

## Information sheet for children and young people (age 10-17) and their parents about the COVISION Children's Research Advisory Group

<b>Study Title:</b>	COVISION: Children as Innovators - Harnessing the creative expertise of children to address practical and psychosocial challenges of the COVID-19 Pandemic
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<b>Funding Source:</b>	This research was funded by the Health Research Board and the Irish Research Council under the COVID-19 Pandemic Rapid Response Funding Call [COV19-2020-017].

### Introduction

All round the world, children's lives have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. For many it has made their life very difficult.

But children have also been active and organised in tackling the problems and coming up with creative ideas to help their friends, families and communities stay safe and stay positive in these difficult times.

Our research project is to find out how children have done this, and what we can learn for the future from their experiences.

We are Dr Suja Somanadhan, Dr Helen McAneney, Dr Harry Shier and Ayrton Kelly, who all work for the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems at University College Dublin.

#### **A NOTE FOR PARENTS**

Your daughter or son should read this leaflet carefully before deciding to sign the assent form and make a commitment to join our CRAG. We would be very grateful if you could also discuss it with her or him to help them decide.

Also, your daughter or son cannot participate in our project without *your* informed consent as their parent or legal guardian. Therefore, it is also important for you to read this leaflet carefully and sign the parent's consent form. If you want more detailed information about the project, there are links and contact details at the end of this leaflet.

Many thanks, COVISION Project team

## **What is this research about?**

This project aims to find out how children's creative activities are contributing to positive social action during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Why are we doing this research?**

By learning more about children's creative responses to COVID-19, we can also learn about:

- How to strengthen children's capacity to deal with the challenges they face during and after the pandemic.
- How children's actions can help to make communities stronger and better prepared for dealing with disasters, pandemics, and other unexpected changes.

## **Why do we want to form a Children's Research Advisory Group (CRAG)?**

We believe that children and young people are experts in the issues we are researching. They already know how COVID-19 has affected their lives, and they know how they and their friends and family have responded to this. Children and young people are also experts in communicating with other children and young people, and how to treat children and young people fairly and respectfully.

We also believe it is important that our research project respects and protects children and young people's rights at every stage.

So, we feel it is important for the team of adult researchers to be able to get advice and ideas from children and young people who are in the same age-group as we are gathering information from. Setting up and supporting a Children's Research Advisory Group or CRAG is a good way to do this.

## **Why are we inviting you to join the CRAG?**

We are looking for children aged 10-17 who are interested in our research, who feel enthusiastic about getting involved, and who are available and willing to commit to a series of online meetings.

If you are reading this information, that means you have already heard about the project or seen our online publicity. If you are still interested after reading this leaflet, then you could be the person we are looking for to join our CRAG.

## **What will it involve if I decide to participate?**

The CRAGs will meet online, using a secure online platform (Zoom) and will be run by adult experts who are friendly, trustworthy, and experienced. Your safety will be our top priority.

To begin with we will meet once a month and meetings will last about an hour. We will discuss this with the members to find the best day and times to meet. Once we get going, if it works better for members, we can always change the days and times, or decide to meet more often (or less often). For now, we are not thinking about meeting up face to face, but it is a possibility we can look at if the conditions are right in the future.

As a member of the CRAG you will be the experts advising the adult researchers. During each meeting, the researchers will listen to your input, discussing the issues raised and acting on the suggestions made. This may mean that we, the adult researchers, make changes to

the study, or that we run workshops differently, or improve our communication strategy. So, as expert advisors, your input will make sure the research is relevant and meaningful to children and young people.

The first meeting will be about getting to know each other and forming a team, introducing the study, discussing what we expect from you and what you can expect from us, and deciding how we want to work together.

In the following meetings, we are thinking of covering the following, although we can decide to change this as we go along:

1. An update on the project, how it is progressing, and how you can help us.
2. Getting your ideas about what we have done so far or plans for the next stages of the study to see if we can improve the project.
3. Answering your questions and discussing your ideas about any part of the project.

We expect the CRAG will continue for about a year and a half, and we hope members will stay with us. However, should you wish to, you may leave at any time, without having to say why if you don't want to.

### **How will your ideas be used?**

1. We will use the advice, views, and suggestions of the CRAG to help us improve our project to get better final results so we have a real impact in helping communities get through pandemics and other disasters (we do not promise to use every single suggestion, but we will consider and discuss all ideas from the CRAG).
2. We will analyse the whole CRAG process, to learn more about how children and young people in online CRAGs can be effective as advisers to international research projects like ours.

### **How will your privacy be protected?**

As CRAG members are advisers to the adult researchers, you are seen as part of the research team; **not** the people who are being researched. This means you have the choice to be anonymous (or to use a pseudonym of your own), but you also have the choice of being identified so you get recognition and credit for your contribution to the research project.

At the start, we will guarantee to protect your privacy, but if you want, after discussing it and understanding the consequences, we will make a new agreement with you where you can confirm that you want people to know who you are and what you have achieved.

### **What are the benefits of being a CRAG member?**

Joining a CRAG is not a paid job. It is a voluntary commitment.

However, there could be all kinds of other benefits for you if you decide to join the CRAG:

- You will learn a lot about the topic of the research.
- You will have a good experience of working with others on an important project, and learn new skills for working with others, including online collaboration.
- You will meet new people and might make new friends – it could be fun.

- You will know that you have made a real contribution to helping other children, families and communities face pandemics and disasters in the future.
- This would be an achievement you (and your family) could feel proud of.
- All this could boost your confidence for new projects in the future.

We will give you a Certificate of Achievement as a CRAG member, outlining what you have done.

Although there will be no travel costs and you can join the CRAG from home, if it looks like you will be out of pocket due to your being a CRAG member, we will find a suitable way to compensate you for this. In line with common practice in our sector, a small token of appreciation will be offered to CRAG Members.

### **What are the risks of being a CRAG member?**

It is hard to think of any serious risks in being a CRAG member. Any possible risks – like somebody finding out about your involvement and trying to harm you, or you being upset by something that is discussed, or a falling-out with another participant leading to unpleasantness – are extremely unlikely. In any case, the adults running the sessions will be experienced and sensitive and will know how to support anyone who is having difficulties.

### **Can you change your mind at any stage and withdraw from the CRAG?**

Yes, you can. There will be no penalty and you do not even have to give a reason if you do not want to. However, we are really hoping that people will stay with us, as this will make the CRAG much stronger.

### **How will you find out what happens with this project?**

As a CRAG member you will receive an update directly from the adult research team at every meeting, so you will always be well-informed.

There may also be follow-up activities after the CRAG comes to an end (e.g., publication of articles, presentations at meetings and conferences, and other publicity activities), and we will continue to inform CRAG members about these activities and the outcomes (but if you do not want to receive any more communication from us you can always opt out). There could also be opportunities for you, as a former CRAG member, to be directly involved in follow-up activity. We will discuss and agree this with you when the time comes.

### **Contact details for further information.**

For more information go to our website: [www.covision.ie](http://www.covision.ie)

You can contact us by email at: [covision@ucd.ie](mailto:covision@ucd.ie)

If you would like to join the CRAG, or discuss it further with us, drop us an email and we will arrange it.