



# CHILDREN'S PARLIAMENT

## The Children's Parliament Community Initiative

Case study

### About the project

**Funding awarded:** £319,965

**Duration of funding:** 3 years

**Number of beneficiaries:** 1,224 children aged 9-11

**Areas of delivery:** Glasgow, Scotland

Children's Parliament gives children the opportunity to voice their ideas, thoughts and feelings so that their opinions can be listened to and included in the social and political landscape.

The Children's Parliament Community Initiative (CPCI) aims to promote human rights and pro-social relationships among children on the periphery of anti-social behaviour or gang involvement. The initiative includes training for teaching staff, a one-day workshop for children to explore their rights and five days of focused group work where children identify personal goals in a series of activities centred around the creation of a 3D papier mache model.

### Lessons learnt

**Children's Parliament's delivery in Realising Ambition highlights the experience of replicating a rights-based approach.**

The Children's Parliament Community Initiative relies significantly on the children's rights principles that underpin the service and on the skills and passion for advocacy that delivery staff bring. These things are difficult to 'bottle' and thus can be difficult to replicate. Children's Parliament has therefore had to work hard to fit into the demands of Realising Ambition as a replication programme. It has made substantial progress in being able to articulate the impact of the service and the underpinning logic to it, and now has a number of the tools in place it needs to support further replication, including a manual and implementation handbook. This is a significant achievement; prior to Realising Ambition the service was relatively undefined and had developed organically through a process of iteration, trial and error.

The organisation reports that Realising Ambition has supported it to become more outcomes-focused and to commit what it delivers to paper. While the CPCI programme content was a replication of the organisation's ongoing core programme, a new dimension was the requirement to work solely with children who were on potential pathways to offending. Children's Parliament's usual approach is to work with children from mixed backgrounds and abilities. A key lesson learned was that mixed groups offer opportunities for positive role modelling and create positive spaces around which the challenging behaviours can be more effectively managed.

CPCI is currently being replicated in Fife with children who are looked after. The approach continues to underpin all Children's Parliament's work. Involvement in Realising Ambition provided support and space for the organisation to become clearer on its service offer and on its method of delivery.



## Five key ingredients of successful replication

**The Realising Ambition consortium has mapped each project's journey against our five key ingredients of successful replication. The key points from this follow below. Find out more about these ingredients.**



**A tightly defined and replicable service:** Children's Parliament has made substantial progress in defining and refining its service, including developing a strong logic model and manual.



**That is effectively and faithfully delivered to those that need it:** Both the capability and skill of the staff team within the organisation are a key strength, along with strong, hands-on leadership from directors.



**Evidence is used to learn and adapt, as required:** The organisation consistently engages with children to get their feedback on CPCI and uses this feedback to shape future delivery.



**There is confidence that outcomes have improved:** While the quantitative evidence is more limited, Children's Parliament has amassed a significant amount of qualitative evidence from children, teachers and parents/carers.



**The service is cost-beneficial and sustainable:** Replicating CPCI has transitioned the service from a project to core business for the organisation. Children's Parliament's Board of Trustees has been fully engaged with the delivery of CPCI, and focused on how it may be sustained post Realising Ambition funding.

## Outcomes for beneficiaries

**Each organisation has sought to monitor the outcomes of children and young people prior to and after service delivery. Find out more about outcome measurement in Realising Ambition.**



Children's Parliament developed a number of bespoke processes to measure the learning and development of each child taking part in CPCI; the additional time taken to do this impacted on the amount of outcome data it gathered, particularly in year one. The data gathered does indicate an improvement in outcomes in the third year of delivery compared to the second. Of the 40 children who completed pre and post questionnaires in year two and three, **63% showed stable or improved general mental health in year three delivery, compared to 43% year two**, and **72% showed stable or reduced levels of anxiety in year three compared to 64% in year two**.

Children's Parliament also gathered a variety of qualitative feedback from children, parents/carers and teachers involved in CPCI. This feedback indicated **improved emotional wellbeing, increased engagement with learning** and **better relationships, cooperation and pro-social skills**.

## What next

As with many other voluntary organisations, Children's Parliament remains vulnerable to cuts in public commissioning and funding. It has found the rights-based approach a challenging one to 'sell' to potential funders and commissioners, an issue it states is in part due to a lack of understanding of the topic of children's rights and therefore the need for a service that supports them. The organisation continues to engage with a number of influential external networks to promote this approach. The work has also left a legacy of good practice in a number of locations through effective partnerships with local schools.

## Find out more



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