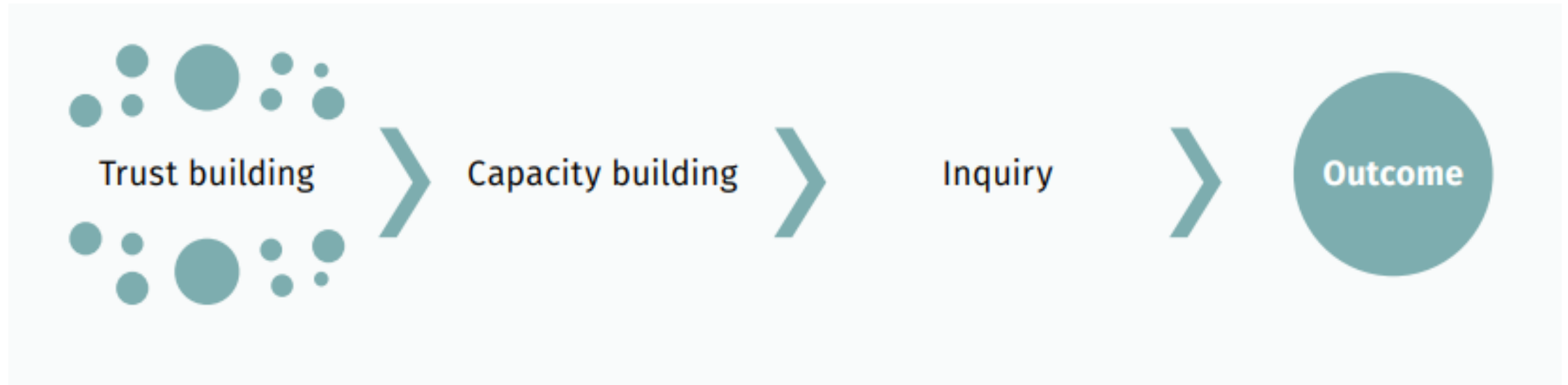
PAHRCA: The Methodological Framework



Hearne, Rory and Murphy, Mary
P. (2019) *Participatory Action Research: a Human Rights and Capability Approach*. ReInvest Project and Maynooth University Social Sciences Institute.

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PAHRCA: Four key steps



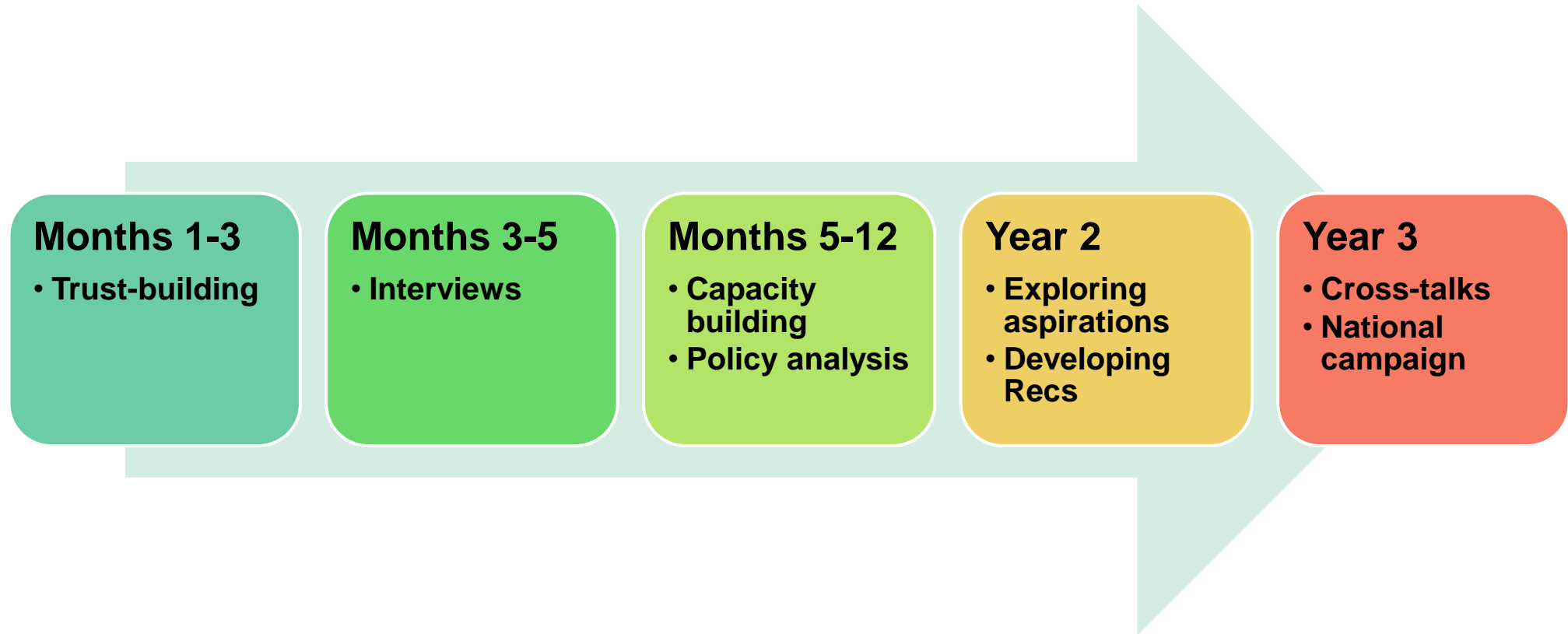
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In Practice



Project Timeline



1. Trust building



The need to create an environment that is **trauma-informed** and **child-friendly**



Important for **creating trust** between group members



Not just a researcher, also about **establishing bonds** with participants

Trust building continued...



An important phase for **creating transparency** between researcher and the group



Key for **recruitment and retention**



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Interviews



Life stories

Six topics: Education, Employment, Housing, Health, SES & Politics



Interactions with public services

Explore participants experiences with public services



Important for focus group development

A key step in identifying key policies and shaping focus group discussions

2. Capacity Building



Information sessions about policies, their development, why they were created and by who



Participants are not just passive recipients in the research process



Provide different stakeholders perspective on the policy to help create more realistic policy recommendations



Creates structure that empowers participants to use their own voice from an informed perspective

3. Inquiry: Policy analysis, issues and solutions



Focus Group Sessions: How they are structured

- Sessions with 10-15 people
- The sessions were broken into 2-3 different groups of 4-5
- Identified the policy, knowledge building, identified problems with it, then explored solutions
- Focus groups respond to the needs of the group

3. Inquiry: Exploring Aspirations



Can be a challenge with people/groups living in poverty



Creative methods can be used to open-up discussions



Examples: Photo diaries, art, theatre performance, composite character development

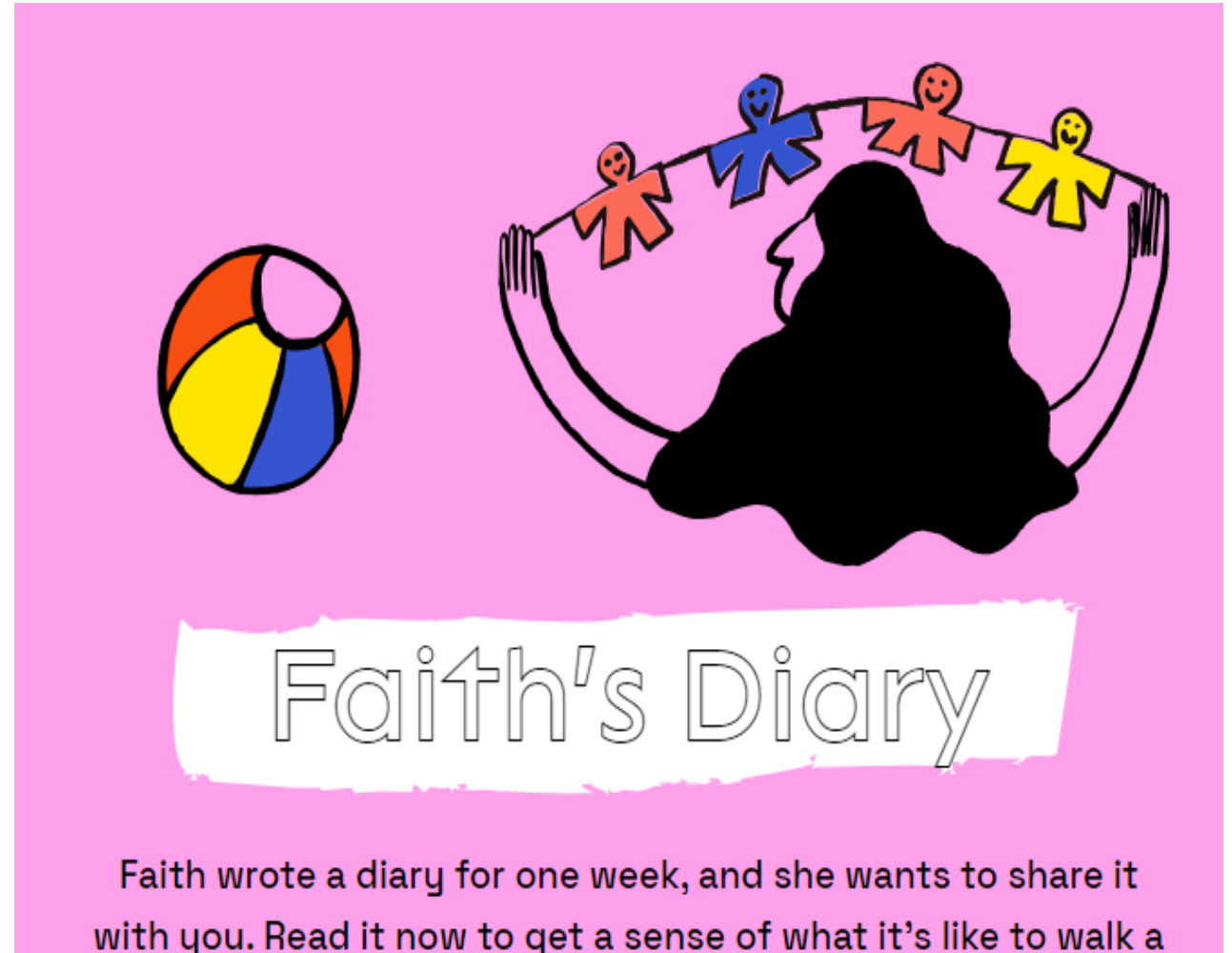
Creative method example

The character '**Faith**' was introduced to the group

Faith had a **physical presence** in the focus groups

Represented participants **experiences, feelings and aspirations** to speak to **policymakers on their behalf**

Development of Faith's diary:
<https://testingfaith.ie/>



4. Outcomes



Co-produced recommendations



Cross-talks with policy-makers



National campaign

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Reflections



PAHRCA - important considerations



Recruitment



Retention



Flexibility



Resources



Group
dynamics and
relationships



Time

PAHRCA – the strengths



Participatory



Practical and
collaborative



Critical



Provides rich
data



Emancipatory

Empowering our participants to use their own voice



"That's why I am so grateful to be here because it makes me feel I am doing something good. I believe that by raising our voices, we can make change happen, and that is what the Involve group is all about.

.....the most important thing is that together, we can create change. This group is not for complaining or to talk about the same issues over and over again. It's about using our experiences to create positive impact. It's about action and although changes can take time, it is very rewarding to know that you are helping someone in the future with your actions now."

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Thank you!

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Project website: www.involve-democracy.eu