



Listening to Children – round table

19 April 2017

The V&A Museum

In attendance

- Vicky Ireland, Chair of ACA
- Dr Chris Abbott, Trustee of ACA
- Mairi Hayes, Community Drama and Diploma manager, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama
- Astrid Hilne, Acting Assistant Programme Manager: Performance Learning Department, Victoria and Albert Museum,
- Harriet Curnow, Programme Manager: Performance Learning Department, Victoria and Albert Museum,
- Julie Ward MEP
- Trevor MacFarlane Cultural Affairs Manager, Julie Ward MEP
- Chris Waterman, Writer

Listening to children – what does it mean?

JW mentioned the Young Mayor programme in Salford as a good example of this scheme.

- The British Youth Council is the National Youth Council of the UK. A youth-led charity, we empower young people aged 25 and under to influence and inform the decisions that affect their lives.

Young Mayor Network: (C/O The British Youth Council) Email: ymn@byc.org.uk

- The UK Youth Parliament provides opportunities for 11-18 year olds to use their elected voice to bring about social change through meaningful representation and campaigning: info@ukyouthparliament.org.uk

Could these organisations be encouraged to have junior representation ie. under 11yrs.

Also mentioned conference Generations United in Liverpool last year, bringing together different age groups to consider key topics.

JW mentioned Commons movement in European Parliament. What do we all own in common? She is now arguing for a Commons for children. Aiming to do this for International Children's Rights Day November 20th. Also mentioned work at UCLAN on children's rights.

JW also involved with Quality of Childhood organisation in Europe, and also spoke about her other activities and experiences within Europe.

How does your organisation listen to children?

AH asked why there are no children here. VI explained about Polka link.

AH explained that V&A involvement of children is through Families work – evaluation, response cards etc. Staff are keen to do more. Pop up performance recently where artist, Simon Mole consulted with school in North Kensington Yr4 group beforehand. Whole class went to see the production “Friends for All”, at Canary Wharf.

Also youth dancers involved in the V&A performance and Chickenshed involved next time. Also Door to Design involves children in schools and families. Mentioned Winnie the Pooh exhibition soon, first family-friendly exhibition at V&A.

MH explained CSSD has 1000 students and works with 550 children from 6 to 17 in their youth theatre. Also up to 6500 children come to performances or are involved in other ways.

JW talked more about ways that she and others in European Parliament are listening to children. She has also been approached by Children’s Press Centre in Amsterdam aiming to put children at front of news and politics.

TM mentioned Takko, Dutch reporter who interviews children for the news, especially in war zones. He also mentioned that many of the structures such as the European Youth Parliament reflect only certain sectors of society and kinds of children.

HC mentioned family tours led through galleries by children.

CW mentioned his pop-up plays *12 min Shakespeare*. Also performance poetry in schools in English and Welsh. On World Book Day he had y5 children in parliament – all kinds of children not the semi-professional political ones that join the Youth Parliaments. Has just been to the launch of the latest PISA report on well-being and explained that this is produced every three years. He believes you need the bottom-up stuff in the community as well as the top-down parliamentary councils etc.

HC mentioned the Manchester Museum pop up bouncing castle. Also a stately home did the same.

Gathering responses to Missing Conversations

We could use the three questions from this by asking UK children the same questions.

- What is it like here?
- What do you want your country to be like?
- What are British values?

CA suggested a child platform performance to support the production in 2018 at The National

TM asked if there was still interest in a statement that everyone could sign up to. He thought we should move forward on this.

JW mentioned that in Germany there is a full Youth Service and young people can take government to court if it is not good enough.

HC spoke about the Happy Museum – well-being and museums.

<http://happymuseumproject.org/>

With regard to a statement to sign up to, she mentioned the Kids in Museums manifesto:

<http://kidsinmuseums.org.uk/manifesto/>

Family Arts Festival have Family Arts Standards: <http://www.familyarts.co.uk/family-arts-standards>

AH mentioned the Jack Petchey Awards that anyone can sign up to

www.jackpetcheyfoundation.org.uk

CW suggested cards be sent to MPs and ask for responses. JW supported this.

MH said she would work on the three questions with her Youth Theatre over the next ten weeks as a pilot Listening to Children project

The group also agreed we should encourage other groups to do the same and if possible get it included in the NT Connections process.

JW suggested using International Children's Rights Day on November 20th in London which she would attend, for a launch event and VI suggested seeking Arts Council support for a large event.

Key actions

Pledge from parliament –we should send a pledge card to all current MPs asking them to sign up to it.

We should ask the NT Questions more widely and collect the answers

Use a larger meeting in November to develop this more widely towards an event in summer 2018.

JW mentioned that she also works with Performing Arts unions on similar topics. She will also ask a question at the EU Cultural Committee on 21 June.

AH suggested possibly involving someone skilled in Forum Theatre techniques or using the forum Devoted and Disgruntled <https://www.devotedanddisgruntled.com> to further discussion amongst adults.