



## Call for submissions: Day of General Discussion 2016 Children's Rights and the Environment

Deadline: 31<sup>st</sup> July 2016

Together wishes to put forward three examples of good practice in Scotland regarding **the role of children as agents of change in the environmental context.**

### 1. Engaging children and young people in decisions around the built and natural environment

Planning Aid Scotland (PAS)<sup>1</sup> has developed a number of innovative educational resources for young people aged 8-25 years. Its education work is closely linked to Scotland's 'Curriculum for Excellence'<sup>2</sup>, is co-ordinated alongside Education Scotland, and is specifically outcome-focused. Through schools, the organisation engages primary children, secondary children and secondary+ young people in three age-appropriate programmes which foster engagement and active citizenship in issues around the natural and built environment, how and for what purpose land is used, and most importantly, what influences decision-making. It encourages global citizenship by focusing on contemporary issues such as renewable energy, including off-shore, community gardens/allotments, recycling, housing, design and shared spaces.

Once that participation has been activated at an early stage in the child's life, young people can become 'Young Placemakers'<sup>3</sup> (16-20 year olds) who become part of a network of young community leaders who champion active citizenship and create a voice for young people through which they can engage in shaping Scotland to become greener. Young Placemakers work in areas such as offshore renewables, marine environment, sustainable transport, climate change and green networks.

Through Scotland's education system, these programmes enable children of different ages, gender and social backgrounds to use their capacities, competencies and experiences to respond to environmental issues and to meaningfully participate in environmental decision-making. As such, the programme fulfils a number of children's rights enshrined in the CRC including respect for the views of the child<sup>4</sup>, the right to education in relation to protecting the environment<sup>5</sup> and the right to health, including a clean, safe environment<sup>6</sup>. Child-friendly policies such as Young Placemakers are particularly salient in the context of the 2016 Concluding Observations to the UK from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child who raise concern around environmental health and air

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<sup>1</sup> <http://pas.org.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://pas.org.uk/young-people/>

<sup>4</sup> UNCRC Article 12

<sup>5</sup> UNCRC Article 29 1(e)

<sup>6</sup> UNCRC Article 24 2(c)

pollution<sup>7</sup> and recommend that the UK places children's rights at the centre of national and international climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies<sup>8</sup>.

#### Resources:

- Summary information sheet, engagement with primary age children.  
<http://pas.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/IMBY-A4-Information-Sheet-2014-LM-update-NEW-with-graph.pdf>
- Summary information sheet, engagement with secondary school children.  
<http://pas.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/YEP-A4-Information-Sheet-2014-LM-Update-NEW-with-graph.pdf>
- Summary information sheet, engagement with young people. <http://pas.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Young-Placemakers-Info-Sheet.pdf>
- Youth engagement outcomes report. [http://www.ourlivepark.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/20140829-PAS-LLTNP-report-V01\\_ps2.pdf](http://www.ourlivepark.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/20140829-PAS-LLTNP-report-V01_ps2.pdf)
- Lessons for youth involvement.  
[https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=6&ved=0ahUKewi449W4mOHNAhUdM8AKHW0nD\\_kQFgg4MAU&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.sustasis.net%2FInglis.docx&usg=AFQjCNFm3y43i8TJffZ7Aocnmt8neEemA&sig2=EjiAeij3M8-dg0RrnEAWWg](https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=6&ved=0ahUKewi449W4mOHNAhUdM8AKHW0nD_kQFgg4MAU&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.sustasis.net%2FInglis.docx&usg=AFQjCNFm3y43i8TJffZ7Aocnmt8neEemA&sig2=EjiAeij3M8-dg0RrnEAWWg)

## 2. Ensuring children's voices are heard in decisions around their social and political landscape

The Children's Parliament<sup>9</sup> in Scotland gives children the opportunity to voice their ideas, thoughts and feelings so that their concerns and opinions can be listened to and included in their social and political landscape. It is currently running a project in partnership with East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership (ELHSCP), East Lothian Council, enjoyleisure, Historic Scotland, Festival of Architecture 2016, Heritage Lottery Fund and Tranent Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme called "StreetsAhead Tranent", which explores children's views and experiences of their local community and built environment in the town of Tranent and examines how these factors impact on children's rights and wellbeing.

Specifically, two hundred and fifty children in P5, 6 and 7 at five local primaries created images of Tranent's past and present, along with their ideas for the future of the town helped by visits from local adults, urban planners, East Lothian Council countryside rangers and their archeologist. A representative group of 16 children from each of the schools came together for five days to replicate the 250 images, in addition to their own ideas, to create a series of messages to adults in this large-scale mural.

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<sup>7</sup> Para. 67 Committee on the Rights of the Child (2016). Concluding Observations: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (CRC/C/GBR/CO/5)

<sup>8</sup> Para. 68(b) Committee on the Rights of the Child (2016). Concluding Observations: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (CRC/C/GBR/CO/5)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/>

A smaller group of children subsequently worked with Children's Parliament's creative team of artists, drama facilitators and local professionals to create a large scale mural, reflecting the views of all those involved. The mural is now a piece of public art and will eventually be permanently displayed outside Ross High School, Tranent.

In October 2016, the children from the StreetsAhead Tranent mural team will travel to Geneva to take part in the UNCRC's Day of General Discussion on Children's Rights and the Environment.

**Resources:**

- Children's Parliament StreetsAhead Tranent webpage.  
<http://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/streetsahead-tranent.html>
- Live blog site documenting the StreetsAhead Tranent project.

### 3. Ensuring children's voices are heard in decisions around their social and political landscape

In September 2015, Scottish Ministers appointed an independent review of the Scottish planning system. The authors were tasked with providing a 'root and branch' review, and encouraged to explore game-changing ideas for radical reform of the system. They were asked to focus on six key themes: development planning, housing delivery, infrastructure, development management, community engagement and leadership, resources and skills.

In May 2016, the independent review of the Scottish Planning system was published, containing a series of recommendations which will be used to inform the development of a future Scottish Government programme of further planning reform. Recommendation 48 explicitly makes reference to Article 12 of the UNCRC<sup>10</sup> and recommends the introduction of a statutory duty to consult children and young people in the preparation of Local Development Plans.

The full recommendation is as follows:

*A new statutory right for young people to be consulted on the development plan should be introduced. This would engender much stronger participation in place planning to realise the terms of Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is also important that active citizenship is underpinned by education – place planning should be built into the Curriculum for Excellence and the Place Standard should guide much wider discussions on place in schools. Community council membership could be transformed where involvement of young people is a requirement rather than an exception. A mechanism for direct engagement between young people and elected members which focuses on place is also recommended. Training will be required in this area as well as a measure for monitoring inclusion.<sup>11</sup>*

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/crc.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Pg. 39. Beveridge, Biberbach & Hamilton (2016) Empowering Planning to Deliver Great Places: An independent review of the Scottish planning system (<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00500946.pdf>)

Whilst the Scottish Government has agreed in principle with many of the recommendations of the review<sup>12</sup>, it has not yet responded in relation to recommendation 48.

**Resources:**

- Empowering Planning to Deliver Great Places: An independent review of the Scottish planning system - [www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00500946.pdf](http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00500946.pdf)
- Review of Planning - Scottish Government response  
[www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00502867.pdf](http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00502867.pdf)

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<sup>12</sup> Scottish Government (2016) Review of Planning Scottish Government response  
(<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00502867.pdf>)