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### What does the Capabilities Approach give us as a framework for emancipatory change?

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# What does CA give us as a framework for emancipatory change?



THE UNIVERSITY  
*of* EDINBURGH

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HDCA Global Dialogue Day  
19<sup>th</sup> September 2022



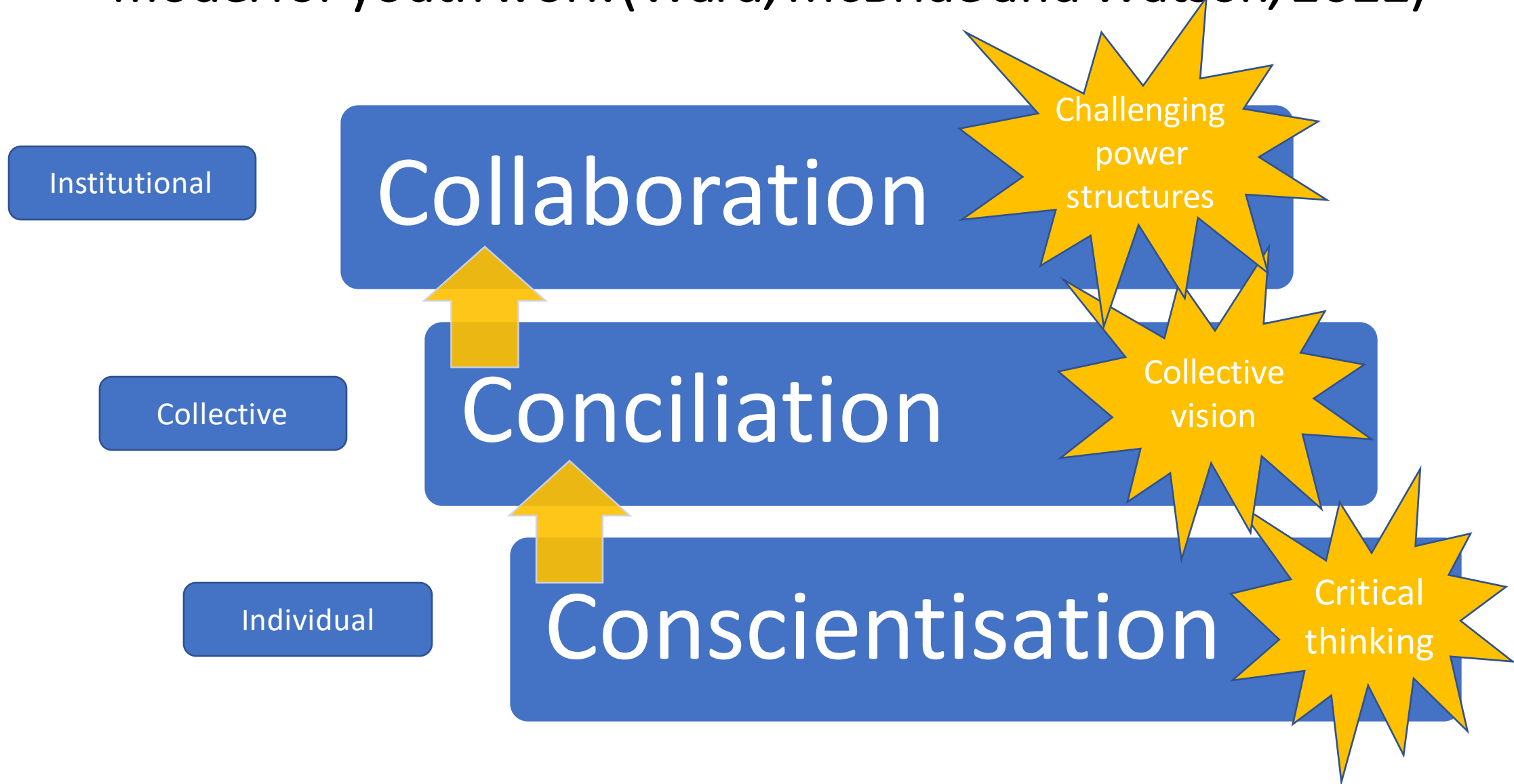
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# Children's Neighbourhoods Scotland



- Scottish Government (2018) 'Every Child, Every Chance: Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2018-22':
  - a. Focus on poverty mitigation
  - b. Attention to quality of life
- Children's Neighbourhoods Programme (2018 – 2022, £2.2m, 5/6 neighbourhoods)
- CNS as facilitator for participation, collaboration and change in neighbourhoods of high social deprivation
- Child-centred approach to improving wellbeing goals for children and young people: deliberation, dialogue and decision-making
- Research and evaluation integrated into programme

# Building collective agency with CYP: adapting Ibrahim's 3C-model for youth work (Ward, McBride and Watson, 2022)



**Dialogue** is ‘a deep, challenging, responsive, enriching, disruptive encounter and conversation-in-context; and also a mutual and critical process of building shared understanding, meaning and creative action’

(Westoby and Dowling, 2013: 21)

# Epistemic Injustice (Fricker, 2007)

## **Testimonial injustice**

‘injustice in which someone is wronged *specifically in her capacity as a knower*’ (20)

Speaker to hearer – credibility excess/deficit – mainly based on stereotype – affects social imagination – ‘psychic alienation’

## **Hermeneutical injustice**

‘hermeneutical hotspots – locations in social life where the powerful have no interest in achieving a proper interpretation’ (152) – leaving a lacuna

# Disrupting assumptions

## - testimonial justice?

SHAY: I've learned to look at other people's views, and then just respect everyone.

NOAH: It's not all about what you want. It's about the community and what other people think as well.

AVA: Probably that not all people in Scotland have a house or food and clothes and that's really bad. So, we want to try and make more people get the stuff that we have.  
(School A)



# Being heard - testimonial justice?

When you find someone that you can trust with your information you feel happy telling them. I think that's good that you can have someone you can tell your emotions to, and they'll listen, they'll help you ... it's just a matter of getting it off your mind, it'll be a relief ...

I can talk to some teachers because I trust them ... they understand and they listen. I feel it a massive glow when I talk to somebody because I know they're listening.

(Freya, School B)





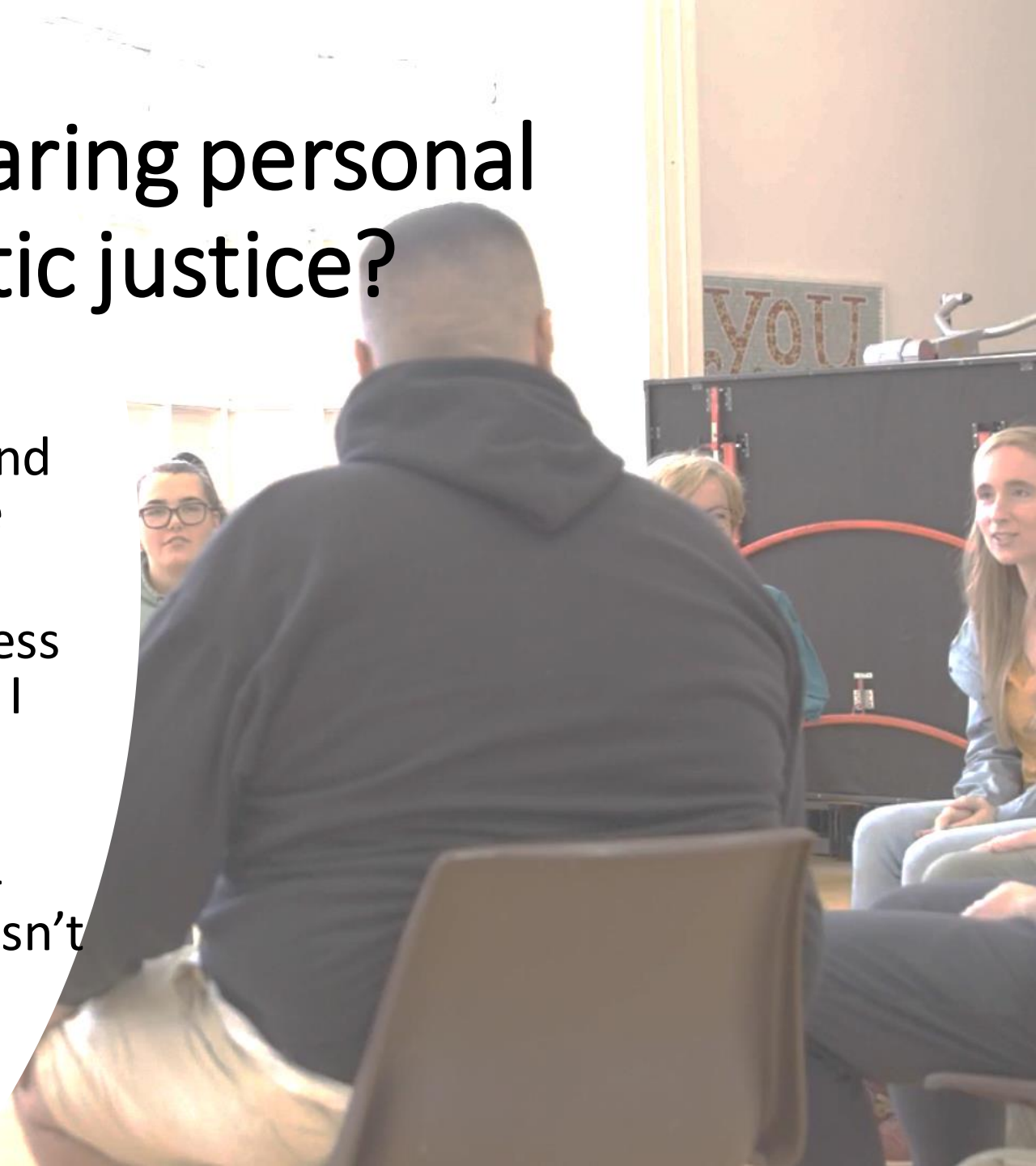
# Creating solidarity by sharing personal experience - hermeneutic justice?

'When I was at school there was ... certain people you identify are going to achieve and they're very nurtured. And a lot of people are excluded.

... Once I hit fifth year, I kind of, made a mess of my exams ... Once that happened, once I didn't meet those standards, I almost felt, kind of...abandoned ...

As if all a sudden there wasn't this one-to-one, you know, small groups and there wasn't the support. It was just, kind of, exclusive.'

(Jamie, Youth Group C)



# Space to think and articulate - hermeneutic justice?

KRISTINA: I've never thought about this, but like going to the future. They helped me do that, cause when I was with my work group they were like, 'What do you want to be when you're older?' and I couldn't really think about that.

So that really helped ... I told them I dream to be a doctor.



INSTITUTIONAL

?

?

TESTIMONIAL  
(HEARER)

COLLECTIVE

HERMENEUTICAL  
(SPEAKER)

DISRUPTING ASSUMPTIONS  
BEING HEARD

CREATING SOLIDARITY THROUGH  
PERSONAL EXPERIENCE  
SPACE TO THINK AND ARTICULATE

INDIVIDUAL



# Collaboration – some (limited) successes



COP26 Ministerial visit, students from Clydebank at University of Glasgow event

“It is vital that we listen to the voices of those experiencing poverty to inform our next Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, which will be published by the end of March and will set out a critical path to reducing child poverty.”

(Cabinet Secretary Shona Robinson on CNS visit to Drumchapel, October 2021)

# University of Glasgow – a civic university

## **CONNECT, COLLABORATE AND CONTRIBUTE.**

- **The University of Glasgow was founded for the benefit of the city and its people.**
- We work with companies and organisations throughout the city to co-design solutions to create real, lasting impact and opportunity in Glasgow and beyond.
- Our staff and students are engaged in strong, enduring research and community partnerships to improve health, boost the economy, build a better future and celebrate the achievements of those living in Glasgow.

# Possibilities for collaboration?

Genuinely challenging power structures requires:

- Long term funding commitment – short term projects often make limited impact and can in some cases do more harm in good
- Policymakers / decision-makers at local and national levels committing to listening to and acting upon the voices of children and young people (and other marginalised groups)
- In the case of university–community the collaborations, the university's approach must not be tokenistic or extractive but a genuine commitment to acting in line with its stated values

**In the context of the neoliberal state, and the neoliberal university, how can we move towards this? How can we hold institutions accountable to acting on the voice of oppressed people?**