

## THE CHILDREN'S PARLIAMENT - DO THE RIGHT THING LOCAL PROJECT

### PARTICIPANT'S VIEWS OF THE DO THE RIGHT THING LOCAL PROJECT

Children, professionals and parents told us what they thought about participation in their Do the Right Thing Local Project.

#### Children

Overall children were positive about the approach; they enjoyed working in groups and without too much direct adult direction other than guiding some of the tasks in hand. Children commented positively on feeling that they had all had the chance to contribute and have their views heard and recorded on the 'props' provided. They liked the creative approaches and that they produced a colorful representation of their work. The children were also interested in looking at the different Articles of the UNCRC, most had no prior knowledge of the Convention. At the end of workshops they were able to relate articles to their lives and experiences. On occasion some of the older participants in the Secondary School settings disliked working in groups with people they did not normally work with. On rare but nonetheless important occasions disrespectful comments to others had to be challenged, particularly in the context of learning and discussion about ideas of human dignity.

#### Professionals

Participants were also positive about the approach; they liked the mix or presentation and discussion, with the focus on space for participants to interact with each other. Participants from different agencies/sectors also reported that they enjoyed the 'time out' to reflect on the issues raised and that they were able to link discussion about a range of issues and initiatives, for example work on rights to work on restorative approaches. There was a positive view of the effort made in the workshop to link day to day practice with relevant policy and legislation. Teachers who participated in the children's workshops liked the approach and the tools used to support learning.

#### Parents

Attempts at facilitating parent workshops in the Scottish Borders local project proved to be difficult although a number of parents did come along and took the opportunity to see children's work and discuss the project. In Angus a more flexible approach, whereby parents were encouraged to drop-in and hear about the work was adopted. Parents were supportive of the work and impressed by the reflective nature of the children's work.

**Direct quotes from participants follow...**

## Some comments from children

'The best part was the Jack and Chloe puppets because it was fun looking at them' (P3)

'The best part of the workshop was talking about your feelings to others' (P4)

'I learned that you should treat others the way you would like to be treated and about human dignity' (P4)

'The craft was the best thing because you were learning as well when you were doing it' (P5)

'I find it interesting that not all people have the same thoughts about things' (P6)

'I learned what rights we have. Children have 42 rights. Some of those are you have a right to life and to be healthy. And I now know what UNCRC stands for' (P7)

'I learned about dignity and that children have rights just like adults' (P7)

'I think now when I go home I could say to my parents what I think about things. When they're making decisions I'd definitely be more confident about saying something' (S1)

'We worked really well together. It was nice to work with people we don't normally work with' (S1)

'Article 26 stands out to me because me and my mom were homeless and had no money and I don't think we got it. I'm going to take this home and show her' (S1)

'I found learning about my rights interesting as I didn't know I had any' (S2)

'I knew adults had rights and I thought children might have some but definitely not as much as adults' (S2)

'The best thing about the workshop was the conversations because they were open and interesting' (S2)

'I thought the 'cube' we made was a much more interesting way of learning' (S2)

## **Some comments from professionals**

'This can be incorporated into our work on Health and Wellbeing'

'Interesting & thought provoking, a good excuse to think about 'first principles' of teaching and why we choose to work with young people. I liked how practical the activities were'

'The session really made me think about children's rights, and that the majority of children I deal with don't have any, and how I can help improve things for them. I really enjoyed the relaxed approach of the session, and the tasks really made me think'

'I found this session very interesting for a number of reasons. It provided an opportunity for personal reflection regarding how staff relate to and interact with children. It helped clarify impact on restorative practice. It reflected upon current practice and how consideration of rights impacts (or should impact) our work'

'Enjoyed the session both at personal and professional levels. I don't often have (take!) the time to reflect fully about how the ethos and values of the school relate to 'high order' legislation or conventions, etc. In many ways a positive endorsement of the direction we are headed without explicitly meaning to head in the 'right' direction. Activities were well structured and brought out interesting points absolutely focused on issues of rights'

'Very valuable session – it seems wrong that such important basic issues are so seldom discussed'

## **Some comments from parents**

'I hope you can use this to help children learn about their emotional wellbeing. Lots of what happens in school can't do this'

'Can this be compulsory for all teachers? Isn't this what they're trying to do in Curriculum for Excellence?'

'They've come up with some great suggestions about what kids need – I thought it would be all Play Stations and Xboxes'

'I find it really interesting all the things they've written down. I talk to my children about these things, but it's good to have them reinforced from other sources'

'Teachers think that children will tell them what they think but if you're scared of saying what you think then you won't will you?'