

# Learning for Well-being Magazine ③

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## Abstracts

### Viewpoint 1

'The tempting range', *Middlemarch*, and me

By Ted Simonds

As I reach half-way through my university studies, what I do after becomes of paramount importance. In this article, I retrace the moments that have helped me decide where I want to go, ranging from local youth-led projects, international conferences, and a Victorian novel. The study of literature and children's rights may seem tangential, some may say unconnected, but both are inexorably linked within me by a desire to be part of shaping my world.

### Viewpoint 2

Why I've become involved in organisations and activities based on children's rights, in particular the right to participation?

By Polyxeni Papageorgiou

A personal reflection on the motivation, as a young person, to be involved in Children's Rights, particularly the right to participation.

### 1

Quest for Inclusion: a Story of Active Participation

By Jacqueline Tordoir

This article is an account of an interview with drama teacher, Carl Robinson, who works at the International School of Brussels; he uses a pedagogical approach that leads to inclusion and trust building, and creating safe environments where risk-taking is encouraged. The interview followed his school production of *The Jungle Book*, where as a parent I was impressed with the extent to which he managed to put the school's motto of 'inclusion, challenge and success' into practice. The production particularly affected my daughter Daniela, who is classified by the school as a 'special education student;' Daniela ended up feeling part of the whole during the process of rehearsing and performing. The article will examine the ways in which Carl manages to make pupils feel that they have something unique to contribute and will explore his conviction that difference is not just OK, but something to be cherished.

2

### Strategies for discussing and managing power dynamics in intergenerational groups

By Bijan Kimiagar & Ayşenur Ataman

All over the world, children, youth and adults are organising themselves to collectively address issues that affect their lives and well-being. Forming civil associations is a critical component of a democratic society, and it is a right protected in national and international policies, such as Article 15 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: the right to form associations and freedom of peaceful assembly. However, in associations where members' ages may range from young children to adults, younger members' meaningful participation in decision-making may be at stake due to adult power holders. In this paper, we present practical methods for intergenerational groups to reflect on how members govern themselves – that is, how they make decisions, elect or appoint representatives, recruit new members, and collaborate with other groups in sustainable ways. We developed these methods as part of an international partnership with child-centred community development agencies, as well as members of child and youth associations around the world. We provide an overview of activities in a kit of resources available online and detail the opportunities and challenges of adapting these methods for diverse settings. We focus our discussion on strategies we recommend for intergenerational groups with varying degrees of management by children and adults.

3

### *Hearing All Voices* – Transforming the Lives of Vulnerable Youth:

#### The power of participation

By Carolyn Conway, Grazyna Bonati, Liz Arif-Fear, Tricia Young

This article focuses on how the process of young people's participation has transformed the lives of the young people and adults who participated in Child to Child's *Hearing All Voices* project in London schools from 2013–2016. All the young participants were considered at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) some were low academic achievers and many were highly disengaged. The article describes project activities and discusses impact, highlighting significant transformation evident at multiple levels. The benefits of *Hearing All Voices* were striking for both adults and young participants, especially those who were already disengaged. The article concludes that it is imperative that such initiatives are introduced in schools with younger children to enhance their life chances before the process of disengagement and consequent marginalisation from their education and communities begins.

4

### Making the youth's voice heard: The story of a child can change the world

By Tako Rietveld

Children changed the life of journalist Tako Rietveld (37). Since last year he is the first correspondent exclusively for children. He travels the world to make their voices heard. 'They know how the world should be. Listen!'

5

Children’s natural curiosity – the basis for the Children’s International Press Centre:  
Engaged participation from the home and the classroom to the world around

By Elise Sijthoff

Do we – as adults – really want to suppress the beautiful curiosity with which children are born, or can we cultivate this curiosity in the playful ways that are typical of children...? The world news and even the national news is seen as circulating far above the heads of young children whose paths are considered restricted to the home, the classroom and the immediate neighbourhood. The Children’s International Press Centre was launched to challenge such assumptions early this year, at the time when the Netherlands took its turn as President of the European Union. In Amsterdam, a class of 11-year olds walked with their teacher to the newly established offices of the EU Presidency on a historical site, and found that their access was restricted to the visitors’ centre. At the same time, they listened to an encouraging personal message from a woman Member of the European Parliament, asking the children what their priorities would be for MEPs like herself. The article elaborates on how the Children’s International Press Centre stimulates investigative exploration by children of their immediate surroundings in ways that link to wider developments in local, national and international arenas.

6

Another world is needed; together it is possible:

The experience of the Social Forum in Ivry sur Seine (France)

By Marie-Thérèse & Jean-Guy Dufour

In this article we present briefly the history of the World Social Forum and then how and why we established a Social Forum in Ivry sur Seine, a suburb of Paris, as well as some of the very significant experiences we have had together with all the members over the last 13 years. Through all of that we would like to express our objective: ‘Help the maximum number of people in our town to flourish as citizens with the desire and feeling that they have the capacity to contribute to building a more human society, which is increasingly needed; and to understand that this society of “well-being” will not emerge without their contribution and that they will never feel good in themselves if they feel disinterested or powerless.’

7

Khulani Nande – Grow More

By Carol Gorelick

The concept of community schools has developed from a preference for teaching children in neighbourhood schools to a movement that sees the school as a hub that brings together many partners to offer a range of support and opportunities for children, youth, families, and the larger community. This article is based on an action-learning project: Building Communities: Strengthening Schools whose goal was to transform two South African primary schools into vibrant centres of community life. These schools engaged with parents and other education stakeholders to address the challenges of poverty, improve teaching and learning, and support students’ well-being and development. Within this context, the article focuses on organisational learning interventions and outcomes that directly engaged and effected principals, teachers and children in two very different

under-resourced schools. Despite the significant challenges, there is hope. The article includes a video of a ninth grader speaking at a 'launch event' to 1,000 community members that ends with: 'We as children have power to change the world. Learn as much as you can. Be somebody in life. Try to change the world.'

8

Not another article on social inclusion:

[youngsters with disabilities, the hidden gem of youth work](#)

By Adrian Hristescu

Three years ago I was supposed to be group leader for seven Romanian youngsters with visual impairments and, even though I voluntarily signed on for this, I was quite stressed about it. It turned out that the stress was for nothing and the job was no more difficult than with other groups I had worked with before. In the light of this experience, this article will present some of the misconceptions that we found to be often associated with working with persons with disabilities and how peer education can be used to tackle them and make youth workers more open to being inclusive in their work.