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How can the EU children's rights strategy live up to the expectations of citizen children?

**Children, Citizenship and Europe:
Listening to marginalized children in Wales and France**



The Centre
for researching
children and young people's
participation and empowerment

How can the EU children's rights strategy live up to the expectations of citizen children?

- **The context**
- **What we did in this project**
- **Intro to citizen children**
- **Findings: themes and processes**
- **Standard of Living**
- **Education**
- **What now?**

Context

NGO

“EU leaders have finally recognised that children are European citizens too” (Euronet 23.10.07)

EU

“solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child”. Treaty of Lisbon Art 3.3

Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child
The Charter of Fundamental Rights

Academic

What is children’s citizenship?

A lived experience of rights, responsibilities,
respect and membership

(Lister 2008)

What we did in this project

PAR by 6 children's research groups

54 children, aged 5-13

- Gypsy Traveller,
- Young Carer,
- Disabled,
- Looked After
- Minority Ethnic
- Refugee

Thanks to Save the Children,
Barnardos and
Swansea Local Authority
who have all
supported the groups in Wales.

50% of children in Wales, 50% in France.
65% were girls and 35% were boys.

What we did in this project

Usually met 5 times each

In school, residential and play settings

Participatory and action activities including:

- Performance
- Art
- Group discussions
- Site Tours
- Reflection
 - Video

What rights, respect, responsibilities?

And for who?

Who are we these citizen children?

For example:

Zoë – Brothers and stabilizers

50 cent – Houses and hitting

What do we think about citizenship?

THEMES

Play	UNCRC articles 31, 15
Giving - Receiving Care	Preamble, 6
Participation and Decision Making	12, 13
Protection Prevention Violence Respect	Preamble, 19
Family / good alternative home life	9,10, 20, 25
Standard of living: food, clothes, house	26, 27
Education	28, 29

All these themes were discussed by all the groups

What do we think about citizenship?

THEMES

UNCRC articles

Rights and protection in (un) paid work	12, 32, 36
Discrimination and cultural differences	2, 30
Gypsy Traveller, Minority Ethnic, Disabled Children, Young Carers	
Good governance	3 ?
Gypsy Traveller, Minority Ethnic, Looked After	
Special help for disabled children	23
Disabled Children, Young Carers, Gypsy Travellers	
Special help for refugees e.g. a house	22
Refugees only	

What do we think about citizenship?

PROCESSES

Participation

Respect

Resources

UNCRC articles

Article 12

Preamble, 19

Various

Responsibilities

Look after and care for ourselves

Contribute to group, look after things

Work/learn/care for others

Do as you are told

Show respect

who?

GT & YC

All

All

All

All

How do we think about citizenship?

All of those themes, apart from *responsibilities*, are mentioned in one or more of

The Communication

The European Parliament Response

The Charter of Fundamental Rights

So to judge whether they live up to expectations we need to look at the details

Standard of Living – Child Poverty

Education – The Charter

How do we think about citizenship?

Standard of Living: Food

« La nourriture : pour agrandir, pour l'énergie, pour la santé, pour le sport, pour maigrir ou grandir. »

Food: for growing, for energy, for health, for sport, to slim or to grow.
For the whole world.

« C'est qu'elle a le droit de boire à l'école et pas nous ! »
It's that she has the right to drink at school and we don't

How do we think about citizenship?

Standard of Living: Food

Resources:

- Accessible vending machines.
- Workers and friends who remind you to eat
- Enough money for food, or cheaper food in the shops
- Ingredients so that you can make food
- Parents and workers who make food.

Responsibilities:

- Planting and gathering food from the garden or farm
- Going shopping, Preparing Food,
- Laying the table, Serving Food, Washing up
- Looking after other children's bottles

How do we think about citizenship?

Education

To enjoy creative and sporting activities in Education

« About the same responsibilities, everyone has work. Adults have work. Children have work. Sometimes they have their work. The job/work of children is: to study. »

“C’est la maîtresse qui commande”

Resources

- Freedom to make choices in education, particularly when you have finished
- Creative and sporting activities to choose between
- Teachers who are kind, just and treat children equally
- Recognition of the other responsibilities they carry in addition to school work

•Responsibilities

To do your work

To show respect to children and teachers

To help clear up

How do we think about citizenship?

Education

What is the challenge to duty bearers?

To ensure all children in the world have access to resources to enable them: to take part in education that includes creative and sporting activities appropriate to their skill levels; to make some choices in education; to be respected at school; and to have their wider responsibilities recognised and taken into account.

What do we do about citizenship?

Three dimensions of change

improving citizenship understanding

improving rights frameworks

improving citizenship processes

What do we do about citizenship?

improving citizenship understanding

Understand children as citizens who
hold responsibilities and contribute

Equality **NOT** just solidarity

What do we do about citizenship?

improving rights frameworks

UNCRC Articles 12, 28, 29 not The Charter

Child choice, individual and no just compulsory

Or

Article 15.1: Everyone has the right to engage in work and to pursue a freely chosen or accepted occupation.

Plus collective bargaining...fair and just working conditions

NOT a lower standard

What do we do about citizenship?

improving citizenship processes

Fair Distribution of Food Resources: income

Think about whole range of EU

Economic policy

And

CAP

Why do we think about citizenship?

improving citizenship experiences

Understanding, frameworks and processes

but also monitoring

Use rights indicators which include processes

Participation – Resources - Respect

Apply these indicators in every field

political and economic and social