Living Theory Research Group – a model of sustainable learning for the 'flourishing of humanity' Sonia Hutchison and Arianna Briganti, University of Cumbria.

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https://youtu.be/MMZPiehd1NI

Abstract
Traditionally developed and developing world non-profit organisations do not share their learning across the sectors. However, as technology provides an improving platform to share learning more easily, we explore how learning can be shared to improve practice in both fields. As practitioners we are currently researching our own practice respectively, one author as a development economist currently living and working in Albania and the other author as a leader of a charity in the UK.

This paper explores the strengths and weaknesses of using new technologies, critiquing the Living Theory Research group we both attend against Rheingold's (2010) Social Media literacies. The five literacies of 'attention, participation, collaboration, network Awareness and critical Consumption' p.16 are considered in relation to the research group. The findings are presented from us as participants and highlight that the research group transcends the Skype group as we live our learning through our practice and develops our resilience and self-care as we both seek to sustain ourselves and our work.

1. Introduction

Throughout this paper we will use our first person voice to express our individual and unique voices using 'I' to refer to ourselves and 'we' as those we work with. The reader will be guided by our individual names appearing at the beginning of each section. We will then introduce shared sections with Arianna and Sonia appearing at the beginning of the text and use 'we' to refer to us both.

2. Arianna and Sonia

Arianna is an experienced development economist, currently working in Albania and Sonia is a Chief Executive of a local carers/care-giving charity based in the UK. Both of us are members of a Living Theory Skype Research Group and PhD students at the University of Cumbria. Our enquiries are distinct, however, having a weekly Skype group enables us to share learning that is traditionally separated between developing and developed world practitioners.

We see our practice includes not only our paid roles but also our roles as researchers, carers, parents, children and as global citizens. We are working to research our own practice and what sustainability means to us in all these roles. Creating our own living-theories (Whitehead, 1989), by which we mean making public our values-based ways of working that we have developed to bring hope for the flourishing of humanity. Our

individual living-theories create knowledge that other practitioners can be influenced by to create their own unique ways of working.

Our Living Theory Skype Research Group is made up of Living Theorists from around the world enabling shared learning across developing and developed world practitioners. Using a Living Theory methodology we are interested in exploring our learning, the learning of others and the learning of social formations to bring a social movement (Whitehead and Huxtable, 2016; Laidlaw, 2016) that develops research as a force for social change.

As participants in a Skype group that meets weekly we as the authors will share our findings in this paper of how the group is not just meeting the social media literacies put forward by Rheingold but actually transcends the medium as we both take our learning into our lived realities.

This has led us to develop our own living-theories of what sustainability means to us.

3. Our Practice

Sonia

My research has led me to reflect on having been a child in care through to an adult where I am a carer for my mum with psychosis and drug addiction issues. I am researching how the resilience I have developed from these experiences have enabled me to improve my practice working with carers and leading a carers' charity. From a life of caring for others, my living-theory of caring has led me to recognise that self-care is fundamental to sustainable practice in all areas of my life. The current social, economic and environmental climate is leading to 'burnout'.

> 'Burnout is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among individuals who do 'people-work' of some kind. A key aspect of the burnout syndrome is increased feelings of emotional exhaustion' (p.99, Maslach and Jackson, 1981).

Practitioners are becoming emotionally and physically exhausted as they are working with less and less resources. Due to the current economic system 1% of the population own more than the rest of us (Oxfam, 2016) and successive economic crashes have led to money and resources being diverted away from humanitarian needs. In the UK the health and social care services are in crisis due to a lack of funding and these are impacting further on professionals who are often having to cover several jobs. The larger global picture of an impending environmental crisis is being downgraded in importance in the UK due to the immediate economic crisis raised by Brexit causing the new government to remove the climate change department (Independent, 2016), whilst creating a new Brexit department.

I can feel the lack of sustainability on all levels in the UK in my role as Chief Executive of a Carers' Centre. Running a charity with an income of under £1m, I am aware of the reducing finances in local government which funds 55% of our work. Generating income

takes up a large proportion of my time as I write ever more funding bids to grant giving organisations. I am working to create a sustainable organisation whilst sustaining myself and my staff and recognizing that even as a small charity we have an environmental responsibility. At a micro level I am researching my practice to create sustainable development in my life and work. Through our regular Living Theory Skype Research Group I have been able to be influenced by and influence Arianna's work as she works in a developing world context. It has been this experience that has shown me that there is a lot of learning that can happen between the two sectors to influence global social formations such as non-profit organisations.

4. Arianna

I am a development practitioner specialising in 'sustainable development including horizontal inequalities, poverty-reduction strategies, cultural heritage preservation and peace building. My practice involves sharing and collaborating, as I try to create peace and peaceful spaces where people feel at ease and secure, able to foster their own capabilities, inspire and learn from each other, and work for a fairer world in which resources are equally shared' (Briganti, 2016) Throughout my professional life I have worked and lived in various developing countries such as Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Georgia. The project I am currently working on in Albania represents an evidence-based example of how my practical work evolves, together with my embodied and developmental values.

In order to define what 'sustainable' means for me I would like to use the wisdom of a first nation American person who said, 'We have not inherited the earth from our fathers, we are borrowing it from our children'.
To define development I use the simple, but very powerful words of Chambers (2005) for whom development is 'a good change' whose objective is to empower individuals and build their capacities (Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff, 2005, p. 18).

The scope of my profession is to contribute to the establishment of human capabilities that encourage innovative forms of personal and social evolution, rooted in freedom. As a Living Theory researcher I have the chance to strengthen my own capabilities in the attempt to live my values fully and contribute to the building of a fairer world.

Whilst money is an imposed driver on both of us we are able to share our learning that to go beyond economic sustainability more is needed than just the cash to run. We are both successful in our organisations at getting the money to continue and have good track records of raising the funding needed to sustain our organisations.

5. Sonia

I have managed to secure in the region of £3m in contracts and £1m in grants and donations over the last 5 years for my charity, increasing the charities income year on year since 2009 despite the financial crash globally in 2008. However, the money is not enough to ensure the charity is sustainable. I have learnt over the years that having staff who burnout and end up leaving is very damaging for the organisation. Performance management is time consuming and bad for the morale of the person

managing the staff member and the staff member involved and often leads to staff leaving feeling let down by the organisation.

I was fortunate enough to be able to take a sabbatical in 2014 for 6 months where I spent most of my time skiing and recovering from my own near burnout. I had been running at full speed growing the organisation and after a number of difficult staffing issues had been left emotionally and physically exhausted.

The time away enabled me to understand that my role as Chief Executive is not about modelling hard work alone but that the really hard thing is to live a sustainable model of self-care (Hutchison, 2015) whilst getting the work done. On my return I made public my ambition to live self-care whilst getting the work done in both our newsletter and at our AGM. I feel as I continue to work at my own self-care and balancing getting the work done and supporting others to do the same I am seeing improvements in morale and the quality of the work we are doing. Evidence of our quality was externally validated in April 2016 when we became the second charity in the country to be [awarded level 3 PQASSO a quality mark for small charities](). I have found this affirming and believe this is not just due to the work the charity does but also because as a charity we manage the amount each of us has capacity to do and have a culture where we can ask for help when we need it. We look after each other as a staff team providing support practically and emotionally. This is both sustaining us and enabling us to go beyond sustainability into what Arianna calls generativity.

6. Arianna
The following reflection resonates with my understanding of generativity:

> 'In essence, generativity is the act of preparing another's garden for spring. It's power in the service of love. It's an act of giving that enables another person to manifest his or her own strengths and gifts through love… Generativity protects our mental and physical health across an entire lifespan. When we nurture others, we nurture ourselves'. (Post and Neimark, 2007)

My practice in various developing countries offers me a way of engaging in my own educational development and has evolved my understanding of sustainable development into a more holistic and value-based explanation of development, which becomes generative thus beneficial to a broader group of underprivileged people.

7. Sonia
My understanding of generativity for my staff and I means we are able to be innovative, creative and achieve more and at a higher quality than if we were working without consideration for our individual and collective well-being.

Laing (1960) defines ontological security as a term to mean knowing yourself and being well and connected with yourself. I see myself as ontologically secure, I have a high level of self-awareness and am aware that at work I am in a position of power whether I choose my role to be treated in that way or not. As the Chief Executive I have the ability

to make decisions that effect and affect the lives of staff, volunteers and beneficiaries and I have a degree of influence over other organisations. I am aware that by stating my intention of looking after myself whilst getting the work done and asking my staff to look after themselves and each other as I will try to look after myself and them I am directing the culture of the organisation.

My ontological security also enables me to have a high sensitivity to the relational dynamic between myself and others and my ability to help others. I am solution focused and therefore I often enact this by doing something to meet the needs of others. On a simple level this may be making someone a drink, getting them a projector, or as I did with one colleague spending an hour or two a week helping them study for their Psychology open university degree. I am moved to do things over and above my own convenience as I am motivated to be the change I want to see in the world to paraphrase Gandhi. I feel that humanity is easily turned to be cruel, greedy, and cause harm but that if we all work hard to care for one another, to show love in action we can consciously create a better world. By going out of my way to help another I believe I am not just helping them but I am creating ripples in the space time fabric that will have a huge and long term impact like the analogy of a butterfly flapping their wings creating a tornado across the world. (Lorenz, 1969). I believe my actions have the capacity to create a better more loving world, or a worse, more dangerous and scary world.

With that belief comes great responsibility. My research provides me with a standard of judgement that I can use to validate whether I am living my intentions in practice. My standards of judgement are my values that have emerged from the life I have led. For me love is a key value, not a romantic love but a love that is an action that is intended to improve another's life for the better. Hope which is not merely wishful thinking but rather holding both the space for better possibilities whilst holding people if things work out worse. Justice which is not a cold legalistic justice but a belief that people have a right to be able to improve their life whilst balanced with the understanding that rights are not at the expense of others. And finally that we all have the right to participate fully in this world in inclusional spaces that people can act and be listened to. I resonate with Rayner's definition of inclusionality:

> 'Inclusionality is a relationally dynamic awareness of space and boundaries that is connective, reflexive and co-creative.' (Rayner, 2004)

I am not always able to live my values fully and I can find myself being a living contradiction (Whitehead, 1989). However, by researching my practice of being a professional, a carer, a researcher and a citizen of the world I can identify when I am being a living contradiction and explore how to bring my actions back in line with my values. It is by doing this that I am able to care for myself. I believe I must live my values firstly for myself before I can live them for others.

- To love and care for myself I know I need time with friends and people I love, I need time outdoors and time exercising, dancing, skiing, freebording, cycling, swimming and walking.

- To give hope to others I need to give myself time to recognise what better possibilities I might want for myself and provide myself opportunities to gain them.
- To have justice for myself I need to be fair to myself, taking responsibility for what is mine but not feeling guilty for things I cannot change.
- To participate I need to make sure I spend time in spaces where my voice is respected and listened to and that I can influence change for the better.

It is then that I am resilient and strong enough to be in positions where I am able to fight for my values for myself or for others. I am motivated to help people improve their lives which necessitates that I work with people who lack love, hope, justice and the opportunity to participate. It is therefore crucial to prevent my own burnout that I do not only work for others care but that I balance my time to reenergize and face the next challenge.

8. New Technologies
Arianna and Sonia

The Living Theory Research Group we are part of meets every Sunday evening at 8pm GMT. This time was chosen because it has enabled participants from Canada, the USA, Albania, Denmark and the UK to participate. Our research group uses the latest release of the Skype platform which is free to download and allows nine people to simultaneously be on the screen and communicate together. New video conferencing technologies are now free to use and have enabled the move from purely face to face research groups to international research groups.

Rheingold (2010) focuses on the need to create new ways to manage our use of social media. These have relevance and are useful to develop when using a multi-media online platform such as Skype to create a research group. Rheingold's five social media literacies are:

- Attention
- Participation
- Collaboration
- Network Awareness
- Critical Consumption' p.16

We will look at each of these areas to critique how our Skype group embody these literacies and actually goes beyond them.

9. Attention
Sonia

I am part of a generation who is used to splitting my attention which Rheingold describes in his classroom. I often have my laptop open in meetings, enjoying being able to take notes and being able to look up on the internet points that are raised. Rather than wait to look at them afterwards I find it can often add to the conversation as

it often provides more depth of knowledge than is held in the room at that moment. However, I am aware this often creates barriers as Rheingold describes:

> 'In the Japanese language, one pays attention with ki, which means "life energy." Any public speech is an exchange of ki. For me, I felt this exchange was broken when students were not looking at me while I was talking to them.' (p.16)

In the Skype Group I feel we create this same "life energy" as in a physical space. When I was a teenager I drew a picture which I feel helps describe this sense of ki, at the time I was trying to represent "conscious conversations" (p.137, Redfield, 1993) which I had been reading in the Celestine Prophecy. In the Celestine Prophecy Redfield describes a conscious conversation as:

> "As the members of a group talk, only one will have the most powerful idea at any one point in time. If they are alert, the others in the group can feel who is about to speak, and then they can consciously focus their energy on this person, helping to bring out his idea with the greatest clarity. Then, as the conversation proceeds, someone else will have the most powerful idea, then someone else and so forth. If you concentrate on what is being said, you can feel when it is your turn. The idea will come up into your mind." (p.137)

This sounds mystical, but actually when a group is having a conversation where you feel energised, I find this description very accurate and is what I tried to depict in the picture below.

Image 1. Conscious Conversations
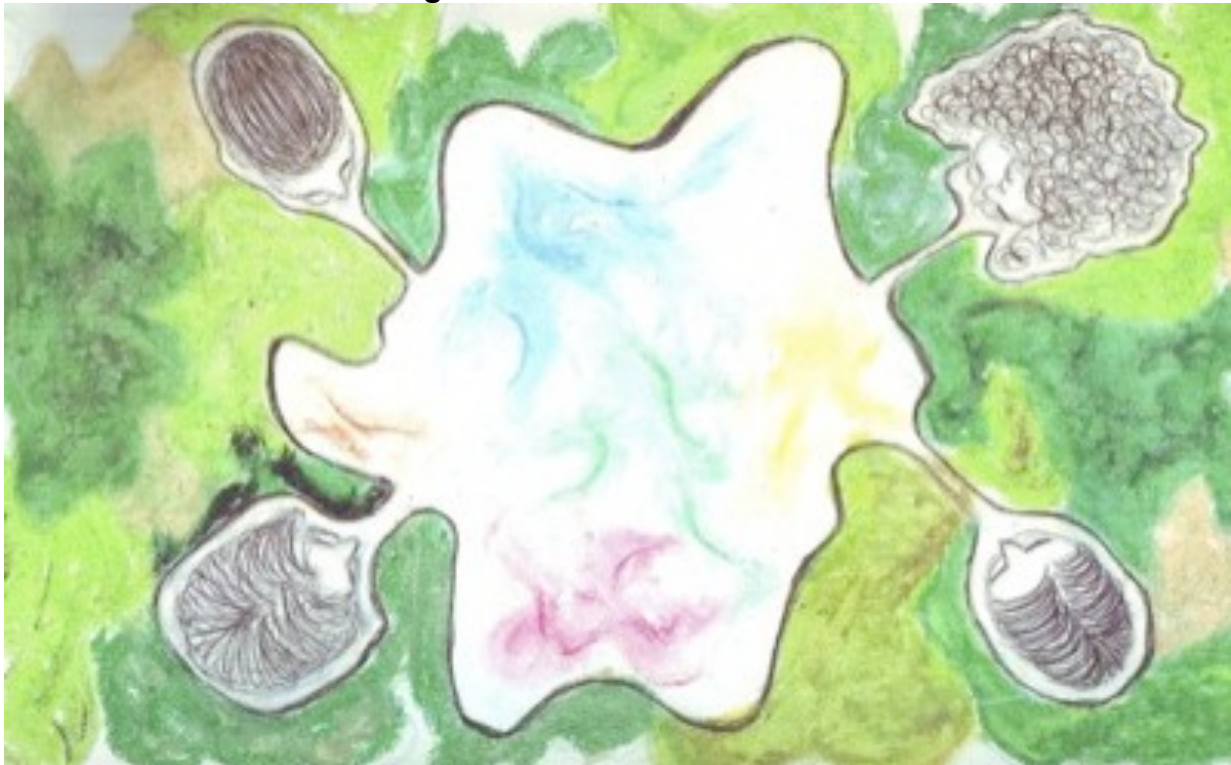
I find I can add to the conversation on Skype when I look up on the internet. However, I agree with Rheingold I need to be aware when I am being distracted and have lost my attention on the group and given my attention over to what I am searching for on my computer.

10. Participation
Arianna and Sonia

Rheingold discusses the idea of participation from a digital perspective and how that is changing the nature of participation:

> 'Today's media enable people to inform, persuade, and influence the beliefs of others and, most important, help them to organize action on all scales. In doing so, people move from the literacy of participation to the literacy of collaboration.' (p.20)

In the Living Theory Research Group each session starts with each member giving their buzz from the week. This can be about any form of our practice such as our academic work, our paid work or our personal life. By starting with a buzz we are informing each other of where our current excitement lies. This often leads the discussion as we influence other member to get excited. Other times the session focuses around some writing or reading that was circulated by email during the week. As the group focuses together different members bring their perspectives, other literature to help to inform the group of work that will challenge or support their research.

Rheingold says 'in general doing things together gives us more power than doing things alone' p.20. As a group the power has been in coming together. Many of the group have found opposition or challenge from their university in using a Living Theory methodology. In terms of analysing the group against Rheingold's social media literacies we have found the collaboration we have is in part the peer support we provide that sustains each member to continue their research. Some sessions have focussed on how to defend using a methodology that is highly criticised in the academy. Others have been how to defend using first person in academic writing. Other sessions have been about how to defend practitioner research as being of at least equal importance to academy led research. Having the group has empowered the members to continue in their research and be resilient in the face of opposition.

11. Collaboration

The group also helps to organise our actions, many collaborations have spun off from the group discussions with further actions being created. Arianna managed to get funding to enable her to work together with another member of the group which involved them gaining funding to enable them to travel to see each other in Denmark and Albania to develop a project to benefit the charity Arianna works for in Albania.

12. Network Awareness

The group's network awareness is not just of bringing members of the group together across various countries and locations but also to link into other networks. A new method has recently been developed to facilitate this called living-posters (Whitehead, 2016). This provides the equivalent of "speed dating" for researchers giving an attractive visual and narrative depiction of the Living Theory research people are involved in across the world. This was developed to facilitate a town hall style meeting at the Action Research Network of the Americas conference in Toronto which facilitates both people being physically in the room and Skyping in from across the world.

13. Sonia

I was able to Skype from the UK into the Town Hall meeting in Toronto, Canada and found the experience extremely exciting as I was able to network with people from across the world and influence the participants by my participation all from the comfort of my own home. I facilitated a workshop at ALARA, 2015 in Pretoria, South Africa where I enabled the same international collaboration through Skype at the workshop and there are plans to continue this democratization of conferences at the CARN study day at the Carers' Centre in Bath, UK February 2017 and at ARNA in Cartagena, Colombia in June 2017 by bring groups together as well as other individuals across the world.

14. Critical Consumption
Arianna and Sonia

Often the writing group members send round has an argument that is trying to persuade or influence the reader. The group provides a platform to test if the writing is valid, the group uses ideas developed from Habermas's (1976) tests of validity of being truthful, comprehensible, right and true or we use the term authentic. We also test writing for rigour to help the group have greater influence. The group often focuses on other writing or mediums and the session is used to develop critical responses.

15. Interconnection

Rheingold says:

> 'the social media technologies and literacies will shape the cognitive, social, and cultural environments of the 21st century. As Jenkins and his colleagues have emphasized, education that acknowledges the full impact of networked publics and digital media must recognize a whole new way of looking at learning and teaching.' p.24

Using Skype research groups is a new way of learning. Our group has a number of PhD students alongside a number of post-doctoral members and a number of the group also supervise other members. This adds a dimension of 'teaching', however, this is not all one way.

16. Sonia

As Jack Whitehead (one of my supervisors on my PhD) expressed to me in an email on the 25/10/15:

"I see myself expressing my value of living global citizenship in being a supervisor of your doctoral research programme. I believe that your embodied knowledge as a carer and leader of a carers' centre is superior to my own. I believe that my knowledge as an educational researcher may be helpful to enabling you to make public your embodied knowledge (as a carer, leader and researcher). I also believe that making public your embodied knowledge, with its evolution, offers opportunities for enhancing the influence of this knowledge in contributing to values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity.

I also accept a responsibility to you as one of your team of supervisors, which is a different sense of responsibility to that of living-global-citizenship. Where you and other doctoral researchers have moved my understandings forward is in seeing that you can experience the educating the education of this.

In seeing that your knowledge is superior to my own in being a carer and leader I hope that I am expressing what Buber calls the 'special humility of the educator'."

The notion of Living Global Citizenship comes from Mark Potts and is relevant to the idea of interconnection as:

'… hope is achieved through participants operating within learning-community partnerships that are actively engaged in negotiating, discovering and then living out their shared values more fully – and, in so doing, cultural divisions are transcended, cultural-empathy is developed and real lives are improved.' (p.115, Potts, 2014).

17. Other practical considerations
Arianna and Sonia
In order to use Skype effectively it is important to have:

- The latest version of Skype so you can have a group up to nine people meet at once
- If possible headphones and a microphone to have the best quality of sound
- A web camera so you can be seen by the others on Skype
- A web connection

In order to get the group together you will need to decide who is in the group and all set up a Skype account (which is free) and share everyone's Skype addresses. Decide a time that is convenient for all the group members and choose one member to invite all of the members of the group into the Skype group at the time you decide.

18. Findings
Sonia and Arianna
The use of digital platforms has problems as well as benefits. When the technology fails it can disrupt the conversation. We have some meetings where poor connections can

disrupt conversations. As the group members are positioned in countries of varying socio economic situations the internet connections vary. Although it is often those from wealthy countries that have poor connections. When the connection breaks down or people are unable to get the video working and we only have a still picture of them it can often become the focus of the conversation. One week a whole conversation took place when Arianna's camera was not working over whether she could change her picture from her dog, which whilst very beautiful, made the group feel even less connected to her. Sonia has also had frustrations where her video was so poor that she missed parts of the conversation and got cut off mid flow when she was speaking. All these issues are unique to a digital platform and create challenges which the group needs to persist and overcome as the benefits we have found outweigh the technical problems.

Blackenship (2011) enthuses about Skype for teaching and disseminating knowledge. However, we would argue he misses some key benefits the use of Skype brings as he does not explore the use of Skype as a tool to get together as a regular research group. Our group has come together with the purpose of shared learning, development, sustaining research and finding other researchers that share our values that bring hope for the flourishing of humanity.

We have found the key benefits to be:

- Skype has changed the nature of the experience of getting together as we have the perspective of seeing ourselves amongst others on the screen - we see ourselves as part of the group in a way that is impossible in the physical world. This adds to the sense of collegiality and changes the dynamic of a group to include ourselves on the same level as others. This is a powerful view, to see yourself with others in real time and one you do not have in person. Relational dynamics can be seen as you experience them, as we can see the love and care of each other. For us this is seeing Ubuntu in action. Ubuntu is an African phrase which is most closely translated as 'I am because you are'. Marie Huxtable, a member of our group extended this notion to recognise that we are because I am (Huxtable and Whitehead, 2015). The Living Theory Research Group Skypes enable us to see this in action, without the other there is no session and without us the session is a different session to one we are not present at. We truly are living Ubuntu in action in the Skype sessions. To us this is moving beyond mere attention of the other to the entire experience being changed by each other's presence.

19. Sonia

The image below shows our group as it is displayed on the screen when we are on Skype. This picture shows a debate taking place about whether my being on Skype via hands free in the car is opening up a new way of experiencing the other in the call or an unwise move on my part to be having a hands free conversation. Either way the technology is bringing in new dimensions to our experience of each other and testing new boundaries of communication.

**Image 2.** Living Theory Research Group 21-08-16 clip
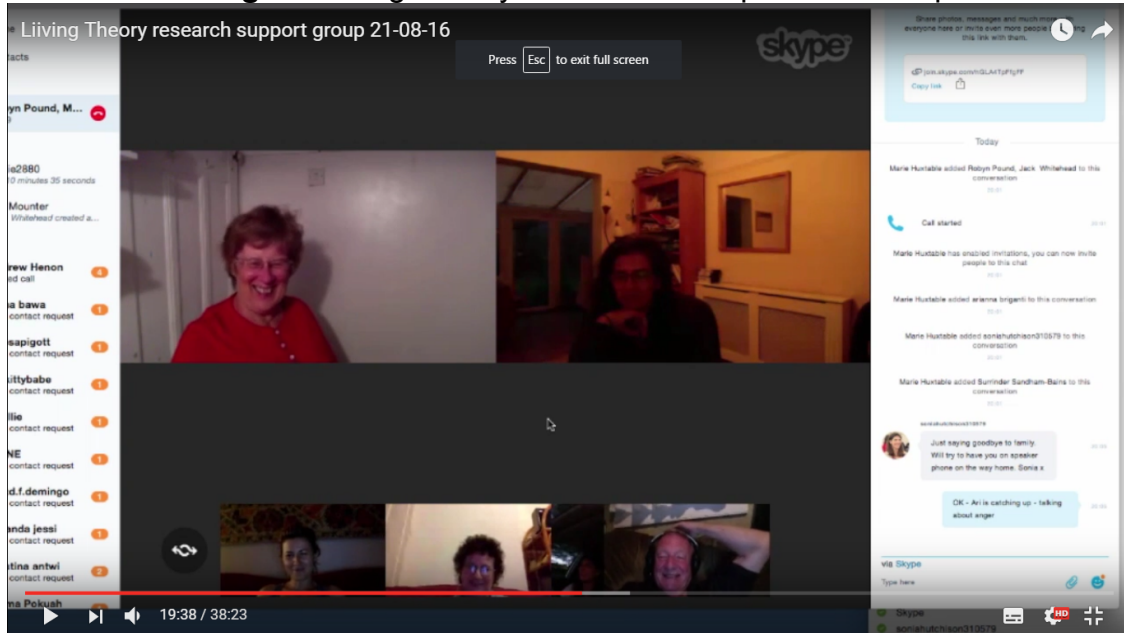
20. **Sonia and Arianna**
- Participatory and collaborative (Heron and Reason, 1997) due to everyone sharing their research and supporting each other to improve the validity and rigour of their research.
- Sustainable, both financially as there is no cost to Skyping, and emotionally. The group provides support to continue in our research even when the going gets tough. The support has been especially helpful as practitioner researchers studying long distance. Participants have also benefited where they feel disconnected from their university due to their focus on research in practice creating a tension with the traditional objective research focus.

21. **Sonia**

In this clip I am reflecting on a particularly hard decision I am making regarding my mum's care and my decision making process to intervene. For me the group is very powerful in providing emotional support to work through my decision whilst encouraging me that I am providing an example of living my values in practice. I am then twice confirmed by Robin for having something useful to say on self-care and resilience and how by living my values in practice by offering to write a funding bid, it has led Robin to be motivated. **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbYedV91WOU**

Image 3. Living Theory Research Support Group 22-05-16 5 Minutes of Sonia' Catch Up
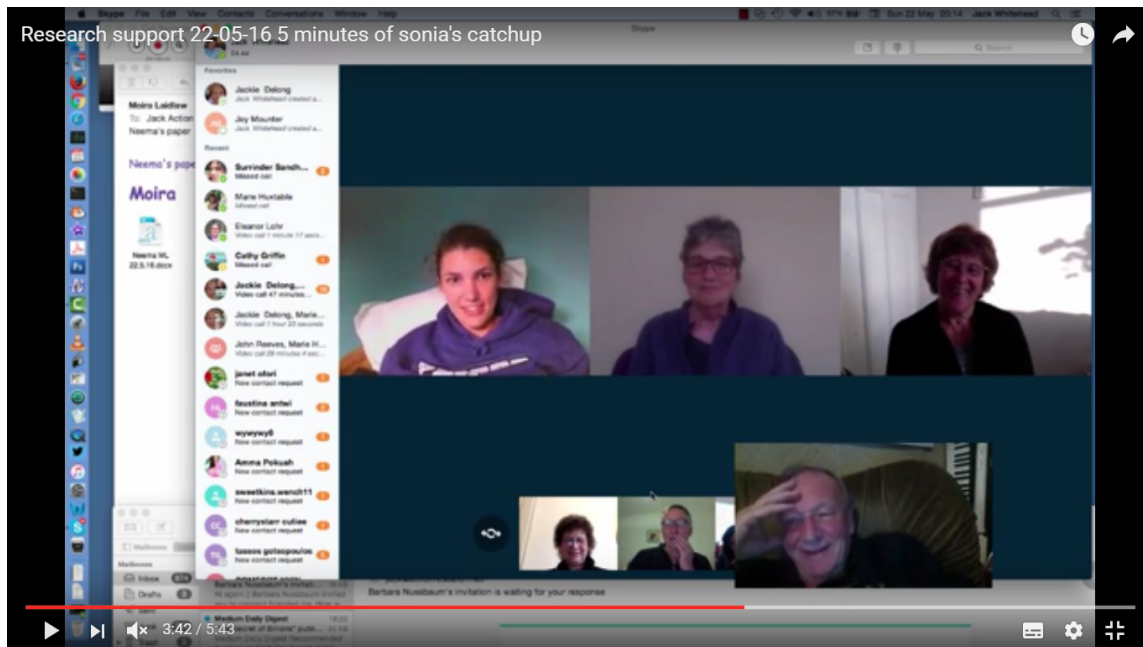
- The ability to record the sessions and reflect on them later. This helps develop our learning and understanding in ways we are unable to do from other forums where even if it is videoed we are unable to see ourselves amongst the whole group as you can on the Skype recordings.

22. Arianna

I have written in emails what the group means to me, I wrote:

> "the relationship we manage to create through the Skype Sunday conversation group, and to me, as I've said it very often transcends the conversation on a Sunday it really it lives here in my apartment. Whenever I approach a new concept or new writing I think of you guys and the inputs you are giving to me. The quality of the relationship that we are building together … is fundamental for me writing my doctoral research but even beyond that for understanding … myself and what I am and how I'm trying to express myself in my practice and be the best I can be." Sunday Research Group 18/10/15.

23. Sonia

I resonate with what Arianna is saying. I also find the conversations on Skype are like a top up to keep me motivated but the influence of the group is lived out in my reading, writing and practice as I seek to improve on what I have learnt and shared on Skype.

24. Arianna

In my email I go on to give an example from my work that brings my description to life in my practice:

> "(my colleague) said "you are not a Balkan person but you fit because you understand people because you can establish a relationship with us". This meant

everything to me, you know, this is one of the most beautiful things that I've heard about myself.

So this goes back to the quality of the relationship we are able to build, we as a group and then … me as a professional. This is a portrayal of … the relationships I want to mirror in my daily life and daily practice because if I can't use this quality … of relationship with the people I work with I'm useless, I'm a useless instrument. So it's not really about the relationship it's about the quality based on trust … so I would like people to really understand this is much more than just getting together and exchanging buzzes every Sunday. It is for me the foundation of my job."

I am communicating that the mechanics are not what gives the group meaning and purpose (Frankl, 1949). Although it is useful to understand the mechanics and we have explored these in depth to support people to set up their own Skype research groups. However, I am highlighting that the group is about ensuring the validity of the research the group produces is in line with our values to bring hope to the 'flourishing of humanity'. The group is not just about continuing professional development which whilst important can often be only for the flourishing of the practitioner but does not necessarily lead to making that learning public to influence others to bring hope for the flourishing of others or of social formations.

25. Sonia

I find that from Arianna's sharing of what the group means to her I can see that the work we both do is fundamentally about relationships with people and therefore we can share our learning on this level. That whilst our resource levels, security levels and social policy settings will be entirely different between developing and developed countries the need to connect with each other on a relational level remains the same as does our need to self-care to prevent burn out. How we achieve these may be different. However, we can still learn from each-others insights and take these forward to improve our practice.

For me our settings give us our context but our values carry beyond our settings and are able to challenge and develop my practice beyond the concern of whether I am in a developed world setting and Arianna is in a developing world setting. We are not just able to sustain each-others practice from getting together weekly but to take ourselves to the next level and be generative, through our learning and developing of our ideas and taking these to generate new ways of being in our individual practices.

26. Conclusion
Arianna and Sonia

As practitioners researching our practice in developing and developed world countries, we have found that not only does our Living Theory Research Skype Group meet Rheingold's five literacies the group transcends these. We are both able to generate new knowledge from our involvement in the group which is relevant for each other in our different contexts. We are able to share our learning and generate new learning through

the Skype group. Beyond our research and our jobs we are also supporting each other to sustain ourselves as part of our individual self-care which enables us to continue in our work and lives in which we seek to bring hope for the flourishing of humanity.

We have the shared privilege to leave in a virtual space that eventually transmuted into very tangible quality relationships with other researchers and where we are welcome to express our insights, personal and professional experiences, values as well as improve our professional and personal lives by responding to the question: 'How can I improve my practice' (Whitehead, 1989).

All these led both of us to a change in how we understand and describe sustainability each of us in their field of work. The common thread seems to be that we believe that the sustainability of both developed and developing world non-profit organisations must evolve in a more holistic and inclusive way of working towards the integral wellbeing of the individual. Our practice and our habit of sharing our understanding using the Living Theory Research Group show us that sustainability has to evolve in a self-perpetrating force if we are to make the greatest contribution to a fairer world.

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