Towards the Child Friendly City

Children’s rights in the built environment
International conference of the European Network for Child Friendly Cities

Bristol, England
27-29 November, 2019

Book of Abstracts
Scientific Committee

Abstracts and other submissions were assessed by a committee* of specialists in play, urban planning, and children’s environments:

Dr. Maria Nordström, Visiting Senior Researcher and Associate Professor at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (Chair).

Jeanette Fich Jespersen, MA, Head of the KOMPAN Play Institute (KPI), Denmark.

Dr. Matluba Khan, Research Associate in Evaluation Research and Public Health, Institute of Health Equity, University College London, and co-founder of A Place in Childhood CiC, Edinburgh, Scotland.

Dr. Jenny Wood, Research Associate, School of Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure and Society, Heriot-Watt University, and co-founder of A Place in Childhood CiC, Edinburgh, Scotland

Adrian Voce, MA, President, European Network for Child Friendly Cities.

*Members of the committee submitting papers to the conference were recused from discussions and decisions about their own abstracts.

Board

Adrian Voce, MA, OBE (president)

Jeanette Fich Jespersen, MA, Head of the KOMPAN Play Institute (KPI), Denmark (vice president).

Dr. Maria Nordström, Visiting Senior Researcher and Associate Professor at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (chair of the scientific committee).

Professor Josip Grgurić, Professor of Paediatrics, University of Zagreb, School of Medicine, Zagreb, Croatia.

Dr. Darijana Hahn, Lecturer in cultural anthropology, Protestant University of Applied Sciences, Hamburg, Germany.

Marianne Labre, Social worker and play policy strategist, City of Ghent, Belgium
Introduction

Dr. Maria Nordström, chair of the scientific committee
Adrian Voce, president, European Network for Child Friendly Cities

Building a conference around a call for papers is something of a leap of faith. Who will respond? Will they address our themes? Will there be enough submissions, of sufficient quality, to populate the programme.

We hope you will agree that in this case our faith has been justified. Indeed, our greatest challenge has been to decide which submissions we could not include. It is no exaggeration to say that we could have filled a five-day conference with the proposals we have received for this first in our new series of independently-curated child friendly city conferences.

But five days is too long for a conference, even given the enthusiasm and commitment of the child-friendly city movement. We hope that those whose submissions are not included will therefore forgive us.

By the same token, we hope that all our delegates – speakers and others – will be equally understanding of the decision to include as many presentations as we could manage. This is a real conference, where the majority of those attending will be presenting their work in some way.

This means that the programme is very full, and we encourage you to be discerning in your choice of sessions. This book of abstracts is to help you in those choices.

Some practical notes:

- This document is for conference delegates only, to assist you in navigating the programme, and for your further reference after the event. Please respect this and do not share it more widely.
- As a conference resource, rather than a full publication, the copy-editing and proof-reading is of a limited standard. Please bear this in mind, and be understanding of the fact that many of our contributors are writing in a second language.
- There has not been time to compile a table of contents. The abstracts are organised in alphabetical order of the first-named presenter’s surname.
- Each abstract appears with the number of the programme session where the presentation will be given. Please check this against the final published programme, and if there is a discrepancy – trust the programme!
- Although many papers will be presented by academic researchers, this is not a purely academic conference: practitioners and advocates are an equally important part of the mix. Thus, some of the contents are more accurately described as summaries rather than abstracts and do not take the form of academic papers.
To save cost, and paper, this document will not be printed. Please either download it to your mobile device or laptop, or use the venue’s wi-fi to refer to it during the conference.

You will have an opportunity to select your choices of sessions via an online questionnaire before the conference begins, and we encourage you to do so, but to also be flexible and think about a second or even third preference for each parallel session, as some of the breakout rooms are of limited capacity.

We hope you enjoy the breadth, diversity and quality of the work represented here – by both research abstracts and practice summaries – as much as we have enjoyed assessing and curating them; and that they will provide a helpful guide to the conference.

We each want to thank our friends and colleagues on the scientific committee – Jeanette Fich Jespersen, Dr. Jenny Wood, and Dr. Matluba Khan – whose work on this programme has been invaluable; and, also, our fellow board members, Marianne Labre, Dr. Darijana Hahn, and Professor Josip Grgurić, whose commitment and support over a period of transition has enabled our network to begin a new chapter with confidence and optimism for the future.

We must also thank our partners in the conference – Bristol City Council, Playing Out, A Place in Childhood, Room 13 Hareclive, the Architecture Centre, Movium, the University of Bristol, the University of Bath Spa, Colvine Communications and Playful Planet. Without the collaboration of these different organisations, and the mostly voluntary help and support of many people who work for them, this conference would not have been possible.

Mostly, we want to thank those who submitted abstracts and proposals – whether included in the final programme or not – and all delegates to the conference. You have rewarded our faith.

A conference is only as good as the people who come together for it. We are confident that this one will be excellent.

Enjoy!

Maria Nordström and Adrian Voce,
on behalf of the scientific committee
Which indicators can guide the way to a healthy urban childhood?

Reflections on the Uppsala Health Summit, 2019

Petter Åkerblom

Parallel session 4A

Abstract

About 200 stakeholders from all over the world and from different policy areas, sectors, and geographies, gathered at the summit Healthy Urban Childhoods 8–9 October 2019 in Uppsala, Sweden, for a dialogue on how to take the next steps beyond visions and statements to create healthy, child-friendly urban environments.

The summit was arranged to provide an arena that could be truly helpful in development of input for interventions based on what we indeed know about child-friendly city planning, well-functioning urban playscapes, the health situation among children, key factors that could generate physical literacy, and what characterises suitable and attractive urban environments that influence children’s learning, joy, and pleasure.

Each one of the nine workshops at the summit ended in conclusions and recommendations for different levels of society based on actions that could lead to strategies and action plans useful when strengthening child friendly city planning, children’s and adolescent’s abilities to influence urban development in different parts of the globe, considering the city as an environment to live and thrive in, and including both children’s and adults’ needs.

The presentation is focussed on initial findings from some of the workshops, and is reflecting the following:

1) How knowledge about the impact and importance of outdoor play, stay, and contact with nature for a healthy child development can be used in urban planning, including examples of urban ecosystems required for nature-based play.

2) How to stimulate teaching combined with outdoor activities we know has measurable and positive effects on academic performance and achievements as well as on health, wellbeing, and personal and social development. Is city farms and school gardens a viable model to bring children in an urbanised world closer to knowledge about the “producing landscape” and an effective and sustainable way to learn about where food comes from?

3) Possible key factors that could be used to transform qualities of an urban childhood into a built environment. Today private interests are gaining an increasing role in the urban planning context and both formal and constitutional power of the municipalities can be undermined by private actors with their focus on securing private investments.
But when it comes to ecosystem services, there is a praxis with indicators (at least in Sweden) that the builders must fulfil in the bidding process to satisfy the landowner’s demands. What kind of indicators are adequate in a correspondingly way for promoting healthy sustainable built solutions based on children’s needs for healthy, child-friendly built urban environments?

This paper is based on impressions from the Uppsala Health Summit 2019 “Urban Healthy Childhoods”, Uppsala 8-9 October 2019. The Pre-conference report, including videos from the plenary sessions, is available at https://www.uppsalahealthsummit.se/summit-2019/

About the presenter

Petter Åkerblom is a senior lecturer in Landscape Architecture at the Department of Urban and Rural Development, Division of Landscape Architecture, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU). He is the programme committee chair of the Uppsala Health Summit, 8-9 October 2019, on Healthy Urban Childhoods. Petter is a former national coordinator for outdoor urban space for children and young people at the Swedish think-tank, Movium.
Find your village

A systemic response to supporting migrant families with young children

Dr. Tom Allport and Samira Musse

Parallel session 4C

Abstract

The experiences of babies, toddlers and young children affect how their brains grow, and how they learn. Refugee families may experience specific challenges which affect wellbeing and limit children’s opportunities. The communities where people live affect how happy and safe children and families feel, and how connected or isolated they become.

Somali mothers in Bristol have told us about the multiple challenges that may limit children’s opportunities for early play and social experiences. For families coming from societies where child-rearing is communal or collective, it may be especially important to consider what helps build a sense of community where they now live.

We have designed a peer-support volunteer intervention, Find your village, combining (we hope) the best of Somali/African and European/Western ways of bringing up children. This aims to improve parents’ confidence and children’s experience, and improve access to local agencies. We are also using innovative Walkabouts, to explore the ways that disadvantaged migrant communities can influence statutory decision-making; and filmmaking, to illustrate refugees’ experiences of adversity and resilience.

This paper presentation will reflect on:
- how neighbourhood and city systems can respond to the needs of migrant families
- what methodologies can support social and environmental change
- how video/film narratives might contribute to understanding and action in contexts of social disadvantage.

About the presenters

Dr Tom Allport is a Consultant Community Paediatrician, Systemic Practitioner and Honorary Senior Lecturer in the Centre for Academic Child Health at the University of Bristol. His academic background is in the individual and family experience of disability, and ways to improve children and families’ outcomes, especially in their participation. His recent priority has been to understand and improve the outcomes of pre-school children in families from cultures where ‘it takes a village to raise a child’, currently with a grant from the Brigstow Institute to explore refugee resilience narratives. In the NHS, working for the Community Children’s Health Partnership (CCHP) led by Sirona CIC, he has a locality patch in the multi-cultural Bristol inner city.

Ms Samira Musse works for the Bristol Somali Resource Centre.
Empowering young children and their caregivers in urban environments

A case study of Istanbul, Turkey

Presenter: Ozlemnur Ataol
Co-authors: Sukanya Krishnamurthy and Pieter van Wesemael

Parallel session 3B

Abstract

There has been growing attention on children’s well-being since the UNCRC in 1989. The definition of well-being of children has shifted from health to broader requirements, including their participation in decision-making about their environments.

There are particular issues here for younger children (birth-5). Although they are the most silent citizens in decisions about it, the urban environment may influence their long-term developmental outcomes (physical, emotional, and mental). Their interaction with the built environment is limited and controlled by their parents. Therefore, caregivers’ perceptions and mobility can determine the child’s quality of life.

Children’s well-being and the role of the built environment revolve around three domains:

1. caregiver’s perception about safety
2. mobility of caregivers
3. perceived quality of public spaces and services.

In order to present an overview through these domains, several interrelated questions were asked:

I. What is the perception of caregivers about the safety of streets, the neighbourhood, and the park, and what is the relationship between this perception and where their child is allowed to play?
II. How do caregivers move within and around their neighbourhood, and how does this mobility affect that of their children?
III. How do caregivers perceive the quality of public space and services in neighbourhoods, and how would they change their neighbourhoods?

Thus, the paper aims to understand how young children and their caregivers claim and use public spaces within their neighbourhoods, reports their lived experience from public spaces, and identifies what infrastructural changes they would like to see within their neighbourhood.

By developing a focus on the marginalized position of caregivers and young children in Istanbul, this case study constitutes an overview of the challenges that young children and their caregivers face in daily life within their neighbourhoods. The paper is populated by the
findings of interviews and a participatory workshop with mothers of young children from the Beyoğlu and Sariyer Districts of Istanbul.

About the presenter

Ozlemnur Ataol is a PhD candidate at the Eindhoven University of Technology where she researches the role of urban planning and design in the child-focused vision of urban environment and public space. She focuses on empowering children in the decision-making process of urban planning and design. Ataol holds a master’s degree from Istanbul Technical University. She majored in architectural design. Her master’s thesis contributes to the knowledge of Istanbul’s public spaces in the context of Istinye District by studying visible or invisible boundaries in public spaces and the effects of these boundaries on usage. She graduated from Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University with a bachelor’s degree in Architecture in 2010.
Encouraging schools to take up children’s right to play

Presenter: Dr. Cathy Atkinson
Co-author: Dr Charmain Hobbs

Parallel session 4D

Abstract

Children regard playing as one of the most important aspects of their lives. They value time, freedom, and places to play (International Play Association [IPA], 2010).

The importance of play to children’s physical, emotional, social and intellectual wellbeing and health has been well researched and documented (Lester & Russell, 2008, 2010). Yet opportunities for play are diminishing, especially those that are child-directed.

In particular, play within school is being squeezed by a focus on targets and outcomes (Maynard & Chicken, 2010) and school break times have reduced significantly in both primary and secondary schools (Baines & Blatchford, 2019). Within this context, the Division of Educational and Child Psychology (DECP) of the British Psychological Society (BPS), recently published a position statement on play (Hobbs et al., 2019).

Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) advocates for children’s right to access play and leisure opportunities, with General Comment No. 17 (UNCRC, 2013) highlighting the major role that schools and educational establishments have in fulfilling article 31 obligations. Specifically, schools should consider the physical environment, structure of the day, school curricula and educational pedagogy as important factors in promoting play access. This specifically relates to the promotion of free play activities, with Goodhall and Atkinson (2019) concluding that even very young children perceive adult-directed, play-based activities as work.

Play access can be particularly problematic for more vulnerable children, including those living in poverty or those with special educational needs, and this can be potentially facilitated within the school day. First, however, schools need to recognise the importance of play for children of all ages (Atkinson, Bond, Goodhall, & Woods, 2017).

The paper takes a children’s rights perspective and advocates for the centrality of play to children’s experience within and outside school. In particular, it seeks to promote access to play for all children whatever their circumstances and stands against the use of play as a sanction for misbehaviour or uncompleted school work. The DECP would welcome further debate on working with schools and their communities to take up a rights-led agenda for play for all children.
References


UNCRC. (2013). *General comment No. 17 on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts (art. 31)*. Geneva: UNCRC.

About the presenter and co-author

**Dr. Cathy Atkinson** is curriculum director, Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology at the University of Manchester, and a Health and Care Professions Council registered educational psychologist.

**Dr. Charmian Hobbs** is an educational psychologist who has worked for many years in local authorities and whose current focus is on developing the practice of narrative therapy within educational psychology. She co-authored this paper on behalf of the BPS, Division of Educational and Child Psychology (DECP).
Frog Marsh

Engaging the creativity of children and communities in placemaking around their local school

Lucy Badrocke, Sarah Jones-Morris, and Bahbak Hashemi Nezhad, with the Friends of Bannerman Road

Field Trip

Abstract

The Friends of Bannerman Road (FoB) support Bannerman Road Community Academy and the experiences of children attending the school, with a particular focus on art and music. As a group, we have specialisms in architecture, design, sustainable transport, curating and youth work. We want children to have enriching experiences, opportunities to engage with professional artists, and understand the impact of creative practice on the development on the urban environment.

In 2017, FoB raised £57k from the Road Safety Trust to commission artist Bahbak Hashemi Nezhad to create a new design for a pedestrian space outside the school. The space was created through a road closure, initiated by a government scheme to encourage more people to walk, cycle, and improve the health and wellbeing of children and residents.

The development process has engaged children and residents in a discussion about the potential of creative practice in public space. The artist has worked on a number of ideas within the design, including identity and comfort, which respond to the brief developed as part of the consultation process – to enact positive change by creating a safe and healthy environment that brings people together and nurtures communities.

The design is playful, using bold colours, integrated seating, and a small stage that can be used for events. The artist proposed giving the area a new name, which will be painted on a railway bridge that arches over the space. The name, Frog Marsh, is the historic name for this area of Bristol, and was decided through a public vote.

We have worked with a number of partners including Bristol City Council, Network Rail and Sustrans, in order to ensure that the project is embedded in planning and development processes, and has impact beyond the area. Construction was completed in September, and a public programme launched in autumn 2019. This celebrates the space and the contribution of all the participants, and demonstrates the opportunity that the new area provides for social and event activity.
About the field trip leaders

**Lucy Badrocke** is a freelance curator and producer with over ten years’ experience in leading and supporting contemporary art projects, including exhibitions, publications, offsite commissions, and engagement programmes that aim to provide the widest possible access for audiences. At Arnolfini, she led key projects including: a solo exhibition, offsite commission and publication by acclaimed artist Richard Long; the first UK solo exhibition by Egyptian artist Basim Magdy; an exhibition and publication by Willem de Rooij; and a solo exhibition and new commissions by Turner Prize nominee Josephine Pryde. She co-curated *The Promise*, which included offsite commissions by Assemble, Jenifer Kabat, Kate Newby, Jeremiah Day and Oscar Tuazon.

**Sarah Jones-Morris** is a multi-award-winning director and Chartered Landscape Architect with an MA in Urban Design. After 20 years’ experience in established professional practice, she established Bristol-based Landsmith Associates in 2017. Her experience ranges from landscape and health-led masterplans to public realm regeneration, to co-design and digital placemaking. Her work ranges from dinosaur parks and nature reserves to visioning strategies for universities and town councils. She has had various roles; lead designer, project manager, contract administrator, mentor, community and stakeholder facilitator, design critic, event-organiser and tea maker. She is also the Chair of the Landscape Institute South West, a panel member for the Bristol Urban Design Forum and Creating Excellence South West. She was recently selected at one of Design Council's Leading Women in Design and is one of the UK Ambassador’s to Hush City, a citizen science research programme on noise pollution.

**Bahbak Hashemi-Nezhad’s** research interests centre on play theory and de-familiarisation – the idea that using experimental and play based-approaches can change perspectives of public space. His practice engages the public with the design and decision-making processes, to create works that range from neighbourhood plans and spaces to recipes, games, images and objects. Hashemi-Nezhad has exhibited and conducted workshops extensively both in the UK and internationally, including with the Serpentine Galleries, London; Liverpool Biennial; Shanghai Biennale; Tokyo Design Week, MACBA, Barcelona and LCCA, Riga. He is the recipient of a number of international design awards, research grants, fellowships, and is part of Theatrum Mundi/Global Street, an international interdisciplinary research project from the London School of Economics, which brings architects, designers and artists together to re-imagine public space. Hashemi-Nezhad holds an MA in Design Products from the Royal College of Art, London where he currently leads a Masters platform focusing on experimental participatory design methods.
‘Doing’ play sufficiency

Mike Barclay and Ben Tawil, with Samantha Harman and Tracey Jobber

Parallel session 1D

Abstract

In 2012 Wales became the first country in the world to legislate specifically in support of children’s right to play, when the Welsh Government introduced the Welsh Play Sufficiency Duty. This duty requires all local authorities in Wales to produce an assessment of children’s opportunities for play every three years; and in between those times take action to secure sufficient opportunities for play, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Other countries in the United Nations may not have a Play Sufficiency Duty like Wales but they all have General Comment 17 on Article 31 of the UNCRC, which recommends that state parties introduce legislation to support children’s right to play based on the principle of sufficiency (an endorsement of the pioneering work undertaken in Wales).

Since starting their first play sufficiency assessment in 2012, Ben and Mike have spent the last seven years working for /with a range of partners producing robust research to inform play sufficiency assessments, and designing and implementing actions to address the subsequent findings with a view to securing play sufficiency. Throughout this process one of the principles has been supporting children’s active involvement in analysing their opportunities for play and ensuring that adults pay attention to children’s actual lived experiences of playing.

In this workshop, Ben and Mike will share the theoretical framework that has underpinned their approach to ‘doing’ play sufficiency. Participants will then explore the scope of play sufficiency assessments: who needs to be involved in the process; in what order; and some of the ways in which this might be achieved. Participants will then be introduced to some of the findings from research with children and asked to consider the implications for national and local government policy and practice.

The workshop will draw on examples of ‘doing’ play sufficiency research in both Wales (where there is a statutory duty) and England (where there is not). In particular it will focus on the facilitator’s experiences of ‘doing’ play sufficiency in Wrexham (North East Wales) and Sandwell (in the middle of England), where Ludicology are currently supporting the local authority’s play team, via a knowledge transfer process, to produce their first play sufficiency assessment (which may also be the first of its kind in England). Ben and Mike will be joined by Samantha Harman and Tracey Jobber from the Sandwell play team, who will also be sharing their experiences of ‘doing’ play sufficiency so far.

This workshop will focus on conference theme 2: activism and children’s voices and cross cutting theme B: scaling up. The format will consist of short presentations, round table discussions, table-top activities and possibly some displays of work/evidence produced by
children. Participants would ideally be sat around small tables. A projector and screen will be required and possibly some wall space for display materials.

About the presenters

Ludicology exists to promote a better understanding of children’s play and the ways in which adults can support it. Ben Tawil and Mike Barclay (based in the UK) formed Ludicology to share their knowledge and experiences of supporting children’s play over the past 20 years and to work with other parents, practitioners and policy makers to improve conditions for playing. Their work involves advising on the design of spaces and neighbourhoods for play, developing play centred policies and procedures, involving children in research to inform play interventions and delivering training to adults. Ben and Mike have given talks and delivered training on the topics of play sufficiency, playwork and risk management to a broad range of audiences and their work has featured in play sector publications, academic journals and edited books.
Play sufficiency and the roles of playwork

Mike Barclay and Ben Tawil, with Gareth Stacey

Parallel session 3D

Abstract

This presentation will provide an introduction to the Welsh Play Sufficiency Duty and explore the roles of the playwork profession in helping to secure sufficient opportunities for children’s play.

The concept of play sufficiency is clearly not just about playwork or even play provision. Rather it is concerned with cultivating more favourable conditions for play throughout all aspects of children’s lives.

However, the process of assessing children’s opportunities for play requires adults to account for the ways in which they impact, directly and indirectly, on children’s ability to find time and space for play (Lester and Russell, 2013 & 2014). This includes accounting for the ways in which playwork contributes towards securing sufficiency, producing evidence of what it is playworkers do to help. Additionally, these assessments may reveal ways in which playwork might further develop to better respond to children’s right to play.

Using examples from Local Authority play sufficiency assessments, the presentation will identify some of the ways in which playwork can contribute at both a local government level, working across policy areas, and operationally within local communities to cultivate more favourable conditions for play.

The presentation will conclude by suggesting that, in the context of play sufficiency, the role of playwork might best be understood as a play centred approach to community development where more playing, and all its associated benefits, is the primary outcome (Tawil and Barclay, 2018) and that, as a consequence, playwork may be complimentary to good planning practices and compensatory for poor ones.

About the presenters

Ludicology exists to promote a better understanding of children’s play and the ways in which adults can support it. Ben Tawil and Mike Barclay formed Ludicology to share their knowledge and experiences of supporting children’s play in the UK over the past 20, and to work with other parents, practitioners and policy makers to improve conditions for playing. Their work involves advising on the design of spaces and neighbourhoods for play, developing play centred policies and procedures, involving children in research to inform play interventions and delivering training to adults. Ben and Mike have given talks and delivered training on the topics of play sufficiency, playwork and risk management to a broad range of audiences and their work has featured in play sector publications, academic journals and edited books.
What we have learnt from three cycles of play sufficiency in Wrexham, Wales

Changes that make a difference

Mike Barclay and Ben Tawil, with Gareth Stacey

Poster presentation

Abstract

Since 2012, Ben and Mike have been involved in each of the three cycles of Play Sufficiency in Wrexham, Mike as Play Lead for the Local Authority in 2013 and again in 2016, Ben as consultant on behalf of the local University (Glyndwr) and again in 2019 where Ben and Mike as Ludicology were contracted by Gareth Stacey (the current Play Lead) to carry out aspects of the most recent assessment. This poster presentation addresses specific theme 2: ‘Activism and Children’s Voices’. Each cycle of Play Sufficiency in Wrexham has paid attention to and taken account of children’s voices and of the voices of adults that have a response/ability for children and their play in different ways and for specific evidence-based reasons. The poster will document three cycles of Play Sufficiency assessment, action planning and implementation, how they have contributed to children’s satisfaction with their opportunities for play and what we have learnt through this process. Whilst the poster deals to varying degrees with a number of the cross-cutting themes, A, C and D, it deals most predominantly with B: ‘Scaling Up’, in that a coordinated and robust approach to play sufficiency assessment, considered as a process of ongoing research and action in strong partnerships with both communities and local government infrastructures, is essential to and makes possible the cultivation of the temporal, spatial and psychological conditions needed for children to play (Barclay and Tawil, 2013).

About the presenters

Ludicology exists to promote a better understanding of children’s play and the ways in which adults can support it. Ben Tawil and Mike Barclay formed Ludicology to share their knowledge and experiences of supporting children’s play in the UK over the past 20 years and to work with other parents, practitioners and policy makers to improve conditions for playing. Their work involves advising on the design of spaces and neighbourhoods for play, developing play centred policies and procedures, involving children in research to inform play interventions and delivering training to adults. Ben and Mike have given talks and delivered training on the topics of play sufficiency, playwork and risk management to a broad range of audiences and their work has featured in play sector publications, academic journals and edited books.

Gareth Stacey has worked across three Local Authorities in Wales in various play development roles, in Flintshire first, then Conwy and currently in Wrexham where he is working as Head of the Play and Youth Support Team.
School spaces and parents’ associations in two Roman neighbourhoods

Giulia Barra

Parallel session 4C

Abstract

The city of Rome suffers a series of problems in the management of public spaces and welfare policies that negatively affect the lives of its most vulnerable residents, among them children. Decades of cutbacks, the insidious presence of corruption, and the semi-legal condition of most of its urban fabric (Clough-Marinaro, Thomassen, 2014; Cellamare, 2010) determine shifting relationships between state and population. Public schools are one of the most visible examples of how post-crisis urban policies interact with grassroots efforts to negotiate the use of common spaces (Mattei, 2011).

In my PhD fieldwork I focus on two public primary schools where parents engage in the planning and organisation of school spaces for extracurricular activities. In the first one, where the presence of foreign children is high, the parents’ association manages yard and basement for children and adults’ activities, even contributing to integrate migrants in the community. The school manager and local administration encourage these practices, and their example is followed in other neighbourhoods. In the other school, located in a gentrifying area where spaces for children are shrinking, a sector of parents struggle to manage school spaces. Even if the community supports them, the school management and the local administration are suspicious.

These examples show how ‘subsidiary governance’ in schools involves citizens in managing the spaces that children use, but also implicates arbitrariness, since the outcome depends on the population and management of each school. The risk of school segregation in Italy is rising, and researchers are studying the growing inequalities in the public-school system (Pacchi, Ranci, 2017; Cognetti, 2012). However, few detailed studies exist of these processes in each local context. As a researcher in planning and teacher in a Roman public school, I aim to contribute to the debate on the socio-spatial dimensions of childhood in the city (Gill, 2007; Valentine, 2004; Holloway, Valentine, 2000) by observing how parents compensate for the shortfalls of public policies. In a city where the gap between state and population is widening, and where spaces are increasingly segregated (Satta 2012), I will point out the interactions between the schools and their neighbourhoods, showing how they reverberate on the spaces produced by/for children in the city.
References

Pacchi C., Ranci C. (2017), White flight a Milano. La segregazione sociale ed etnica nelle scuole dell’obbligo. Milano, Politecnico.
Valentine, G. (2004), Public Space and the Culture of Childhood. Routledge

About the presenter

Giulia Barra is an engineer, secondary school teacher, and PhD student in urban planning at Sapienza University of Rome. Her research focuses on the relation between children and public space, and the role of schools in the social life of the city. She is one of the founders of DAUhaus collective, a group of engineers who study and experiment with urban self-management, through self-construction and participatory planning with adults and children.

She has been part of many interdisciplinary grassroots planning initiatives and collective research processes, such as the activist research group Emidio di Treviri about the post-earthquake management in central Italy (2016-2017). She recently contributed to a children-friendly grassroot design process of a public square of her neighbourhood in Rome.
**Born Thriving**

Policy and Practices for infant, toddler, and caregiver neighbourhood planning in Tirana, Albania

Simon Battisti

Parallel session 1A

---

**Abstract**

This paper will present Qendra Marrëdhënëie’s recent work on a neighbourhood planning for infants, toddlers, and their caregivers (ITCs), entitled “Born Thriving.”

Born Thriving is a flexible but comprehensive model created for local governments to “mainstream” healthy mobility and play for young children and their caregivers into all functions of city planning. We use the term mainstreaming to describe the process of mutual learning, experimentation, and refinement through which the values of ITC planning are absorbed into the collective knowledge and practices of city departments attending to the built environment. Born Thriving’s aim is to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes of ITCs using the means cities tend to have most readily at hand with minimal administrative complexity: parks and greening, maintenance, and public works departments. It is precisely these departments’ control over the “everyday” and relatively inexpensive materials that allows them to scale across an entire city without the budgetary scope of a mega-project.

Born Thriving was developed with the municipality of Tirana, Albania, over the past sixteen months in a real-time feedback loop of research, study tours, workshops, and temporary street closures, pop-ups, and public surveys.

In the case of Tirana, we have proposed to transform primary school campuses into public parks throughout the city. Like many cities, Tirana’s school campuses represent a large, open, and relatively evenly distributed public asset. The school parks will become the nuclei of the “Lagjet e Shkolles” (School Neighbourhood); which combines the high-quality green play space of the school park with a network of safe and stimulating walking and cycling routes for ITCs connecting to the school. So far 55 “Lagjet e Shkolles” have been identified to be rolled out in phases over four years.

The School Neighbourhood project addresses two key areas of importance for early childhood development and caregiving: safe mobility and access to quality play. Constant exposure to motor-vehicles is a primary factor negatively affecting the health and wellbeing of ITCs. Even on low-volume residential streets, private vehicles both parked and moving eliminate places for play and represent a constant source of worry for caregivers. Infants’ and toddlers’ lungs are especially vulnerable to environmental harms like air and noise pollution. Walkable streets keep families out of cars too: in countries like Albania, where 96% of women are
involved in caregiving compared to 36% of men, not having to rely on a car or a more mobile male family member to carry out daily tasks makes a world of difference.

And in terms of quality play, access to quality green space for play has been shown to significantly improve cognitive development in young children. Born Thriving calls for the planting of mature trees to establish shade coverage immediately, the replacement of surfaces to maximize rainwater infiltration, and where possible to double as play features for babies, like large sand areas and topography.

Safe mobility and access to quality play certainly aren’t automatic knowledge. Born Thriving’s project of mainstreaming is underpinned by comprehensive ITC neighbourhood design guidelines, and a parallel, fully interlinked evaluation and monitoring toolkit of 40 indicators. The indicators help a city to understand what matters to ITCs within the built environment and how to measure it. And the design guidelines in turn explain in detail how to build it, should it be found to be lacking.

In total Born Thriving attempts to make visible the needs of infants, toddlers, and their caregivers to city staff, while providing the tools to address those needs flexibly and inexpensively. Because it was developed between India and Tirana, the Born Thriving approach pays special attention to the difficult fact that in many parts of the world long-term, and large-scale planning just isn’t possible. But the scale of the babies’ world is small, and that scale becomes the greatest strength of the project; that city-wide change can happen through incremental repetition of conditions that make experiences that count to families, like a safe, quiet walk to the park in the afternoon.

References

1. Born Thriving is a three-year initiative supported by the Bernard van Leer Foundation’s Urban95 program, in collaboration with the municipality of Tirana.
5. Kristine Engemann, Carsten Bøcker Pedersen, Lars Arge, Constantinos Tsirogiannis, Preben Bo Mortensen, Jens-Christian Svenning. Residential green space in childhood is associated with lower risk of psychiatric disorders from adolescence into adulthood. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 2019
Voiceless political engagement

Potentials of play for rebellion and resistance

Lucy Benson

Parallel session 4B

Abstract

Children and adults are in a continuous state of negotiation for public space. Adult fears about children’s subversions of adult systems arise as a theme of these negotiations. Children and young people frequently use public space noisily and in large groups, which is often interpreted as anti-social. Because children use public spaces differently from adults, their citizenship is also in negotiation.

Elements of children’s presence in public and their play can be seen as a form of ‘voiceless’ political engagement, because children are not using their voices in a manner which fits popular understandings of children’s participation. Although they do not always articulate or even understand the politics of their actions, children’s acts can still be seen as political, a means of constructing power relations. Could children’s play be a voiceless expression of revolt and resistance from a narrow construction of the meaning of ‘childhood’?

We have plenty to learn from children’s playful negotiations for public space and from their tactical rebellion from regulations and rules. I will follow Kallio & Hakli, Valentine and de Certeau to support my argument.

About the presenter

Lucy Benson is Head of Adventure Play at Islington Play Association, where she works with and for children in six adventure playgrounds. She recently co-authored a paper with Dr Rachel Rosen which was published in Children and Society - From Silence to Solidarity: Locating the Absent ‘Child Voice’ in the Struggle Against Benefit Sanctions. She holds an MA in Sociology of Childhood and Children’s Rights from UCL.
Towards the child-friendly city

The power of policy, process and practitioners

Dr. Kate Bishop

Opening plenary session

Abstract

More than 20 years on from its inception, the Child-Friendly-Cities (CFC) movement has gained a lot of ground but still has much further to travel to reach its significant goals. As we look around the world at international attempts to implement CFC, what inhibits progress and what will help to maintain momentum? Why does such a universally sound ambition for child-friendly cities struggle for recognition, respect and success?

This talk will briefly acknowledge and reflect on where we are with CFCs and then it will turn to focus on the strategic process of achieving quality urban environments for children and youth and the power of our roles as policymakers, practitioners and researchers in making these happen. It will discuss the complexities facing the ongoing implementation of CFC and some of the strategies for negotiating them as demonstrated around the world, ultimately making recommendations for the path ahead.

Kate is in the unusual position of having been a design practitioner, a senior policy and research officer in a Children’s Commission (State Government) and an academic. With an understanding of each of these sectors, their challenges and their ways of working, she will address two contemporary questions facing the ongoing CFC community: how can advocates for child-friendly urban planning and development do more to have their ideas adopted, to scale, by senior policymakers; and how can the CFC movement itself raise the level of priority given to the built environment in supporting children and young people?’

About the presenter

Dr. Kate Bishop is Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Built Environment at the UNSW, Sydney, Australia. Her background in environment-behaviour research underpins her teaching and research and her particular area of interest: children, youth and environments. She specialises in the research and design of environments for children with special needs; child and youth-friendly urban planning and design; and participatory methodologies with children and young people. Kate worked in private industry and government before becoming an academic.
Southampton Child friendly streets

Innovation and engagement with Sustrans’ street kit

Alex Bottrill, Benedicte Dubiez and Carolyn Ireland

Abstract

How do child-friendly cities ensure adherence to the fundamental principles of universal children’s rights, non-discrimination, inclusion, and accessibility for all, in the face of developmental and economic pressures?

In March 2018 Southampton City Council commissioned Sustrans to develop child friendly streets in Sholing through community engagement process in order to improve the routes between the local community hub and school. This project ran from March 2018 to March 2019, in 4 phases, on 4 locations. The aim was to create child friendly streets which feel safe and attractive for children to use, and encourage community activity, and informal play: an indicator of the quality and inclusivity of the public realm. Sustrans staff worked closely with the local authority and the local people running a series of workshops to co-design, trial and implement light-touch improvements to their neighbourhood.

For this purpose, Sustrans installed Sustrans street kit on the streets of Sholing over a whole year, moving it from street to street, from the forecourt of a school to the local cycle hub, creating and opportunity for children to play and adults to discuss how to improve the local streets. Local children and residents felt inspired and empowered in using their outdoor spaces, making changes, and children felt engaged and stimulated to play. Alex, Bene and Carolyn will present Southampton Child friendly streets, introducing how Sustrans street kit has helped engaging and transforming the local streets, engaged local residents, children and the local school. They will then take the audience to College Green and build benches with Sustrans street kit, demonstrating the value that intrigue has as an engagement tool, and the effect that a simple action of changing and adding colour to a street can have on the way people use it.

About the presenters

Alex Bottrill has 8 years’ experience in Urban Design and Masterplanning. His design approach and vision are responsive to the needs of local people and communities. He has been involved with a broad range of schemes with varying remits, but with a common theme of creating places for people, that balance the necessity to move with the ability to have vibrant, attractive streets, squares and public places, which reflect the communities that inhabit them. Alex particularly values an inter-disciplinary approach to projects that aims to better balance the demands of ‘place’ and ‘movement’ on the public realm. Alex has a particular strength on
public engagement, using innovative and interesting methods to involve local people in the decision making and design processes that will impact upon them.

**Benedicte Dubiez** has six years of urban design experience, with an MA in Architecture and Urban Sociology. She is a qualified architect and over the past four years has developed her practice around community engagement, participative design and advocacy planning in Paris, Bristol and Southampton, particularly in deprived neighbourhoods.

**Carolyn Ireland** has been part of the active travel team at Southampton City Council since 2017, with a primary focus on delivering community cycling events. Alongside contributing to the Sholing Child-Friendly Streets project Carolyn created Southampton’s “Community Street Closure” scheme which allows residents to close local streets up to once a week for child play and to borrow bikes, toys and signage free of charge.
Child friendly?

Teenagers’ everyday experiences of their urban neighbourhood

Dr. Jackie Bourke

Parallel session 4A

Abstract

“...look closely, and with as little previous expectation as possible, at the most ordinary scenes and events, and attempt to see what they mean”.

Jane Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities

Despite their increasing independent mobility, teenager’s right to access the built environment can be somewhat fraught and their presence in public space is not always welcome. The focus of this presentation is how teenagers experience the ‘ordinary scenes and events’ they encounter along the routes of their everyday walks through their urban neighbourhoods. Looking closely, as Jacobs suggests, at these ordinary moments, an insight into the role of design and architecture in shaping their mobility emerges. An exploration of the meaning associated with these everyday moments reveals teenagers’ perspectives on the tension between increasing independence, a sense of belonging and exclusionary practices in urban public space.

The presentation draws on two projects. Firstly, an art-based project working with teenagers aged 15 and 16 living in Dublin’s north inner city and suburbs. The participants used photography, collaborative drawing, walking fieldwork, map making and posters they hung on lampposts, to capture and communicate their everyday experiences of public space. Through their work the young people convey feelings of vulnerability and alienation as well as a sense of place and belonging, an inherent playfulness, and an acute awareness of both architectural detail and environmental neglect.

Secondly, an academic study into the efficacy of art-based methods to communicate teenagers’ experiences of urban public space to planning authorities. This study is located in Cabra, a 1930s inner Dublin suburb, originally built by Dublin Corporation to house working class families. Using creative mapping methods and child led walks, teenagers aged 15 and 16 capture their experience of routes they walk regularly through the neighbourhood on their way to school, to the shops and to the local sports centre. Through the maps the participants identify places and objects of significance which either enhance or impaire their experience, as well as conveying a sense of the social significance of their walks.

The presentation will look at creative mapping as a process to empower teenagers to explore and convey the details which comprise their experience of their urban environments. It will...
also discuss the value of child-led walks as a method to explore urban public space and how teenagers feel they are perceived within that context.

Finally, the presentation will describe the outcomes of a meeting with city planners, local politicians and community leaders during which the participants highlight the absence of young people’s voices in urban planning policy in Dublin and make proposals on how to actualise their views in future planning initiatives.

About the presenter

Jackie is a children’s rights advocate and a researcher with an interest in the lived urban environment. Using a range of creative methods, she works with children and teenagers to explore how they both shape and experience public space. She lectures in urban geography at the School of Geography, University College, Dublin. Her current research projects include *Communicating Teenager’s Everyday Geographies Using Arts Based Methods*, funded by the Irish Research Council. She is a member of the Children’s Research Network of Ireland and Northern Ireland, and is an occasional contributor to childinthecity.eu.
A tale of two developments

Marion Briggs

Parallel session 1A

Abstract

This is a comparison of two neighbouring developments in Deptford, South East London, a place with a rich history and a reputation for innovation and creativity. One development was built in the 1960’s, using the latest innovations in providing density, green space and child friendly areas. The other, Convoys Wharf, is going through the planning process now. I will contrast and compare them and examine how the two interplay. We’ll see in what ways policy makers and developers influence the creation of playable, child-friendly neighbourhoods and how the policies of the London Mayor and Local Authority are helping to raise awareness of what is actually required to make the newest development child friendly.

About the presenter

Marion Briggs lives in Greenwich, London and is working with a community group in neighbouring Deptford lobbying for adequate provision of play and informal leisure facilities for children and young people in a large development there. She has made representations for the Mayor’s new strategic plan for London, in association with other play and childhood experts and members of the GLA, to make it more child friendly. She has worked with architects and artists for many years, including enabling a community consultation process for the creation of two community buildings then working with the architect, planners and builders to bring them about. Her career began with caring for special needs children and young people in community contexts. In the last 20 years she has been an advocate for ensuring a healthy childhood for all children through the Alliance for Childhood.
Uses of land awaiting development

Waste, futurity and the reclamation of youth on Joan Littlewood’s urban playgrounds, c. 1967-75

Dr. Luke Dickens

Parallel session 1A

Abstract

This paper aims to address the overlooked role that children themselves might play in actively planning and producing the conditions for child-friendly urban environments. In particular, it attempts to advance a child-centric orientation to the material practices and spatial imaginations bound up in the making/unmaking of urban futures. To do so, it focuses on the work of the influential British Theatre director, Joan Littlewood, who led a pioneering attempt to develop experimental playgrounds in London’s East End from the late 1960s under the auspices of her ‘Fun Palace’ project. Littlewood’s efforts centred on temporarily laying claim to derelict sites awaiting redevelopment and transforming them through the playful deployment of child-led theatrical practices, creative projects and community events.

The paper argues that at the core of these interventions was a temporal politics of reclaiming and cultivating youthful futures as a critical response to the prevalence of ‘waste’. Waste in this context is understood both as a material manifestation of the creative destruction that invariably accompanies cycles of master-planned redevelopment; and as an emotional state expressing the deep sense of futility and loss that characterise the experience of urban working-class childhoods under these perennial circumstances. Methodologically, the paper prioritises the voices and first-hand accounts of those youth workers and young people involved in Littlewood’s playground experiments, through an examination of archival materials (personal diaries, correspondence, project publicity) and recently recorded oral history interviews. Overall the paper demonstrates how marginalised children and young people might not only speak back to those planning the future of cities on their behalf, but can themselves give shape to the imaginative visions and material forms that these futures might take. The paper concludes with a critical reflection on the parallels between this case and twenty-first century aspirations for ‘playful’, ‘child-friendly’ cities.

About the presenter

Dr. Luke Dickens is a human geographer specialising in the cultural politics of urban change and the urban experiences of children and young people. Luke joined the Department of Geography at King’s College in 2016, having worked previously as a lecturer in the School of Geography and Environment at the University of Oxford (2015-16). Prior to this, Luke was a Research Associate on the AHRC-funded Energy Generation and ESRC-funded Creating Hackney as Home projects at the Open University (2013-16); the EPSRC-funded Storycircle
project at Goldsmiths, University of London (2011-13); and a researcher at The National Foundation for Youth Music (2010-11).

Luke completed his ESRC-funded PhD at Royal Holloway, University of London (2009), where he also obtained an MA in Cultural Geography with distinction (2004). He also holds a first-class Human Geography BSc from the University of Reading (2003).

Luke has recently completed a joint British Academy / Leverhulme funded research project entitled ‘The Fun Palace and the Future City’ (2017-19). This archival project explored child-centric forms of utopian urbanism with an emphasis on practices of play and pleasure. He is currently writing a monograph based on this research.
Pioneering Places

Child-led reflection on the environment

Fran Edgerley, Josephine Martin, Joanne Ursell and Lucy Pettet

Abstract

Pioneering Places is a child-led project by architectural and art practitioners straddling geography, philosophy, heritage, art, design and technology. The project is being delivered by Turner Contemporary with over 60 primary school children from 2 Ramsgate schools and is funded by the Great Place Scheme, a partnership between NHLF, ACE, and Artswork. Through weekly sessions over the course of the 2018-19 academic year, a delivery team comprised of Navigators (Turner Contemporary learning team), Artists and Heritage Researchers, worked with the children aged between 7 to 9 to undertake research and philosophical inquiry, to explore their environment, their classroom, their school, and their town. The team and the children were supported throughout by Assemble.

The approach to learning was innovative, with the team testing and exploring ideas about ‘child-led’ learning with a particular interest in environment and space. Most of it took place outside school, and often in places which are either normally restricted, or not accessed by children.

Out of this body of work, three themes emerged which were of greatest importance to the children: Play and Playfulness, Caring and Modern Machines. Each of these themes relates closely to Ramsgate and formed the core of an artist’s brief for a major new artwork commission. The children shortlisted their favourite proposals, and then interviewed and appointed an artist. They are now currently working with their selected artist on the development of the concept, and will be actively involved in every stage of the commission, up to its completion and installation in July 2020.

This workshop aims to give a background to the project, and to share some of the ideas, methods and exercises used by the delivery team working in the two schools. We will reference the Kids Rights Index and the UK’s current pitiful ranking at 172nd out of 183 countries, and highlight how the approach this project has taken has brought about the positive impact that is created when children are supported to fully participate and change in their environment.

We will show some short films illustrating how the children were empowered to lead recruitment / commissioning and how they went through a democratic decision making process to appoint. We will involve the audience in an interactive spectrum voting exercise which will demonstrate ways in which the children made, and interrogated different viewpoints throughout the project, and will generate a discussion about child-led projects.
from the audience so we can hear some ideas and thoughts before we present our findings/approach.

We will conclude by sharing publicly for the first time a publication produced by Assemble in response to the findings of the project, and which will act as a toolkit for anyone wishing to involve children meaningfully in public policy making. Logistical features: A screen to show images and a film with sound, a room with space to move chairs back to allow for some floor space to move around.

About the presenters

Fran Edgerley is a co-founder and partner of the architecture and design collective Assemble, with whom she has worked for the past 9 years to take a critical look at the processes that produce our built environment. Her work is focused on the possibilities in collective and cooperative relations created by different social and environmental structures. Fran is also a Trustee for Baltic Street Adventure Playground.

Josephine Martin has over 20 years’ experience in the arts and heritage sector. She has been Museums Manager for York Museums Trust and Principal Keeper at Leeds Art Gallery and Producer / Curator at Art on the Underground, working on public art commissions with Jeremy Deller, Mark Wallinger and Pae White. Jo currently works for Turner Contemporary on the ambitious child led project Pioneering Places, which is working towards a major new artwork to be installed in Ramsgate, commissioned by children.

Joanne Ursell is a visual artist, practitioner and Navigator*. She has 25 years’ experience working and volunteering in grass roots community and arts projects including Spots v Stripes Olympic community project. She wrote the bid for the successful HLF funded project Sisterhood and Solidarity 1914 -18. Jo brings an expertise in engaging with hard to reach groups. She has worked across a wide range of schools providing innovative arts sessions and has hosted created events with large audiences in the cultural sector.

Lucy Pettet is an artist, practitioner and Navigator*. Over the past 8 years at Turner Contemporary, she has been involved in a wide range of culturally significant projects such as Art Inspiring Change, a successful child led project which brought about positive change in Margate. She is experienced in working independently in schools and communities. Lucy also facilitates delivery of Arts Awards and supports schools to achieve Artsmark status.

*Turner Contemporary Navigators are qualified in using philosophical inquiry to enhance a deeper understanding of art. They are experienced in working creatively with a wide and diverse audience, delivering sessions which provoke discussion and spark curiosity both within the gallery and peripatetically. They give gallery tours, devise and deliver bespoke workshops, and train teachers.
Playful public spaces, young people and social sustainability

Claire Edwards

Parallel session 1A

Abstract

Increasing density in cities is diminishing public space. Population growth and smaller living spaces further, places pressure on the need for spaces that suit all ages. The need to share space that is equitable and socially sustainable is becoming more critical. Developers recognise the social value of place and how this can add value to their offer, but appear slow to apply contemporary social sustainability thinking to practice. Increases in air temperature, is also creating a need for indoor public space, for example shopping centres, popular sites for socialization. Drawing on Sydney based analysis I will discuss the tension arising from young people accessing shopping centres in the after-school hours, and how the surrounding outdoor and indoor space requires new thinking to accommodate their needs – privatized space remains contentious. Young people’s needs are often similar to other age groups, such as a desire for seating, time and space to spend time with friends, and a sense of safety. Drawn from evidence-based findings of small and large scale, local and international cases the presentation will illustrate and discuss public space design with an emphasis on play and space that potentially suits all ages. Some of the analysis is drawn from research and observations where the focus was to identify how to fulfil young people’s needs (Edwards, 2015; 2017), and why making public space, safe and accessible during this formative period is critical. To achieve spatial equity – is integrating social sustainability principles and rights-based agendas in planning policy for both private and public spaces essential?

About the presenter

Claire Edwards is a practitioner and researcher (MRes). Her work focuses on: the socio-economic, policy, conceptual and cultural factors affecting public space and the built environment. Additionally, she explores methods to increase participation and co-creation in the design and development process to fulfil rights-based agendas, placemaking principles, and social sustainability goals – such as her interest in promoting play in public space and spatial equity - especially for youth. Before Claire’s passion for public space took hold, she worked for 15+ years as a graphic designer and art director.
The Playworkers Travelling Journal

A special conference edition

Vicky Edwards

Liminal space

Abstract

The Playworkers Travelling Journals, is an ongoing independent project combining both playwork and the thoughts of those who share an interest in play and / or playwork from around the world. The journals are creations full of magical contributions sharing passion, images and stories. Playwork, is a unique profession whose practice is to work to support the child’s right to play, with reference to the UNCRC article 31. Playworkers’ special role is to facilitate the play process and ensure all children have their voice heard.

The project now invites built environment professionals, interested in ensuring cities are ‘child-friendly’, to engage by contributing to the journals during the course of the conference. Professionals will be encouraged to complete contributions based around their understanding of the child’s right to play and how they as professionals ensure they promote this right within their different practices.

After the conference I hope to use the contributions to bring together and pick apart the findings, presenting evidenced similarities, tensions, and how professionals other than the playwork sector advocate for play within cities, examining their approach to supporting children and young people’s participation in creating child-friendly cities. The results will be shared and disseminated via the European Network for Child Friendly Cities

About the presenter

Vicky Edwards is a play manager with experience of working face to face within adventure playgrounds and other play spaces for over 12 years, creating spaces that offer opportunities for children to make their own using the resources provided. Vicky, an advocate for children’s play has recently begun to work closely with small community groups highlighting the benefits of children’s play, offering those involved a new understanding of the importance of play.
Innovative play solutions - the key to more play

Janne Eilsø

Parallel session 1D

Abstract

Playgrounds have been documented as the place within parks where children are the most physically active. The awareness that parks and playgrounds matter for children’s well-being has grown. Some cities have made park access for residents within a ten-minute walk of home as an initiative. Others have made cross-departmental solutions and opened school yards up for play after school hours. But is short distance the main reason for visiting parks and playgrounds? Do we really know what works in attracting people?

Some playgrounds do appear more visited and interesting to users than others. Why? To gain an understanding of what makes a playground more visited and interesting from a user perspective, adults and children at a refurbished playground in Flag Pole Hill, Dallas US were interviewed for 6 days. More than 500 visitors were observed throughout the period with some of the coldest days of the year at the location. The study shows that the playground is a great success in attracting people. 77% of the visitors interviewed increased their visit to the park after the refurbishing, mainly because they found the playground unique. Uniqueness were described as play equipment with a design approach that were appealing to all ages, inclusive and intelligently placed on the site.

Even though most of children who visited the playground were below 5 years old, parents’ attraction to a playground should be considered when designing public playgrounds. That’s because they are of great influence of their children’s playground visits. Most of the respondents travelled more than a ten-minute walk to the playground. 10% said they even travelled more than 5 miles. They also said they were willing to travel more than 5 miles to visit a fantastic playground. This is because almost all respondents found playgrounds very important because of the ability to get outside and get fresh air and because of the effect of their children’s health and well-being. When asked the children where they preferred to play, it is nice to know that 76% said they would rather play outdoors in the playground than indoors at home where they had their toys and devices. This presentation will present important findings and recommendations for designing attractive playgrounds that will make people visit more often and stay for longer.

About the presenter

Janne Eilsø is a Master in Sport and Health Sciences, who specializes in playful movement. With an additional background as a trained teacher of children, her work centres on user driven research and design. Her specialty is on-site surveys, interviewing and observing adults and children to source documented feedback on how good play design best motivates children, families and communities to engage in play.
The roots of difference and the path to compassion

An Introduction to the Flourish Values Model

Wendy Ellyatt

Parallel session 3A

Abstract

“Children are a kind of indicator species. If we can build a successful city for children, we will have a successful city for all people.”

Enrique Peñalosa, Mayor of Child Friendly Bogotá

The Flourish Values Model (FVM) is a new evidence-based, ecological wellbeing framework that underpins the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and is being developed to help cities transition towards Child Friendly and Compassionate Cities status. Rooted in the Science of Early Human Development, it puts the wellbeing of young children and their families firmly at the centre of the system and acknowledges the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual aspects necessary to promote healthy human development and a flourishing sustainable planet.

Whereas most other wellbeing frameworks focus primarily on the monitoring and measuring of states of wellbeing in older children and adults (i.e. the outcomes and consequences), the Flourish Project instead explores the conditions that nurture the early development of the values and mindsets necessary to maximize later states of wellbeing (i.e. the causes and solutions). The framework helps people understand that every person has a unique background and context and that although individual differences exist in the ways that we understand and view the world, we all share a common humanity.

Public services, councils and their partners are responsible for safeguarding and nurturing the well-being of all children and young people in their city or community. Children’s experiences of these services have a huge impact on their lives, both now and in the future. But all too often, these services are poorly structured and resourced and lack an understanding of just how influential they can be in children’s lives.

The project helps councils and local authorities to explore local needs, join up the dots, identify the gaps and develop practical solutions by working from the grassroots up. It works with leaders, policymakers and citizens to better understand and promote the health and wellbeing of their own communities and populations. It helps to ensure that child and family wellbeing and resilience is at the heart of all local decision-making and assists cities and local authorities to become Centres of Flourishing. Above all, it underpins the call for a more caring and compassionate world.
As an ecological framework the project helps cities to shape and adopt a number of core strategies that include:

- Child-friendly policies and legal frameworks
- Communication, awareness-raising and advocacy
- City-wide strategic planning (the CFCl Action Plan)
- Budget allocations for children
- Cross-departmental coordination and partnerships
- Inclusive child participatory mechanisms and processes
- Capacity-building to create sustainable results for children
- Collection of data and evidence through monitoring
- Measuring of impact and progress

It promotes the development of new and innovative narratives, methods and resources that span the following areas:

- Healthy Bodies
- The impact of the Built Environment
- Safe Streets
- Family-Friendly Neighbourhoods
- Open spaces and recreation
- Child-friendly urban design
- Healthy Relationships
- The importance of play
- Independent mobility
- Educational accessibility and outcomes
- Children’s voices and participation
- Caring and Compassion
- Equity and Diversity
- Health and well-being
- Joy and wonder
- Growth and potential
- Economic justification and imperatives

About the presenter

Wendy is passionate about unlocking the potential in people. She is the creator of the Flourish Values Model (FVM) www.flourishproject.net, which is a new and powerful framework for understanding and mapping human wellbeing that highlights the importance of child and family wellbeing for the development of flourishing and sustainable communities. She is also the founder and Chief Executive of the UK’s Save Childhood Movement www.savechildhood.net, which in 2013 established National Children’s Day UK www.nationalchildrensdayuk.com as a major annual event championing all the great work going on nationally to support the wellbeing of children and families.
In 2019 she became co-chair of the Global Council for the Wellbeing Economy Alliance, which is calling for an economic system that supports both people and planet.

What does fulfil us and produce sustainable states of wellbeing? How do we protect both children and adults from systems that undermine our inherent creativity and potential? How do we ensure that we can all feel valued and connected? Wendy’s work explores the science of human flourishing and our shared need for meaningful relationship, community and contribution.
Playing Out

A parent-led movement for change

Alice Ferguson

Closing plenary session

Abstract

About ten years ago, a group of parents in Bristol, UK, were feeling frustrated and concerned. Having grown up in the 1970s, their own childhoods had been full of freedom: to play out, explore their “patch”, walk and cycle to school independently, make friends outside school and have adventures away from adult eyes. But things had changed – drastically – and their own children had all but lost this freedom. Looking further out, they realised that the problem was society-wide: the wonderful and essential experience of “playing out” was just no longer a normal part of life for most children growing up in towns and cities. Two things were clear: 1) this was an enormous loss and 2) traffic-dominated streets were a big part of the problem.

Rather than accept the status quo, these parents decided to fight back and try to change things. The Playing Out movement was born with the simple idea of closing a residential street to traffic, creating a safe space for play. Ten years on, this resident-led “play street” model has spread across the UK and beyond and Playing Out is part of a movement for change towards all children having the freedom to play out where they live, every day.

About the presenter

Alice started street play sessions with her neighbour, Amy, and is now Managing Director of Playing Out CIC and one of the two executive directors on the board. Her role includes overseeing the organisation, developing new projects and talking up street play to anyone who will listen. Previously, Alice worked mainly in the environmental and voluntary sectors, including for Sustrans, Friends of the Earth and Climateworks; as well as running her own organic food shop. Since being a parent, she has also been actively involved in community efforts towards creating a more liveable neighbourhood, with a particular focus on children’s independent mobility and their access to public space in the city.
Building cities fit for children

Insights and lessons from around the world

Tim Gill

Closing plenary session

Abstract

What does a truly child-friendly city look like? How does children’s play fit into the picture - and their mobility? Why should we worry about looking at cities through the eyes of children? And how can advocates make a compelling case to decision makers and the wider public?

In tackling these questions, Tim argues that everyday experiences of playing, exploring and getting around are part of a healthy, balanced diet of childhood experiences. What is more, children are an ‘indicator species’ for cities (to quote Bogotá mayor Enrique Peñalosa). Hence child-friendly urban planning has the power to unite play advocates, policy makers and the public around the goal of expanding children’s everyday freedoms and improving cities for all.

This way of thinking about child-friendly cities shifts the focus firmly onto children’s everyday, informal participation in the life of the city. It is a move away from an emphasis on children’s formal participation in planning and design (as seen in the UNICEF Child-Friendly Cities initiative). This is not to say that formal participation is not important. But Tim argues it should not be the benchmark of child-friendliness.

Tim will draw out the lessons from his research and ground-breaking Churchill Fellowship study of child-friendly planning in Europe and Canada. He will set out the key components of a successful child-friendly urban planning initiative. He will offer insights into why decision makers in a variety of different cities have chosen to take the action they have. And he will highlight the challenges and unanswered questions that advocates and decision makers alike must respond to if we are to transform cities into places that are fit for children, and fit for the challenges of the 21st century.

About the presenter

Tim Gill is an independent scholar, writer and consultant based in London, UK. He is an advocate for children’s freedom to play and explore, and for a balanced approach to risk in childhood. His work cuts across education, child care, recreation, planning and urban design. It speaks to decision makers, academics, commentators, practitioners and the wider public.

The New York Times described Tim’s book No Fear: Growing up in a risk-averse society as “a handbook for the movement for freer, riskier play.” It led to him advising politicians across the political spectrum, including a Conservative Party review of childhood.
Tim is a Built Environment Enabler for the Design Council. In 2017 he was awarded a travelling fellowship from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust to study child-friendly urban planning in Canada and Europe.

Tim’s consultancy clients include the Forestry Commission, the Mayor of London, the Bernard van Leer Foundation, the Lawson Foundation, Unilever, Historic Royal Palaces and National Trust. He has spoken to audiences in over 20 countries across five continents, at venues including Harvard, Oxford and Cambridge Universities.

Tim holds degrees in philosophy and psychology from Oxford University and London University, and an honorary doctorate from Edge Hill University. He is a former director of the Children’s Play Council (now Play England). In 2002 he was seconded to Whitehall to lead the UK government’s first comprehensive review into children’s play.

Tim writes for the mainstream media, trade and academic publications, and appears regularly on radio and television. His website is www.rethinkingchildhood.com
Games Generator

Let’s make a game!

Anna Horton Cremin

Liminal space

Abstract

The Games Generator is a pop-up play pavilion that will offer drop-in sessions alongside the main conference programme.

The Games Generator encourages people to develop their own street games. These new game creations are then shared and added to the pavilion to inspire new games and creating space for play in our parks, streets and cities.

During the conference we will create new games with audiences around the topics from the conference, such as activism and children’s voices; scaling up; responding to all ages; and equality and inclusion. We will use whichever spaces we can find, inside and outside the City Hall, using the architecture of the space in our games, and also bringing play out into the city.

The Games Generator space will provide simple toolkit materials and rules to help start the games; and we will look at the mechanics of familiar playground games. We may create some games in small groups: quick fire games of 10-15 mins duration. We will test others’ games, playing them a few times to refine the rules. This can lead into open discussion around themes proposed.

About the presenter

I use games and play to bring people together in new and unexpected ways. I often use playful interventions to talk about complex issues and what we want our future world to be like. I was one of the lead artists on Good Game, (Ampersand Projects, Birmingham), which used games as a positive way to explore our lives, communities and the places where we live. Recent residencies include, Third Room Residency, Left Coasts and the Creative 50 Programme, at Manchester International Festival.

I am a co-convener of the Social Art Network in Manchester and have recently gained representation from Mark Devereux Projects. I am one half of artist duo, One Five West. We are interested in how we can use art and technology to connect with citizens and instigate dialogue around our built environment. Commissions and achievements include Wild Worlds, Chester Zoo, Lightwaves, and Quays Culture, We have been selected for the Arts+Tech creative practice accelerator, one of three £1m national pilots set up by Arts Council of England.
Play for our youngest citizens – dramatic without language?

Jeanette Fich Jespersen

Parallel session 3C

Abstract

This paper presentation features an observation study investigating the effects of a new play environment designed to motivate dramatic and social play in 1-4 year olds. The play equipment focused on sensory, dramatic and social-emotional play events. Observations were made with Play Observation Scale (1), Go-Pro cameras and external cameras as well as observation grids. The observations took place over 1 week in June and 1 week in August.

The observation found that contrary to standard textbook knowledge, the 1-2 year olds of the study played group play, with more than one other child, 51% of the time. They participated in dramatic group play almost 25% of the time played, informally guided by a trained care giver. However, physical play was still a major part of their play behaviour. The 3-4 year olds played group dramatic play without much care giver intervention, and with fewer interruptions.

The findings of the study indicate that infants and toddlers may be more advanced earlier than what was previously held: Parallel play was not the prevalent type of play in the 1-2 year olds observed. They followed and participated in the group play, and dramatic group play, even if they still had no or very limited spoken language. They understood symbolic play: e.g. that a stone could represent ice-cream. The findings call for more studies. But the cognitive capabilities in toddlers may be more advanced than what is generally held. This can have important implications for the nature of our public playgrounds, and particularly our nursery playgrounds.

Reference


About the presenter

Jeanette Fich Jespersen is the head of the KOMPAN Play Institute. She has broad teaching and research experience from universities and colleges in Germany and Denmark. Jeanette has advocated play rights and playgrounds in countless seminars, conferences and courses worldwide for almost 20 years. She has written numerous white papers and articles, mainly on the topics of play and child development, inclusive and universal design and play rights in a globalizing world. With the KOMPAN Play Institute Jeanette heads the user involvement, documentation and research for innovation. Jeanette is the vice president of the European Network of Child Friendly Cities and a member of the advisory board of the Centre for Sports and Learning at the University of Southern Denmark.
Is there childhood in dumping grounds?

Children’s voices of the sanitary landfill of Rio de Janeiro

Alain Flandes, Sérgio Porto, Flora Fernandez
Co-author: Marllon Sevilha

Parallel session 3B

Abstract

The experience reported here presents a multidisciplinary approach to children’s universes in places considered invisible which escape normalized daily lives. From the methodology and devices of the research group “Environment Education” of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, a listening workshop was held with children to learn about their spatial-territorial relationship within the community of Quatro Rodas in the Jardim Gramacho neighbourhood of Duque de Caxias - RJ, Brazil.

Jardim Gramacho neighbourhood housed until 2012 the largest landfill in Latin America, being the main source of income for the majority of the population (20,000 residents according to El Pais, 14 Dec 2017), including the community of Quatro Rodas. Once disabled, part of this population continued to live in the region and even today a portion of the residents seek their livelihood from the clandestine dumps that prevail in the region.

Recognize forgotten childhoods in the city brings complementary narratives to the study of children and their practices spatialize in the territory. This article attempts at similarities and incongruities in the use of devices that trigger activities for listening and speaking with children. Given that, and starting from a notion of forgetting, it is possible to see several interpretative paths about the place occupied by childhood in the construction of cities.

When designing and applying devices that allow access to symbolic places of the individual and / or collective, semantic limits were identified in the daily reading. Since the meaning of referential landmarks commonly found in a city (street, park, square, shopping, etc.) is built through preconceived images and experienced by the individual in their relationship with places. It is within these semantic limits that we find the main prejudices related to childhood dwelling in a place such as landfill.

Is there childhood in dumping ground? This is one of the questions we asked, from our circumstantial understanding of a reality as disparate as Gramacho’s old landfill seems to be. In order to construct a more comprehensive reading of the situation and before wanting to seek answers to such concern, we need as a research group to clarify our conception of “childhood.

We perceive childhood as the social spaces constructed multilaterally and collectively
occupied by individuals temporally (during the period in which they are considered children) in each culture. According to Sarmento (1997), children are not separated from the environment in which they live; it is permeable. They are influenced and altered in each context as they also affect and re-signify surroundings, with their capacity for symbolic production and the generation of organized systems of representation; and beliefs that constitute their own cultures.

Recognising children as agents, who produce culture and are capable of manipulating the environment, we seek to respect their ability to represent themselves, and to give visibility to subjects who generally do not have opportunities for speech, opinion and to generate reflections on the construction of their world. Thus, we adopt a conception of childhood as critical citizenship, in which the child is considered as co-author and co-builder of decisions about urban spaces.

About the presenters


**Sérgio Porto**, Masters student in Architecture, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro; Master student CNPq in the Graduate Program in Architecture of the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (2018-2020), Architect and Urbanist at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (2017), having accomplished academic mobility for the Faculty of Architecture, University of Porto (2014-2015) and technical course in electrical engineering at CEFET-RJ / Maracanã (2007-2009). With academic and professional experience in architecture and urbanism, with emphasis on small-to-large lighting design / light design projects and large-scale urban design, as well as acting as a researcher-researcher Accessible Guide of the city of Rio de Janeiro and Universal Design and Accessibility at the 2014 FIFA World Cup Facilities at the Pró-Acess Nucleus (2013-2014 / PROARQ-FAU-UFRJ), Urban Cultures and Urban Planning in Brazil and Urban Planning Chronology at LeU - Urban Studies Laboratory (PROURB-FAU-UFRJ) in partnership with the Urban Laboratory (PPG-AU / FAUFB) since 2013 and Educational Territories in Urban Renewal Areas: Proposals for a dialogue between architecture, city, school and childhood? in the Environment and Education Group (PROARQ-FAU-UFRJ) since 2018. In addition to the founding member of the Já pra Rua! (IFCS-
UFRJ) focusing on activities relating the themes? Child and urban territories since 2016. Topics of interest: universal accessibility, free and public spaces, history of urbanism, inclusive urbanism focusing on childhood and youth, housing, light design, graphic design, education and ethnography.


**Co-author**

**Marllon Sevilha** - Scientific Initiation Scholarship – Federal University of Rio de Janeiro; Undergraduate student in Architecture and Urbanism from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. Currently a Scientific Initiation Scholarship from the Environment-Education Group (GAE), linked to the UFRJ Graduate Program in Architecture, where he develops research on School Architecture, Educational Territories and the relationship between children and the City through participatory methods. He is also monitor of the discipline of Landscape Design I, at Atelier Integrated I.
School Grounds

An untapped resource for urban biodiversity, play and inclusion

Michael Follett

Parallel session 4C

Abstract

Since 2007 OPAL has helped over half a million children access hugely improved play by reaching them at the places they spent a large part of their early lives – primary school. Based on our unique access to hundreds of schools this presentation will analyse how schools use their grounds, look at case studies of schools that have revolutionised their approach, and propose solutions that could enable a much fairer and equitable access to natural open spaces for children.

We will analyse:

- **Time**: How schools use their grounds currently. Some dictate the design and use of their ground for a single three-hour event once a year – school sports day. A large number use their grounds for 8 to 15% of the year -dry days in the summer term. Most access the whole grounds for less than 50% of the school year. Almost none give access to their grounds beyond the 190 days of the school year.

- **Space**: Not, all but many schools have exclusive access to large areas of land but fail to use much of it. OPAL have helped school increase playable space by thousands of percent by re-imagining what school grounds are for, how you safely supervise children, how you manage risk, how you resource your grounds and how you manage you manage the entire outdoor space.

- **Purpose**: Primary school grounds mainly maintain their grounds using SAM Sports Amenity Mow – great if your main purpose is football, but a desert for play, sustainability and biodiversity. Schools can keep their football pitch and still re-wild 50 to 75% of their sites, making them; cheaper to maintain, much richer play and learning environments, and increasing biodiversity.

Schools that OPAL works with have grounds that are worth on average between £0.5 million and £25 million and before we work with them, all of these are chronically underused. This presentation will demonstrate examples of schools that have radically changed the way they use their grounds by changing their culture and attitude.

The presentation will demonstrate that the move to fence school grounds for safeguarding purposes in since the year 2000 has denied communities access to open spaces they used in
the past, but it has also allowed schools to potentially become havens of much higher quality play, because of the landscaping, provision of playable loose parts and access to skilled playwork informed staff that fenced primary school grounds can offer.

Many schools are already built and few new schools will have budgets for good playful landscape design. The presentation will close with policy and design challenges for the future and explore solutions based on OPAL’s work transforming the policy, culture, and practice in many schools across the UK, France, Canada, Poland, New Zealand and Australia.

About the presenter

Michael Follett spent six years as Play Adviser in the Learning and School Effectiveness Team at South Gloucestershire Council covered all areas of play planning and policy delivery especially the development of improved play policy and practice in primary schools and the design of early years play landscapes. His experience includes work as playworker, teacher, special needs worker, policy officer, school improvement advisor and social entrepreneur. His past achievements include initiating the original Play Rangers and Play Pods projects which have been taken up nationally and internationally. In 2014 Michael was awarded the Paul Bonel Memorial Prize for 'Significant contribution to play and playwork' at the UK National Playwork Awards.

Since 2011 Michael has been director of Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL). A not-for-profit company set up to improve children’s play opportunities especially in schools and early years settings. OPAL have transformed play in over 450 schools, improving play for nearly half a million children. They have five mentors supporting improved play across the UK primary schools across the UK, and projects in New Zealand, Canada and Australia.

Michael takes an active part in development of national and international policy and practice. He was on the board of Play England for six years. He is currently play advisor to Unilever Outdoor Classroom and Play Friendly Schools and has advised The National Trust, Football Association (FA), National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE), Ministry of Justice, DCSF (UK Gov), and The Lottery.

In 2017 OPAL and Gloucester University were granted European funding to develop quality criteria for play in schools in the Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Poland, Hungary and Austria. In 2018 the OPAL Primary Programme won the Erasmus Plus funded Activity Squared Prize for the best active schools’ project in Europe. Michael has started working with the International School sector bringing OPAL to two schools in France and one in Poland.

In 2017 Education publisher of the year, Jessica Kingsley Publications commissioned and published Michael's Book "Creating Excellence in Primary School Playtimes". The Toronto District Education Board supported by the Lawson foundation is working with OPAL’s Canadian Partners Earthday Canada to bring OPAL to 46 schools and the Ontario Catholic School Board has commissioned OPAL to start to transform play and physical activity in their schools.
‘If we don’t tidy this up where are people going to play?’

Insights from a youth-led, community-based place making project

Laurel Gallagher
Co-author: Dr. Jenny Hallam

Workshop 3B

Abstract

Nature contact has a wide range of physical and psychological benefits which support all aspects of children’s health and wellbeing (Chawla, 2015). However, due to increasing levels of urbanisation and fears relating to safety children’s access to nature is restricted (Davis, Egyed, Rose, Chou & Brion, 2014; Hilman, Adams & Whitelegg, 1990). This issue is of particular relevance to children living in low SES areas who have limited access to locally based green spaces (Public Health England, 2014) and tend not to have a garden (Noonan, Boddy, Knowles, & Fairclough, 2015). Furthermore, evidence suggests children who grow up in areas of high social deprivation are particularly vulnerable to emotional disturbance which can result in poor mental health in their adult life (Caspi, Taylor, Moffitt, & Plomin, 2000). This creates a situation in which disadvantaged communities who need wellbeing interventions are unable to freely access nature.

This paper explores the experiences of seven young people, aged between 11-12 years old, who participated in a nature-based intervention run by Feral Spaces. During the intervention, which was funded by the Canal and River Trust, young people from a low SES background engaged in a range of youth-led activities which encouraged a meaningful connection to a local, semi-wild space. During the intervention the young people took the lead in developing and implementing ideas designed to transform a disused space into an area that could be used by the local community as a safe outdoor place to meet and socialise. Each of the intervention sessions were documented using audio and video equipment and the young people also played an active role in recording their experiences through photography. Images from the intervention and the young people’s own words are used to examine what happened during the intervention and investigate how, through engaging with nature and collaborating with each other, a growing sense of community and belonging was developed. It is argued that the youth led community-based intervention developed the young people’s understandings of the natural world and their confidence to engage with it in a personally meaningful way. This had positive implications in terms of supporting the young people’s wellbeing and enabled them to make a positive contribution to their community.

About the presenter and co-author

Laurel Gallagher has been working with young people in formal and informal education since 2003, has a PGCE and PGDip in Art and Design Education and was awarded a Practice Research Fellowship at Leeds University for her work with CUSP (Centre for Understanding Sustainable Prosperity). In 2018 Laurel became co-director of Urban Wilderness CIC, a not-for-profit
company that empowers young people to discover belonging, adventure, and creativity in urban green spaces. The Urban Wilderness philosophy and methodology is informed by Laurel’s action research project ‘Feral Spaces’ that introduced young people to disused urban green spaces and asked ‘if this was your place what would you do here?’. Currently studying an Urban Planning MSc, Laurel specialises in developing models of co-production in urban regeneration.

Dr. Jenny Hallam is a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Derby. In this role Jenny teaches qualitative methods and developmental psychology at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Jenny’s research is informed by a Community Psychology approach and she works closely with Urban Wilderness as part of a research partnership. This ongoing research collaboration seeks to explore the ways in which nature and the arts are incorporated into community projects for children and young people which are designed to support wellbeing and tackle social inequality.
The Croatian Experience of Child Friendly Cities, Towns and Districts

Josip Grgurić
Co-authors: Snježana Krpes, Karolina Grgić

Closing plenary session

Abstract

The social action "Towns and Districts - Friends of Children" was launched in Croatia on November 20th 1999 on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights. This action was launched by two associations: the Union of Societies ‘Our Children’ Croatia and the Croatian Society for Preventive and Social Paediatrics and it has been carried out ever since. The Programme is supported by UNICEF's Croatian office. The aim of the Programme is to encourage institutions on all levels – governments, institutions, children's organisations, civic associations, parents and, of course, children – to better defend children's rights and needs detailed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The action is also included in the National Strategy for the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Croatia.

Programme Towns and District – Friends of Children affirms a holistic approach of the local community focused on the well-being of children, contributing to the realization of rights and a safe and stimulating environment for children. Programme covers every aspect of a child’s life in local community; it is developed with 123 relevant criteria in mind, which can be grouped in 10 key areas: 1) Child welfare programmes and policies, 2) Government funding for children, 3) Third Sector child support and services, 4) Urban health and safety, 5) Children’s health, 6) Children’s upbringing and education, 7) Social care for children, 8) Culture and sport for children, 9) Free time and recreation and 10) Parental support services. Any local community in Croatia can join the initiative and commit to creating better conditions for children. Currently 125 towns and districts participate in the Programme, of which 72 have earned the prestigious ‘Child Friendly’ title.

The assessment is carried out by evaluating the efforts of a local community, by gathering children's opinions and the opinions of adult community members and parents in particular. Questionnaires are used as data collection method for the opinions of children and adults and are also in use for local communities’ self-assessment. Along with the questionnaires there are also field assessments done by the external experts and the town/district’s final report. Should a town/district fulfil 80% of the Programme’s requirements, it receives the ‘Child Friendly’ title.

Developing child-friendly cities and districts is a key part of the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in local politics. Thus, in child-friendly cities and districts, local government representatives, by meeting the criteria of the Children-Friendly Cities and Districts, are adopting effective policies in line with the best interests of the child under the UN Convention.
The Union of Societies Our Children, Croatia, together with the UNICEF Office for Croatia has been implementing the cooperation program “Strengthening the Capacity of Local Communities in the Realization of Children's Rights” since 2016 in order to provide expert support to numerous local and regional coordinators in cities, districts and counties in the Republic of Croatia on implementing the program “Towns and Districts – Friends of Children” through various trainings and consultations on strategic planning, lobbying, children's budgeting, children's participation and equal opportunities. In addition, through a partnership between the Union of Soc and UNICEF it is working to standardize the methodology for evaluating and monitoring cities and districts and cross-sectoral collaboration and networking of all stakeholders at all levels (local, regional and national) to put children's rights and interests at the heart of public policies for children.

About the presenter

Josip is Professor of Paediatrics at the University of Zagreb, School of Medicine. He is the contributing editor of Preventive and Social Paediatrics and was recently presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award for the promotion of the rights of the child by the Croatian Parliament. Josip has published over 350 academic papers, co-authored 10 books and led many scientific projects in different aspects of child and adolescent health and well-being. In 2014-17 he led the expert group responsible for revising the methodology of Croatia’s “Towns and Districts – Friends of Children” programme. He is a member of ISSOP (International Society for Social Paediatrics & Child Health) and a board member of the European Network for Child Friendly Cities.
The Playful City

How can we make cities happy, healthier places by making them more creative and participatory places? What can children teach city planners?

Dr. Penny Hay and Amy Harrison

Parallel session 2D

Abstract

Amy and Penny will share examples of their collaborative work across Bristol and Bath in the context of a child friendly and playful city. Signature projects include My Place, Generation Place, School Without Walls and Forest of Imagination. Responding to the key themes of creativity and participation, Amy and Penny will explore the child friendly city as a place for creative place making and innovating, prioritising civic agency and young people’s voice.

With a focus on the public and civic life of children we question how ALL children can be considered in the physical and democratic space of the city. Working with children and their families from diverse communities who have less access to arts and culture, these projects aim to challenge inequality in both city’s cultural provision. As part of our partnership working, we have developed multiple approaches to reaching children and young people who will most benefit from our programmes and whom might not otherwise have access to such creative educational opportunities.

We will explore children’s connection to place: home, school, neighbourhood and city. ‘Place’ is acknowledged in the UK’s culture in the 2016 Cultural White Paper and place-based participation has the potential to connect city children with their heritage, environment and the creative design process. These projects are inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach in Italy. At the heart of the Reggio pedagogy are the concepts of the child as an innate and creative knowledge-builder and explorer, the environment as the third teacher and the atelier (space for creativity) and the atelierista (artist educator).

Each project is about creative placemaking and social engagement. This engagement involves working with educational and cultural organisations, children and young people alongside creative professionals. They emphasise how everyone can engage in decision making in an urban landscape and public realm context. The work reveals the collaborative and creative ecology of each city in a new and engaging way, and for the benefit of all. We want to highlight the importance of the creative design process in children’s lives, and nurture the next generation of creative and diverse place-makers. We will discuss how we can enact an alternative set of values including everyday creativity, sustainability, inclusive placemaking and co-creation with diverse communities to create urban cultures of belonging.
About the presenters

**Dr. Penny Hay** FRSA, FHEA is an artist and educator, Research Fellow, Centre for Cultural and Creative Industries; Senior Lecturer in Arts Education, School of Education, Bath Spa University and Director of Research, House of Imagination (formerly 5x5x5=creativity).

Signature projects include School Without Walls, House of Imagination and Forest of Imagination. Penny’s doctoral research focused on how we support children’s learning identity as artists. Penny is a member of the RSA Innovative Education Network, Crafts Council Learning Advisory Group, Visiting Lecturer at Plymouth College of Art and Co-Investigator on the AHRC Global Challenges Research project ‘Rethinking Waste’ in Mumbai.

**Amy Harrison** is Head of Learning and Participation at the Architecture Centre, Bristol. Amy is a passionate educator and engagement specialist, highly experienced in delivering programmes which connect children, young people, and communities with the placemaking, built environment, creative and cultural sectors. She is passionate about diversity and inspiring the next generation of creative placemakers through innovative careers and participation projects such as Shape My City. Amy champions the involvement of all citizens, especially children and young people, in the development of the places and spaces which affect their lives. Co-founder of the national Generation Place project, the Bristol Child Friendly City Initiative and the My Place early years research project, Amy is also an experienced teacher, school governor and charity trustee in inner city communities experiencing multiple deprivation.
Wild children, wild City

Enabling families and schools to access and enjoy nature in an urban setting

Lucy Hellier and Freya Morgan

Parallel session 2D

Abstract

‘Every child needs nature. Not just the ones with parents who appreciate nature. Not only those of a certain economic class or culture or set of abilities. Every child.’

Richard Louv, Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder.

A growing body of research has shown that opportunity and access to play in the natural world is key to child development, wellbeing, and to a lasting connection to nature. Our projects at Avon Wildlife Trust seek to connect children, parents and communities to nature on their doorstep, and in turn encourage them to become advocates for a city rich in wildlife, for years to come.

My Wild City is a 3-year funded project all about making Bristol a nature rich city. We want young people, all ages, and all backgrounds, to be able to access rich green spaces on their doorsteps. This is about neighbourhoods, your place. We are working in 8 Local Wildlife Sites in the city, making them better for wildlife and people and creating opportunities for people of any age to be inspired by nature.

Our My Wild Child programme works with 2-4-year-olds and their parents/carers to facilitate nature connection in community green spaces around the city, through wild play, story, song and exploration. This is play at its most genuine– where sticks become magic wands, tree stumps become spaceships and a world of imagination opens up which in turn nurtures problem-solving skills, cognitive development and self-esteem. There is space to run and climb, streams to splash in, and an intricate world of bugs, plants and birds to befriend. Every child has a right to play in nature, and we believe it is vital to enable and protect this.

Older children are engaged through our schools programme, transforming the classroom into a wild space of possibility, where the curriculum takes on new meaning. Instead of learning about life-cycles or food chains from a book or screen, children are able to discover first-hand how wildlife on their doorstep survives and flourishes. Every child has a right to a wild education.

If we all make small changes, they add up to something big. Things are stirring around the world, and young people like Greta Thunberg are pioneers, demonstrating that every single person counts, and every action matters. The thing is, people only care about what they know and love. Creating neighbourhoods that are rich in wildlife and allowing children the space to
play and grow in these places creates memories and experiences that result in love for their local spaces. A nature rich city can nourish a generation of curious and connected minds, aware that this place is theirs to protect and to enjoy.

**About the presenters**

**Lucy Hellier** is an environmental educator who leads Avon Wildlife Trust’s school visits programmes. She sees first-hand the impact that school visits into nature have on children’s emotional and social development, as well as their understanding and care for the natural world. Lucy is currently supporting schools in Bristol to make learning in nature a regular part of children’s school experience.

**Freya Morgan** has a background in the creative arts and environmental education, and her work has focussed over the last 10 years on the place where creativity, nature and children coincide. At the heart of this space is play! She believes passionately that a child-friendly city is one in which children have open-ended access and opportunity to play in the natural world. Freya now leads Avon Wildlife Trust’s My Wild Child project, as well as a community Wildlife Watch club.
Environment and the quality of children’s play

Julian Kayibanda Ingabire

Parallel session 3D

Abstract

There is worldwide consensus on the importance of play for children. Scientists have established resounding evidence that playful behaviour has very powerful and positive effects on the brain. So powerful, indeed, that the amount of play a child does has an effect on a child’s ability to learn. That’s right. Play, which was once considered nonsensical and without purpose, is now known to be necessary for learning, a very sensual and purposeful act. The UN convention on the rights of the child (UNCRC) article 31 states “Children have the right to relax and play and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities”. Play lays the foundation of learning and discovering in the early years.

Despite the evidence, there is a significant lack and decline of access to play due to the increased amount of time spent in the classroom, homework, pressure towards academic success, and increased fear for safety and anxiety among parents and technology. Additionally, the decreases access to forest and other green spaces, is leading to rise in the number of children manifesting sensory and motor deficits.

Children’s access to play and learning, their social interactions, physical and cognitive development are dependent on the quality of spaces and places in which the interactions occur. Safe, responsive, and nurturing environments are integral to supporting the learning and development of children. Such environments also help to prevent challenging behaviours and serve as a core component of interventions for children with identified disabilities. Unfortunately, children are losing their connection with the natural environment, and their well-being and environmental quality are inextricably linked.

Significant evidence now demonstrates the physical and psychological benefits of children simply playing in natural spaces, whether physically active or not (Chawla, Keena, Pevac, & Stanley, 2014; Gill 2014; Haluza et al. 2014; Hartig et al. 2014). Play opportunities and environments that promote play and exploration must be at the core of effective and quality early childhood development programmes and necessary infrastructure for early childhood development needs to be built from the bottom up with emphasis on poor resource settings.

The Playground Hub is one such organization that is working to increase access to play opportunities through provision of advisory and support to promote child friendly play practice, and works to ensure that the importance of play is recognized by all stakeholders. The Playground Hub approach to its programs is focused on:

- Research and Advocacy to ignite play policies that enable educators, parents and communities to understand and be educated about the need for play and child friendly play spaces and infrastructure.
• Training communities and caregivers to leverage environmentally friendly local materials and resources to enable the development of sustainable and inclusive play spaces
• Engaging and advising the private sector; city planners, architects, developers, designers to develop and transform Rwanda cities from a child’s perspective.
• Designing and developing child environmentally friendly inclusive fixed and mobile playgrounds and play materials with a focus on re-introducing nature into play.

About the presenter

A development professional with over 10 years of work experience in the public, private and Non-Governmental sectors currently working for the little but great people (also known as children). Julian is a global fellow for children with the World Forum Foundation on ECE and a Trainer on Care for Child Development who thrives in providing Early Childcare Development and Education Technical Assistance to programs to ensure that all children have access to quality early childhood care and development services to enable them achieve their full potential. Julian is also the founder of the Playground Hub, an organisation that is increasing access to child friendly play spaces and environments, co-founder of the Africa Play Network and member of the Africa Early Childhood Network.
Hearing their voices, empowering their actions

Methods for engaging pupils in school grounds design and change

Mary Jackson

Parallel session 2B

Abstract

It has been estimated that children spend the equivalent of a day a week outside in their school grounds making it one of the most important outdoor spaces they spend time in. They know these spaces better than any adult and will be impacted most by the way they are designed, managed and used.

It is therefore vitally important that their voices are heard about how these grounds should be designed and developed and that they should also take an active role in deciding upon and even implementing those changes.

For nearly 30 years Learning through Landscapes has had child engagement at the heart of its work on school grounds development. Using a tried and tested process we work with schools to help them engage their whole school community in making their school grounds the best they can be – whatever their budget!

In this workshop we will look at that process of change and explore different ways of engaging pupils and hearing their voice from evaluating what they already have to making the changes on the ground.

About the presenter

Mary Jackson is Projects Manager at Learning through Landscapes (LtL), a leading UK charity dedicated to enhancing outdoor learning and play for children. With a background in education and landscape architecture Mary has worked in the area of school grounds for twenty-five years, more than twenty of those being with Learning through Landscapes.

Within her current role as Projects Manger she not only oversees the management of the charity’s UK-wide and European projects but also works with the Development Manager and CEO to develop new project ideas. As well as project management Mary is part of the training delivery team with the particular role of delivering LtL’s accredited training programme to landscape architects and other designers. This includes looking at ways to of engaging pupils in the design process of their school grounds. Mary is a co-founder of the International School Grounds Alliance - a global network of organisations and professionals working to enrich children’s learning and play by improving the way school grounds are designed and used.
Empowering teenagers to improve engagement with physical activity

The ACTIVE Project

Michaela James

Parallel session 2D

Abstract

Teenagers find themselves at the bottom of the hierarchy in claims of public space and feel there are deliberate attempts to keep them away from spaces they’d like to play. The teenage community has rights. Article 31 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child calls for young people to be able to participate fully and equally in recreation and leisure activity. But teenagers feel these rights are overlooked. Recent research shows that only 11% of girls and 20% of boys are sufficiently active. This provides more evidence that there isn’t enough being done to facilitate activity opportunities in this age group. Moreover, news coverage paints the picture that teenagers are lazy and anti-social. This dialogue has meant we do not listen teenagers and the exclusion of teenagers in communities has become publicly justified.

The Active Children Through Individual Vouchers – Evaluation Project (ACTIVE) was a co-produced, mixed method randomised control trial based in 7 secondary schools in the most deprived areas of Swansea, South Wales. ACTIVE aimed to empower teenagers to have a voice. It was developed as a result of conversations with 90 teenagers. The intervention gave them a choice over physical activity by overcoming accessibility barriers such as cost and lack of local facilities through the use of vouchers, peer mentoring and support worker engagement. The success of ACTIVE was measured through focus groups, the cooper run test (fitness), blood pressure and motivation to be active.

ACTIVE showed that empowering teenagers improved fitness and heart health. Data on where teenagers used vouchers and evidence from focus groups showed that teenagers wanted to access more unstructured, informal and social activities in their local areas. There was evidence that teenagers were frustrated by their lack of voice and felt they were ‘told’ what they could not do more than they were empowered to be active in their local communities and also in schools. Ultimately, teenagers want more opportunities to play.

The project provides evidence that advocating for, empowering teenagers and providing more local opportunities for them to take part in activities that are fun, unstructured and social could make a real difference to teenage activity by allowing them to play. The project saw improvements in fitness but only 26% of the vouchers were spent with not enough relevant, safe and local provision cited as one of the main barriers to using them. Our next steps will reverse engineer this intervention style right down to the grass roots and look at young people’s neighbourhoods, schools and activity provision through their eyes and
involve them in the creation and planning of activities in their local communities rather than believing we (as adults) are best placed to decide what activities they want. We will work with them, listen to them and analyse their use of outside space (e.g. neighbourhoods). We want to propose new ways of considering space and design in communities to better meet the needs of young people. In turn, generating better community cohesion.
What worked?

Evaluation of children’s environments

Dr. Matluba Khan

Parallel session 1A

Abstract

Together with participants this hour-long interactive workshop will explore approaches for evaluation of children’s environments, what works and what does not. Post-occupancy evaluation (POE) is an increasingly important activity in some sectors, such as hospitals and care settings (Cervinka, Röderer and Hämmerle, 2014) and to some extent school buildings and playgrounds (Wheeler and Malekzadeh, 2015); however, its implementation in neighbourhoods and cities is rare. POE of a playground generally focuses on the accessibility and safety of different equipment or spaces in the playground. Rarely does it offer any information on whether the designed spaces actually offer children the intended range of affordances (Gibson, 1979) and whether there are enough opportunities available for children’s physical, social and cognitive development. Young children value their physical environment based on what opportunities the environment offers them rather than the ‘form’ or ‘aesthetics’, hence the evaluation of children’s environment need to be based on environment’s ‘affordances’.

The workshop will introduce an evaluation framework based on the concept of affordance and will apply it in a ‘real life’ neighbourhood with the participants. Few urban designers and landscape architects return to their designed spaces to find out what worked in that environment once the design is completed and built. In addition to the affordances the designers initially intended, a well-designed child-friendly environment – playground, park, street or neighbourhood can create new opportunities that are only discovered by children when they start using it, while some elements might not work or be used the way they were originally intended. In most cases opportunities are missed when the lessons from evaluation of a project do not inform future designs. The workshop aims to provide some guidelines around evaluation of child friendly environments that can benefit designers, researchers, teachers and playworkers for planning of upscale or transfer of ideas.

References


About the presenter

Matluba Khan, PhD, is a research associate at University College London. She worked as a tutor at the University of Edinburgh and before that as an assistant professor in Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology. Her research interests are situated in the fields of environment and behaviour, children friendly environments, co-design and evaluation of outdoor learning environments. Matluba thrives to reduce disciplinary silos and combines practice and research and has conducted workshops with different user groups on the role of built environment and engaged community in design of spaces. Matluba is an esteemed public speaker (TEDx talk How to get kids to love learning) and has been winning accolades for her exemplary works including Great Places Award by Environment Design Research Association and American Society of Landscape Architect’s Honour Award.
Displaced children’s experiences of places

What do we know about Rohingya refugee children’s state of play in refugee camps in Bangladesh?

Dr. Matluba Khan

Parallel session 3D

Abstract

The aim of this presentation is to explore displaced children’s experiences of places in the post conflict temporary settlements. The presentation will particularly focus on the state of play of Rohingya children living in refugee camps near Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Over 741,014 refugees have fled to Bangladesh since 25 August 2017, according to UNHCR’s family-counting exercise, more than half of them are children. While different aid and non-Government organisations are working alongside Bangladeshi Government and operating on their capacity in response to the immediate need of interventions for education, play and healing of these children. However, creation of opportunities for children’s play in the temporary settlements deems inadequate considering the extent of the exodus.

Children fleeing conflict and violence have the rights to play and express their opinion as any other child. Do Rohingya refugee children have the opportunity to exercise their rights as outlined in Article 12 and Article 31 of the UNCRC? What are their experiences of places in the temporary settlement in Bangladesh? What do they want to have in their built environment? There is a dearth of understanding about displaced children's lived experiences in temporary settlements and children's voices are rarely sought in the design of their built environment. This presentation aims to contribute to the understanding of children’s experiences in the refugee settlement drawing on evidence generated through a series of workshops with children and other stakeholders and observation of several sites at Rohingya refugee campsites in Bangladesh.

About the presenter

Matluba Khan, PhD, is a research associate at University College London. She worked as a tutor at the University of Edinburgh and before that as an assistant professor in Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology. Her research interests are situated in the fields of environment and behaviour, children friendly environment, co-design and evaluation of outdoor learning environments. Matluba thrives to reduce disciplinary silos and combines practice and research and has conducted workshops with different user groups on the role of built environment and engaged community in design of spaces. Matluba is an esteemed public speaker (TEDx talk How to get kids to love learning) and has been winning accolades for her exemplary works including Great Places Award by Environment Design Research Association and American Society of Landscape Architect’s Honour Award.
What are children’s environmental concerns?

What can be done to foster children’s pro-environmental behaviour?

Dr. Matluba Khan and Dr. Ruth Bell

Parallel session 2B

Abstract

The objectives of this study were to investigate the role of garden based and hands on learning approach to promote pro-environmental attitudes among year 5 children in a London primary school. In addition, this study investigated children’s environmental concerns, their thoughts on how to resolve some of the environmental issues concerning them. A quasi-experimental research study was designed where the intervention group (n=28) were exposed to garden-based activities, the outcomes from this group were compared against a control group (n=30) from the same school. The study used the Draw-An-Environment Test and Rubric (DAET-R) (Moseley, Desjean-Perrotta and Utley, 2010) for assessing the mental models or images of the environment held by children of 8 to 10 years old. Focus group discussions were conducted with children following the drawing activity both before and after intervention.

Preliminary results indicate that both groups showed positive environmental attitudes and expressed environmental concerns. Many children associated environment with plants and animals and the interactions between them. Some children expressed deep environmental concerns around pollution, waste and recycling and have strong understandings of biodiversity. Further data analyses will explore to what extent a garden-based hands on learning approach impact children’s environmental attitudes. The study will further provide recommendations for built environment planning and policy guidelines to support children’s rights to enjoy nature in their surrounding environments.

References


About the presenters

Matluba Khan, PhD, is a research associate at University College London. She worked as a tutor at the University of Edinburgh and before that as an assistant professor in Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology. Her research interests are situated in the fields of environment and behaviour, children friendly environment, co-design and use of outdoor learning environments. Matluba thrives to reduce disciplinary silos and combines practice and research. Matluba is an esteemed public speaker (TEDtalk How to get kids to love learning) and has been winning accolades for her exemplary works including American Society of Landscape Architect’s Honour Award.
Ruth Bell, PhD is a Principal Research Fellow at University College London. She has a particular interest in the social determinants of non-communicable diseases. She currently leads work to evaluate innovative interventions within two HORIZON 2020 projects: INHERIT and Cities-4-People. Ruth has developed evidence-based reports for UNDP, WHO, UNICEF, the UK Department for International Development and Public Health England.
Delivering on a child's right to play: equally, locally, naturally

Alison King and Andrew Joynt

Parallel session 1D

Abstract

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child has enshrined a child’s right to play, but in our complex, polluted and sometimes dangerous urban environments, of what can this ‘playing’ consist?

As practitioners, designers and landscape architects we are passionate about exploring the connections between play, health and nature through our work. Our thinking and our practice are set in the wider global context of rapidly increasing urban populations, climate change, and sobering health inequality statistics.

LUC’s play projects span twenty years, from the Princess Diana Memorial Playground in Kensington Gardens, to Tumbling Bay in the Olympic Park. We will present brief case studies from our work at Heartlands in Cornwall, in Hounslow’s local and diverse neighbourhoods, and at London’s Olympic Park. Using a child-centred, participatory design process LUC designed 4 public playgrounds across Hounslow with the explicit client aim to tackle childhood obesity. Tumbling Bay (Olympic Park) caters for children of all ages and abilities and was a project that allowed us to stretch the boundaries of acceptable risk.

As our understanding of play, child development and health and wellbeing has deepened and evolves we find ourselves increasingly focused on these three things:

1. Risk, challenge and control in play
2. Contact with nature in urban environments
3. Access to quality green space in deprived neighbourhoods

We hope our presentation will stimulate debate on tackling inactivity, risk-aversion and unequal access, towards providing quality playable local landscapes for all.

About the presenters

Alison King, BA Hons MALA CMLI / Principal Landscape Architect / LUCA, is a chartered landscape architect with 9 years’ experience. She is passionate about health and wellbeing for all, and sees landscape and public realm design as playing a pivotal role in addressing the UK’s health inequality crisis. Alison has designed accessible natural play schemes in a range of sites, including city parks, urban public realm and schools. Alison understands the importance of high-quality play provision and access to nature for an urban childhood. She has a background in social anthropology and documentary film-making, feeding her insistence on the importance of collaboration and co-design with stakeholders to deliver successfully activated healthy places.
Andrew Joynt, BA DipLA CMLI / Associate Director, Landscape Architecture / LUC, has over 13 years’ experience as a landscape architect and is responsible for the landscape design service delivered from our Bristol office. He’s a highly competent designer who looks to provide site-specific, creative and sustainable design solutions. Andrew has successfully delivered a broad spectrum of landscape projects, including the World Heritage Site Heartlands in Cornwall, developing landscape proposals from initial concept, detailed design and technical specification through to implementation and on-site supervision.
The ideal Pavement

A child’s perspective

Purva Ladge

Abstract

Several studies have highlighted the importance of active transport to school and have examined the factors (health benefits, well-being, cognitive development, and community life associated with walking to school) that would encourage children to walk to school (Fyhri, Hjorthol, Mackett, Fotel, & Kyttä, 2011; Jamme, Bahl, & Banerjee, 2018; Oxford & Pollock, 2015). Much of current urban design research is focussed on making street pavements inclusive for all. This study aims to concentrate on the experiences of children. What do children think how a street pavement should be? What activities would they like to do? How do they perceive safety? How wide, green should they be? How does the use and perception vary across the different ages? This exploratory, qualitative research aims to find out how the design of a pavement should be according to children (aged 6-16).

Children are an important user group of pavements. Many of them walk to school, for some it is an important place to play (in front of their house or on the way to the shop or school). It is important to know their perspective of how they would like the design of the pavement to be, what kind of activities they would want the pavement to support, the kind of affordances it should provide, how wide, fun, safe, green, interesting and easy to navigate they should be. Mixed methods comprising of a questionnaire, draw-and-write activity and a card sorting task, hope to give some insight into the perfect pavement as seen through the eyes of children.

About the presenter

Purva Ladge is a recent graduate of MSc Environmental Psychology from the University of Surrey, Guildford. She is the recipient of the MIG/Susan and Daniel Scholarship for Environmental Psychology (October 2017). She has experience of working as an Architect and aspires to continue researching topics related to the built environment and environmental psychology.
Walking and staying with lively streets in early childhood

Observing children’s dialogues with cities

Dr. Penny Lawrence

Parallel session 2C

Abstract

How do children in early childhood experience walking, staying and playing for any time on the streets of their city? How can the built environment invite and engage in child-friendly ways, rather than be impoverished, with a passive, hard or even forbidding quality? Children and adults walking and staying out to spend time contribute to the liveliness of the streets (Gehl 2010). The health of the urban and global environment benefits from this participation. Out of the car experiences in walking and staying are fundamental for the 85 UK councils who have declared a ‘Climate Emergency’ (Climate Emergency, 2019) with imminent targets for zero emissions. It is significant for the children and families’ future, and their immediate lived experiences in the environment are enhanced. Sustainable living means walking, and being out of the car is relevant in neighbourhoods of whatever income-level. The current environment is improved and the medium to long-term damage to the global environment is reduced.

This presentation trials a Dialogical Approach to Observation (Lawrence forthcoming, 2019). Multi-modal visual analysis identifies dialogical agency with the children and streets as active protagonists. The focus is the type of relational engagement highlighted involving affordances and responsiveness. It is the participatory complement to surveys such as URBAN95’s Toolkit (Gehl and Bernard van Leer Foundation 2018), because it involves the children and the closest people in the children’s lives: family and early childhood practitioners. It is a potential process of child and community involvement in urban planning (UNICEF 2018). It demonstrates childhoods not only retained in child-areas behind fences (Ward 1978), but includes children in early childhood participating in the liveliness of cities.

References


About the presenter

Dr. Penny Lawrence is a world-class communicator in broadcast media and in academic research. Senior Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies at the University of Roehampton, London, Penny's main research interests are in dialogical experiences, new materialism and agency, particularly in non-verbal interactions with the environment. Her highly developed expertise in how to read children’s experiences is particularly through observation, documentation and visual multimodal analysis.

She joined the BBC straight from university and worked for over a decade as Producer in national and international broadcast features and documentaries. Her interest in documenting children’s learning and relationships took her to work extensively for the municipality of Reggio Emilia, Italy, running the Video Documentation Centre for the reportedly best pre-school approach in the world (Newsweek), including research with materials and the city itself.

She has consulted for over twenty years at the Centre of Excellence Pen Green Research Centre for Children and Families, Corby, UK. Penny's current publications are about dialogical agency drawing on her doctoral thesis ‘Observing and Understanding Decision-making in Two Year Olds in Dialogue’. Penny convenes undergraduate and post-graduate modules specialising in relations of children under 3 years of age, including a new masters-level module ‘Representations of Childhood’ featuring children’s relationships with the environment.
Child friendly city with play acupuncture

Taiwan PfC as a catalyst in a collaborative partnership between children, private sector, academia and government

Christine Yuihwa Lee

Parallel session 2D

Abstract

Taiwan Parks and Playgrounds for Children by Children (PfC) is a NPO that started with a group of activist mothers, who have in four years proved themselves to successfully approach children (and their families), private sectors (i.e. designers, equipment providers or builder), academics (in areas of children psychology, developmental learning or occupational therapy) and the government in a way of acting as a catalyst in a collaborative partnership while they apply 'Play Acupuncture' in public spaces.

Play Acupuncture is a bottom-up alternative heal proposed and implemented by the active participation of the citizens (e.g. children, parents or community workers) to compensate and to inspire in ways of inserting children-centred play spaces in cities. This bottom-up approach contrasts the top-down urban design and planning by the government. Play Acupuncture is the initiative of a placemaking process for all parties to collaborate, develop infrastructure and events, or nurture culture.

In the collaborative partnership to change the playscape of the cities, the government can have immediate political performance, the academics can provide expertise in improving public infrastructure, the private sectors can have niche incomes, and the children's development can be supported and parenting loads of their families from different socio-economic background can be eased. PfC can help children and their families to exercise their right to have voice in the decision-making process in public space wherever they go. This can influence the government to arrange more budget on children's play infrastructures and to step away from risk-averse planning, which is harmful for children.

PfC attend all scales of play space design meetings, change the mechanism of playground design/build projects, turn playground signs into a children-friendly positive tone instead of authority demands, hold playground design workshops with children, lead talks and lectures for government officials and citizens, translate articles of global design cases, and write advocacy articles related to children’s development, urban-childhood and children-friendly spaces.

PfC also use their networking to involve the social playgroups and parenting groups to co-learn and co-work as a team to encourage citizen participation to join design workshops, collect playground photos to lobby MP candidates and stakeholders, propose participatory budgeting and community development projects, and raise public awareness and discussions via new
media (Facebook Groups, Fanpage, Line Groups, Community Forums and Alternative Content Platform).

This Play Acupuncture approach is the first ever attempt in Taiwan to implement new, innovative and pioneering collaborative partnership to playground design. Almost one-hundred play spaces have been amended, optimised, redesigned, rebuilt or newly-design and created after PfC’s participation since Oct 2015 till the end of 2018. Children-friendly facilities in parks have been refurbished upon requests and surrounding infrastructure has been renewed under the inclusive principle, however, public space is still insufficient. Hence, from the end of 2018 till Oct 2019, three indicative street play events have brought the advocacy further to finally announcing street play policies for more space to be retrieved for Taiwan children.

References

‘Canned-Food’ Playground is the local metaphor created by PfC to represent ‘cookie-cutter’ or ‘KFC’ Playground (Woolley, 2007); the activist mothers do not desire children to play as they eat unhealthy canned-food at all times.  

About the presenter

Christine Lee, MEd, GSoE, University of Bristol, is a Founding Member of Taiwan Parks & Playgrounds for Children by Children. Her interests are in gender studies, child-friendliness, play/play Space, equality education. She is the PFC Rep of International Liaison & Academic Affairs. She is on the Review Committee of Adaptive Park Development of Taoyuan City Public Works Bureau, a Convenor of SIG: Play and Childhood Columnist for Eyes on Place; Co-Author of City Commoning (written in Big5 Taiwan) and City at Eye Level for Kids (Bernard van Leer Foundation).
Urban Toys

An ongoing process of resignification and community building

Leticia Lozano

Parallel session 3C

Abstract

When reflecting about the impact the urban environment has on children’s integral development and their progressive construction of citizenship, it could be said that the city itself has failed in becoming a place of meaning, identity and someday a children’s territory. Mexico City is home to 2 million 363 thousand 748 children, more than the entire population 1 of central Paris. They represent 27% of the city proper population —growing up to almost 5 million children in the metropolitan area—, but when walking the streets of Mexico City, encountering a child playing outside is a rare sighting.

And how could it not be? As an ever-evolving territory, this Latin American megalopolis has grown untamed, has copied and excelled the car-oriented model of a city and has systematically replicated the adult-centred ways of making decisions —from a perspective of assistentialism and overprotection; resulting on street insecurity, spatial injustice and the materialization of fenced, private, poor-quality, stereotyped and socially-restricted play spaces. Ultimately, impacting the daily urban experiences of children and fundamentally defining and defying their relation with the city, the level of engagement with their communities and their role as future citizens. Even in this context, where play is recognised as an important element of public health and social cohesion, it is still perceived as a waste of time and pushed down the political agenda, after hunger, malnutrition, poor education and poverty.

An Urban Toy is a temporary or permanent installation co-designed with children to activate underused public spaces, trigger playful interactions between people in the community and challenge by example the conventional plastic “McDonalds style” play spaces. The concept was first used for the Urban Toys project developed by Playful City at the Lab for the City back in 2017, a public competition to design playful interventions to reactivate underused spaces located in areas of high densities of children population.

The purpose of this talk is to share the results of the Urban Toys project, its legacy in the first spaces, the new urban toys, the international urban toys and the evolution of the concept into a play space typology, a children’s participatory methodology, an urban design strategy, an excuse to measure both the qualitative and quantitative impact that play can have in a public space, a way to advocate for the importance of play in urban communities and furthermore an example of how assuming children as autonomous actors and rights’ holders, could potentially eradicate assistencialism and overprotection revolutionizing new paradigms around the adult-centred perspective.
References


2. Short video: https://vimeo.com/31133316

About the presenter

Leticia is the co-founder and director of MACIA Estudio, a transdisciplinary practice challenging the boundaries between architecture, experience design and applied research. She has designed and implemented placemaking strategies, urban interventions, participation methodologies and public policy recommendations from a child-centred focus for various international organisations, governments and universities. Prior to MACIA Estudio, Leticia led “Playful City” for four years, an action-research strategy to demonstrate how play and playfulness can become urban design and development tools at Mexico City Government’s Lab for the City.

She is assistant lecturer on Public Policy & Design at the MA Design Studies in CENTRO, member of the Creative Producers International program from Watershed and fellow of the Salzburg Global Seminar. Leticia holds a BArch from Universidad de las Americas Puebla and an MA in Narrative Environments from Central Saint Martins, UAL.
How playwork qualifications are helping to shape a shared vision for play sufficiency

Marianne Mannello

Parallel session 2D

Abstract

Over the last 12 years Play Wales has been developing and delivering playwork training and qualifications that meet the needs of the sector in Wales. Recently, they have reviewed these qualifications to provide a more proportionate progression route for playworkers and included an introductory award that is suitable for people working in a range of allied sectors outside the field of direct playwork delivery.

The workshop will provide an overview of qualification developments in Wales and how the new qualifications have been adapted to meet the changing needs of the workforce. In particular, it will focus on the Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice (L2APP) and how it is being seen as a fundamental foundation in playwork practice for anyone involved in working with children. L2APP has been delivered to learners working in schools, youth work, sports development, community development and even government officials and is beginning to help shape people’s perceptions of how affordances for children’s play is everyone’s responsibility.

The workshop will also include some interactive content from L2APP to give a feel for how playwork concepts are shared in a playful and participative way.

About the presenter

Marianne is an Assistant Director: Policy, Support and Advocacy at Play Wales, the national charity for children’s play, in Wales, UK. She has over 30 years’ experience in many aspects of play and playwork, including play policy consultation and development. Marianne has worked with the Welsh Government to support the development of a toolkit to support local authorities to undertake statutory Play Sufficiency Assessments. She is an Honorary Research Associate in the College of Engineering at Swansea University and a member of Wales United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Monitoring (UNCRC) Group.
Opening the school gates

Facilitating after-school play in school grounds

Marianne Mannello

Parallel session 4D

Abstract

This presentation reflects on practitioner involvement on an action research project from Wales, UK, which researched the utilisation of school grounds as a community asset for play. Despite children’s right to play in statute in Wales and that play has positive outcomes for children, evidence suggests that school grounds are under-utilised for this purpose. Action research methodology was used within which an intervention was undertaken with three primary schools to support them opening their grounds after school hours for children’s play. Findings from the qualitative data indicate that increasing accessibility and use of these outdoor spaces, enabled student volunteers unanticipated and unique opportunities to engage and interact with parents and community members. The project is featured as a key chapter in the section on Embedding Families and Communities in the recent publication Rethinking Play as Pedagogy.¹

References


About the presenter

Marianne is an Assistant Director: Policy, Support and Advocacy at Play Wales, the national charity for children’s play, in Wales, UK. She has over 30 years’ experience in many aspects of play and playwork, including play policy consultation and development. Marianne has worked with the Welsh Government to support the development of a toolkit to support local authorities to undertake statutory Play Sufficiency Assessments. She is an Honorary Research Associate in the College of Engineering at Swansea University and a member of Wales United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Monitoring (UNCRC) Group.
Time, space and permission to play

The views of children

Marianne Mannello

Poster presentation

Abstract

Seeking children’s views on their right to play is an important component of gauging how the right to play is being respected, protected and fulfilled.

Play Wales has analysed surveys completed by nearly 6,000 children across local authority areas in Wales as part of their statutory Play Sufficiency Assessments in 2019. Through the survey, children tell us what’s good about the play opportunities in their local area and tell us how satisfied they are about when, how and where they can play.

While not a complete picture of children’s thoughts and feelings, the large number of participants in this survey means that there is a strong likelihood that the findings would be similar had all children in Wales taken part. Given the benefits to children and teenagers from play – and playing out in particular – the findings highlight some important messages.

Overall, the picture presented is that when they are allowed out, and able to play in the places they want to, most children are happy and overall are satisfied with their play opportunities. There are however, many children that because of parental restrictions – often with well-meaning concerns for safety – are not able to play out and therefore gain the greatest health, social and emotional benefits on offer.

About the presenter

Marianne is an Assistant Director: Policy, Support and Advocacy at Play Wales, the national charity for children’s play, in Wales, UK. She has over 30 years’ experience in many aspects of play and playwork, including play policy consultation and development. Marianne has worked with the Welsh Government to support the development of a toolkit to support local authorities to undertake statutory Play Sufficiency Assessments. She is an Honorary Research Associate in the College of Engineering at Swansea University and a member of Wales United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Monitoring (UNCRC) Group.
Research in progress

Associations between urban greenspace and the health and wellbeing of children

Deborah McCracken

Poster presentation

Abstract

The percentage of the world’s population living in urban locations is set to increase from 55% to 68% by 2050 (United Nations, 2018). Meanwhile, the World Health Organisation (no date) is striving to create ‘healthy cities’ where residents can achieve a greater quality of life through health-supportive surroundings. As such, the associations between human health and wellbeing and urban environments has become a major research and policy focus. Whilst urban greenspace has been linked to various aspects of mental and physical health in adults, the research with children is more varied and requires further investigation.

The current research aims to explore the relationship between the health and wellbeing of 300 children aged 8-11 years old, living in Edinburgh, Scotland, and their use of urban greenspace. This includes an empirical research study, gathering data on children’s use of outdoor spaces (where they went, for how long, who they were with and what they were doing) and self-reported health and wellbeing. Behavioural and emotional problems will be assessed via parent reports. Secondary data analysis will also occur. Greenspace data will be obtained from Greenspace Scotland and analysed using a Geographic Information System software. Data analysed will include surrounding greenspace and distance from home to nearest greenspace.

References


About the presenter

Deborah is a full-time PhD student at Heriot-Watt University researching associations between urban greenspace and the health and wellbeing of children. She holds a First-Class BSc (Hons) in Psychology with Human Health, an MSc (Distinction) in Urban and Regional Planning, as well as an NC and HNC is Early Education and Childcare. Debbie is also the Social Media Editor for the academic journal Cities & Health and has a keen interest in how our environments affect our health and wellbeing.
Walking with children making multimodal and multi-species connections

Dr. Mel McCree

Parallel session 2C

Abstract

This is a personal muse about walks with my three-year-old son, with reference to my feral practice, liveable child-friendly cities and the Common Worlds approach to practising multispecies relationships.

My son and I walk often. We explore space and everything in it. As a parent, I support this deliberately as a matter of vital importance to his sense of place, belonging, health and wellbeing. In this talk I present some documentation of our walks and share our perspectives.

I am often surprised at where my son focuses his attention and delighted at his interpretations of walking encounters. For example, he has a thing about those stick people painted on tarmac to indicate a walkway. We were walking under a railway bridge. He asks, ‘Mummy, why is that man walking into the wall?’ Laughing, we impersonate the direction of the stick man, repeatedly tottering and bumping into the wall. Secondly, the attention he gives to other species is textbook feral practice sensing and responding through a variety of modes, as I encourage and join in alongside. I explore how our multimodal and multi-species reciprocity of attention bears fruit.

This is a talk about what we can learn from children in how they attend to the world. What or who accompanies us on our walks with children? How can we support children’s senses of place and relationships, playing alongside children and in planning, designing and campaigning for child-friendly spaces?
The Community Safety Audit

A tool for incorporating children’s views in design, construction and management decisions about their local physical environment

Dr. Patrick Meehan

Workshop 1B

Abstract

Humanity is now living primarily in urban rather than rural environments, and most of the human population, (especially in the cities of the Global South), is under 30 years of age. If democratic, dignified and sustainable societies are to survive, it is essential to incorporate the concerns of children in decisions about the physical environment which affect their lives. Too often children are involved in such decisions either as decoration at the inauguration of major construction projects or as tokenistic consultation on pre-existing proposals. The Safety Audit programme however offers an opportunity to engage children in these decisions at the upper end of Hart’s Ladder of Participation (1992). See Appendix A below.

Much of the traditional research on children and their understanding of the physical environment has utilised Piagetian understandings of children’s capacity to store, recall and use information about the places where they live. Also, that research usually had children draw specified aspects of their environment on maps that were post-factum analysed by adult researchers. This appears to have led to a long-term underestimation of children’s capacities in relation to survey, sequential and environmental knowledge which excludes children from planning decisions affecting their lives.

In many jurisdictions around the world, Community Safety Audit programmes are operated by police and local government as a way for people who want to improve their public space to do something concrete towards achieving it. The aim of these programmes is to enable people to identify and document aspects of their local physical environment which they perceive as being unsafe or promoting crime. Safety Audits are conducted by members of the community with expert input from police and other government professionals and they examine any crime and safety concerns that the people may have about their neighbourhood and its public spaces.

Once completed, a Safety Audit makes recommendations to the appropriate public and private stakeholders in that environment for removing or reducing the identified safety risks and opportunities for crime. Crucial to this process is that stakeholders are asked to respond formally in writing within a specified period and to state how they will rectify identified issues or why they will not be doing so. In several jurisdictions in Australia, Safety Audits have successfully been used a basis for civil action against stakeholders who failed to rectify serious crime or safety risks. The Safety Audit process is about professionals working with local
communities to empower them to address crime and safety issues which affect the ability of individuals and groups to live life to their fullest potential.

This workshop addresses all four themes of the conference, as it demonstrates how the Safety Audit process can be adapted to include the views of children in concrete ways about planning decisions affecting the places where they live and play, are educated and travel, in order to develop a more equitable and sustainable human society. The experience of, and the data generated by, the Safety Audit process offers new ways of recognizing, capturing and engaging children’s spontaneous solutions for sustainability and resilience. By taking heed of the view of the children we enhance the role of the public realm to support community participation and development for long term sustainability.

About the presenter

Dr. Patrick Meehan is a former Australian police officer with extensive experience of community safety and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. From 1999 -2002 he was Coordinator of the Safety Audit Programme which assisted over 40 local communities to identify perceived crime and safety risks and to document them for remediation by public and private sector stakeholders. From 2000-2003 he taught undergraduate Criminology at Griffith University in Australia and since 2007 he has taught Early Childhood Studies and Education Studies at Canterbury Christ Church University.

From 2015-2018 he undertook doctoral research on how children understand and depict their local physical environment. His research interests are around the journey of children from infancy to active adult citizenship and how factors such as poverty, housing, health, education welfare and justice policy and practice shapes the life course of individuals and communities.
**Active Streetscapes**

A participatory pilot study to explore 9-10-year old children’s mobility in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

Nafsika Michail

Parallel session 1C

**Abstract**

This paper explores a participatory pilot study, which is conducted with 9-10 years old school children in Newcastle upon Tyne, in order to understand their experiences along their journey to school. This is part of a PhD research, aiming to understand how children’s experiences could inform a better planning policy and street design towards more independent and physical active children.

According to the Newcastle Health Related Behaviour Survey 2017, only 42% of primary school pupils walked to school and a 6% used scooters and bikes (Newcastle City Council & Healthy Schools Newcastle, 2017). Streetscapes that promote active travel could contribute to higher levels of physical activity and shape healthy behaviours. Relatively few studies explore children’s mobility and most of them has been conducted in USA and Australia (Panter, Jones & van Sluijs, 2008), without targeting children’s everyday routes (Broberg & Kahila, 2012; Timperio, Veitch & Sahlqvist, 2018) and streetscapes around schools (Christian et al., 2011).

A year 5 class of a Primary School with 33 students participated in this pilot study. Overall, (a) 18 parents completed a questionnaire related to theirs’ and their children’s travel habits, their satisfaction of their neighbourhood and demographic data, (b) 21 children took part in a participatory mapping workshop regarding their journey to school and (c) four of them, along with their parents, participated in one-to-one walk and talk sessions along the actual journey to school. Qualitative descriptions will be discussed and elaborated with regard to children’s and parents’ perceptions.

Further to associations between the built environment and children’s mobility, this pilot study arises questions related to participatory methods with children, the parental initiative to participate, as well as the way that researchers may interpret children’s experiences or perceptions, in order to translate them to policy or design recommendations.

**About the presenter**

Nafsika Michail is an Architect Engineer (National Technical University of Athens) and Landscape Architect (University of Sheffield), with a particular interest in Active and Healthy cities. Her interests focus on the crossroads between Urban Planning, Public Health and Health Behaviour; and particularly on the health benefits of Active Travel, towards healthier and sustainable communities. She is passionate about the responsibility of the designers on
providing motivations for Active Living, through understanding the role of the built environment on shaping values, habits and behaviours.

Nafsika is a PhD candidate at Northumbria University, exploring the indicators of Active Streetscapes for children and how children’s experiences could inform a better planning and design, contributing to more child-friendly cities and inclusive places and streets. She is a Project Officer for Sustrans North, an Associate Consultant for Living Streets North East, a candidate Board Member for A Place in Childhood, and she is co-operating with Ryder Architecture on writing a series of articles on placemaking and walkability.
A Place Standard Tool for children and young people
Addressing social and spatial justice in Scotland
Cherie Morgan and Dr. Jenny Wood

Parallel session 3A

Abstract

We know that how children and young people spend their time has changed significantly with a reduction in the time spent playing outdoors, a massive contraction in their independent mobility and a huge increase in screen-based entertainment. Challenges faced by children – poverty, disadvantage or disability discrimination – intersect with and are compound by inequality of opportunity in many areas including placemaking and place-based planning.

The placemaking agenda has risen in prominence across the UK in the last five years. Creating and maintaining inclusive places means recognising that there are a diverse range of needs and interests across communities, which includes the needs of both children and young people. The Place Standard Tool is Scottish Government’s internationally renowned approach to engaging constructively in structured conversations with people around place. Yet, the needs of children and young people in these conversations cannot always be facilitated by a tool developed with adults in mind. Therefore, Play Scotland and A Place in Childhood are developing two new Place Standard Tools that can complement the existing approach - one for children and one for young people. The new Tools are being co-produced with diverse groups of children and young people in a four-stage process. The approach draws heavily on existing evidence and best practice around how varying age and characteristic groups view and interact with place, and how to engage in meaningful co-production. The finalised tools will complement recent moves to incorporate statutory duties in new planning legislation for children and young people’s participation in planning, and the development of play sufficiency assessments in each local authority area.

About the presenters

Cherie Morgan is head of Strategy and Development at Play Scotland. She works with local authorities and partners to develop strategy and policy that will improve children’s opportunities for play in their local community. Cherie is currently engaged in strategic planning for play with nearly half of the local authorities in Scotland. In addition, Cherie regularly delivers training throughout Scotland, organises consultation events with providers, parents, families and children and young people and has worked with the Care Inspectorate on many of their best practice resources. Previously, Cherie was the Strategic Play Development Worker with Aberdeen Play Forum and was lead officer on a community capacity building project in a regeneration area in Aberdeen, the “Seaton Backies” project which saw huge success in the community taking ownership and improving their own play spaces. Before that Cherie worked for Children 1st and Aberdeen College in roles that involved
supporting parents and training. Cherie is very interested in the learning and development of children through play; however, she is very keen to advocate for play as vital to children’s positive mental health and well-being. She was Deputy Chair of Aberdeenshire Children’s Panel for a number of years so has good knowledge of children protection and the importance of attachment. Cherie has qualifications in childcare and education, and holds a BA in Childhood Practice.

**Jenny Wood** has seven years of experience in engaging, consulting and researching for and with children. She completed her PhD at Heriot-Watt University in 2016, entitled ‘Space to Participate: children’s rights and the Scottish town planning system’. This was the first Scotland-based study on planning and children, and one of few in the UK context. This built on her prior training as a planner and life-long interest in child development, play and human rights. Through both her research and prior experience, Jenny has helped change physical spaces to better-reflect the needs and ideas of children. She has given a keynote on her research in Seoul and also advised on government-funded research into what makes a child friendly environment in the Korean context. To further these impacts, Jenny co-founded A Place in Childhood (APiC) and has been managing the day to day running of the charity ever since. When not engaged with APiC, Jenny is also a Research Associate at the Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research (I-SPHERE) at Heriot-Watt University where she contributes to a range of projects and publications on poverty, homelessness, and child-friendly policy.
(UN)play in a NON-child friendly city

Tasniva Rahman Mumu

Parallel session 4A

Abstract

“A city is the place of availabilities. It is the place where a small boy, as he walks through it, may see something that will tell him what he wants to do his whole life.”

Louis I. Kahn

Urban space insufficiency for children is remarkable issue among Dhaka’s many shortcomings in terms of human development directories. According to annual global survey of Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU-2018), Dhaka has been ranked as the second least liveable city in the world with the density of 47,400 people per square kilometre. This number of population made Dhaka most densely populated city on earth for the third sequential year. Due to unplanned urbanization the landscape of Dhaka is changing continuously.

The landscape of a city is a living learning platform for the young citizen of the country. According to Kahn, if the small boy does not learn anything from the city which guides him to build his goal for the life, it conveys the message that the city is under threat for the child. The present urban fabric of the city is not child friendly. Proper neighbourhood design considering children is a crucial requirement for this densely populated megacity. This is resulting in the lack of play space for children. Here arises the question of where are our urban children are playing? The children of this city practice alternate approach of playing in a non-child friendly environment where physical movement is restricted.

This urban space inadequacy consequence is seen in transmuting the children’s play habit from outdoor to indoor activity and contributing to more sedentary lifestyles. Child’s play is a crucial component in the growth and development of the brain, body and intellect. Studies of how young people learn have proven that children, especially, acquire knowledge experientially, through play, experimentation, exploration and discovery. Research shows that many of the fundamental tasks such as, exploring, risk-taking, fine and gross motor development and the absorption of vast amounts of basic knowledge, can be most effectively learned through outdoor play. The decreasing of play in a city will eventually turn a generation detached from the city which already resulted in the ratio of young people leaving the country for better permanent address.

The proposed research contributes to investigate the playfulness in the urban city and analyse the potentiality of children to use the remaining outdoor spaces. The transfiguring of indoor activities is triggering the un-play due to lack of minimum space for children to explore. The neighbourhood design including landscape, streetscape and urban space need to consider children while growing. The economic background and the gender of the child are affecting the outdoor exposure as well in the city. Girls who play sports have higher levels of self-esteem
and lower levels of depression than girls who do not play sports (Edwards, 1995). For girls, green spaces immediately outside the home can help them lead more effective, self-disciplined lives by increasing their concentration, inhibition of initial impulses, and increasing their ability to delay gratification. (Taylor et al., 2001).

Bibliography


About the presenter

Tasniva Rahman Mumu has been enrolled in the PhD program (Landscape Architecture) of Edinburgh College of Art with fully funded commonwealth scholarship and willing to start her PhD from September 2019. She has accomplished ‘Bachelor of Architecture’ from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) with first class honours and completed ‘Masters of Human Settlements’ from "Catholic University of Leuven”, Belgium.

At present she is working as a full time Assistant Professor in a renowned university of Bangladesh. Having full time teaching experience of 4 years and part time experience of practicing architect motivates her towards research. She worked in the Early Childhood Development of BRAC University as a part time architect focusing on designing learning space for children. Her undergraduate thesis focused on Architectural space for children and Master’s degree of Human Settlements addresses rapid urbanization in the developing world and contemporary urban transformations within the scope of sustainable development and aims to provide insight into the problems of human settlements as related to swift change and to the interaction between modernity and tradition, formal and informal city-making which she feels highly important for the city like Dhaka. She dreams of a better city for children of all age and economic background.
Circular Play

Elske Oost-Mulder and Arjan Vreugdenhil

Parallel session 4D

Abstract

In 2050 the Dutch Government wants to realise an circular economy. But what does that mean for children’s play? We think that play is the example of what we can do circular in public space. We can do with less and fully circular play equipment and all the other space is just public space but with a clever design or green play area’s or play with waist from other economies.

I think we all admit that we need to reduce use of raw materials: (https://kenniskaarten.hetgroenebrein.nl/en/knowledge-map-circular-economy/what-is-the-definition-a-circular-economy/).

In 2015 European commission made an action plan circular economy (http://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/index_en.htm) and it is up to us advisors, researchers, civil servants and other play ‘fanatics’ to take care that this works for play and not against it.

That’s why we have to take care of a circular vision on play. A vision that imbeds circular play equipment, designing with circular raw materials, look differently at public space and use what is already there (allowance to play) and also prevent that the play-market is becoming the waste pit of materials from other industries (for example shredded rubber).

We can be proud a bit because we are already on the right path. Think about Richard Louv’s Last child in the Woods, Tim Gill’s movement rethinking childhood, Scrapstore Playpod and all the beautiful natural and adventures playgrounds and squares we create all over Europe.

There is an enormous profit for local governments to invest in circular play because in play children and parents are involved. This is a unique moment to start the conversation about raw materials and bring it to practice and come to action. Play is the best experimental space for the bigger picture.

So, our workshop is about developing a vision about circular play and how you integrate this in policy, management, maintenance/safety, tenders and design. We can do this as a pretty theoretical lecture.

We also can do a workshop with focus on designing with waste and circular materials (design principals for circular play). This workshop will bring enthusiasm by exchanging ideas with each other. We would like to focus on youngsters at this workshop because they are the forgotten target group in public space.
About the presenters

We are OBB and we are play specialists. We support local government with design, policy, tenders and everything else that is needed to create a child friendly public space. From 1995 we fight for children’s rights against cars, cheap maintenance and grown up wishes. The knowledge we develop with our clients we share with our clients. We train play advisors, give inspiration through our website en we organise all kinds of workshops.

Our goal for 2019 and 2020 is to get on speaking terms and action terms about circular play including the play equipment. This gives a lot of opportunities for a diverse playscape. In our practical session we’ll introduce our vision on circular play and after that we’ll do a design workshop divided in two groups. One group is going to think about sports/meeting space for youngsters and one group about designing a playground with waist from city projects (building, company waist and public space renovation).
Formulating effective policy principles for play

Elske Oost-Mulder and Arjan Vreugdenhil

Parallel session 1D

Abstract

OBB has worked together with over 100 municipalities to formulate their policy strategies. This work shows that a policy for sustainable play must contain three pillars:

1. Quantity and distance: which amount of play space is offered to children and which distance to play space is acceptable. Holding into account that children are growing up and expanding their possibilities to walk or cycle further later in life, while also taking into account the spatial structure of the city.
2. Quality: giving advice about what play areas should contain for all age groups and including people with a disability. What are the present informal recreation opportunities and how can they be improved.
3. Co-operation: who is involved in policy making and implementation. Are residents willing and able to unite to make more play space or organise activities for playing.

In the presentation the following subjects will be discussed:

- Participation in policy making, how to involve children and adults. Giving them a voice in the three pillars of play: quantity, quality and co-operation.
- Formulating principles of quantity in relation to spatial structures, child density and ways to approach quantity.
- Formulating principles of quality: creating landscapes for play instead of small play areas.

Experience has taught us that children play in a network of play areas. For them play areas are only meaningful in a network. Looking at the whole neighbourhood as a playspace instead of looking at separate places is crucial to see this network and form an opportunity to discuss about it. Naturally the conversation is focused on informal recreation spaces, play routing, road safety, use of raw materials, needs for the long term, and walkable distances. A broader focus demands for a change in the use of budgets: from using it for play equipment only to using the budget for a playable neighbourhood. The key is talking about a value per child instead of a value for play equipment.

Our presentation contains many examples of Dutch play policies. We will show the power of different participation tools, such as Maptionnaire. Furthermore, we include many photos of stimulating play landscapes. The presentation is about making strategies, audits of existing play provision, adjusting for play in a meaningful geographical units and about improving play experience in the play areas together with children and adults.
About the presenters

We are OBB and we are play specialists. We support local government with design, policy, tenders and everything else that is needed to create a child friendly public space. From 1995 we fight for children’s rights against cars, cheap maintenance and grown up wishes. The knowledge we develop with our clients we share with our clients. We train play advisors, give inspiration through our website en we organise all kinds of workshops.

Our goal for 2019 and 2020 is to get on speaking terms and action terms about circular play including the play equipment. This gives a lot of opportunities for a diverse playscape. In our practical session we’ll introduce our vision on circular play and after that we’ll do a design workshop divided in two groups. One group is going to think about sports/meeting space for youngsters and one group about designing a playground with waist from city projects (building, company waist and public space renovation).
Metamorphosis

A child-friendly neighbourhood transformation

Marta Palacios Rufo and Sabine Oberrauter

Parallel session 18

Abstract

In the past, the space between the houses in our cities has been used for a variety of activities and purposes, including work, entertainment, communication, as a marketplace and for transport. Of course, our streets were also the perfect place for children to develop – to play, to argue, to fraternise, to grow up, and to become better adjusted to society. This has been the case for many centuries, but the situation changed radically over the last 60 years. The colourful multifunctionality of the street space became the monoculture of cars and other traffic, which is dominated by motor vehicles. In this transition, children were left behind. The street had become a hostile space, full of fear and danger, and it still is today. Children are even trained on how to survive in this environment.

Over a billion children (according to the UN) are living in cities now. City planning and urban planners must be aware that children are part of the city and should be included in the decision-making process. The focus of the EU-Project Metamorphosis is on children and how they are a major indicator that a neighbourhood is well designed as a sustainable neighbourhood. The word sustainability itself is already inseparably combined with children as it implicates 'designed for the next generation'. In the EU-Project Metamorphosis, we consider children as driving forces, evaluators and encouragers of actions and transform neighbourhoods including children’s needs, perceptions and priorities. Neighbourhoods play an important role for children and they should be transformed from a car-oriented into a child-friendly environment where children feel welcome and safe, where they can visit friends, go to school or ride a bike on their own. We aim to improve our cities for future generations with a focus on innovative street transformations all around Europe.

One example that we would like to present is about awareness-raising and the perception of public space as a common good. Public space should be a common good that is equally accessible by all residents. When it comes to on-street parking, space is reserved exclusively for car owners. Currently, for children to be allowed to use a parking space for playing, it would be necessary to do that in a parked car!

About the presenters

Marta Palacios Rufo: I earned my Geography degree from the University of Sevilla, Spain with a focus on urban development and human and social geographies. To expand my knowledge and experience, I did internships in the University of Sevilla, the University of Applied Sciences of Darmstadt, the University of Applied Sciences of Graz and the Environment Agency of
Austria. Afterwards, I decided to start a Master in Sustainable Urban and Regional Development at the University of Graz, Austria. I am finishing my Master Thesis about Child-friendly urban transformations and working as Project assistant at the Austrian Mobility Research (FGM-AMOR) in different EU Projects as Metamorphosis.

**Sabine Oberrauter:** I have obtained my bachelor’s degree in environmental systems science, specializing in geography with a focus on human-environment-relationships at the University of Graz. The acquired competencies are to be understood as a unit with a common interdisciplinary and systems-scientific superstructure as well as a natural and social-economic orientation. Since October 2018 I have been working as a project assistant at the Austrian Mobility Research (FGM-AMOR) in various projects, in particular, in the EU projects Metamorphosis and City Changer Cargo Bike. I am currently finishing my master’s degree in Sustainable Urban and Regional Development at the University of Graz.
A little person on the way to school

Barriers to independence for Warsaw’s youngest citizens; city-walk conversations with an 8-year old

Beata Patuszyńska

Parallel session 1C

Abstract

When I ask my 8-year old daughter which barriers to movement she encounters on her travels around Warsaw, our city, her reply is, “none”. Am I to assume that the city is so straightforward as to be easily navigable for a child? Or is it, perhaps, that we, her parents, protect her so well from potential problems? And then, inevitably, the question arises: how does my grown-up perception of the city differ from hers?

At her age, the law already permits her to move around the streets on her own. And yet, of the 25 children in her class, only a couple (excluding her) make the trip to school on their own. The aim of the article is to look for the answers as to why it is so – both from the point of view of a grown-up and a child. The resulting work stems from observations and conversations, both with children and their parents.

The presentation looks at the barriers, not to mention the experiences and pleasures, that a child encounters in moving around the city. Special emphasis is placed on the journey to school – a journey which is repeated regularly and which, therefore, is the most predictable and easiest to learn for a novice user of the streets.

The city is observed from and discussed on several levels: the role played by the city’s street furniture and infrastructure (pavements, traffic signals, road junctions, cycle paths, public transport: stops, stations and vehicles); the sharing of the space with grown-up users; the experiencing of the city as a sensual and sentimental habitat.

The article is part of a diploma project entitled “A child in the city – evaluation of the situation of children” at “Cities and metropolises” post-graduate studies at The Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts (Institute for Public Space Research).

About the presenter

Beata Patuszyńska is a PR professional with 15 years’ experience in the real estate sector. She has worked variously for commercial and residential developers, as well as management funds. She has an active interest in urban issues and is a lifelong learner and promoter of urban topics among the young.
“Nothing about us, without us”

Using digital technologies with youth activists to create child-centred cities

Sean Peacock

Abstract

Children and young people's voices are requisite for creating cities that are not just child-friendly, but also child and youth-centred. In the UK, youth councils are one of the only formal mechanisms that include young people in placemaking processes. Youth councils are designed to support young people, typically aged 11 to 18 years old, in becoming activists and decision-makers for their local area. In partnership with local authorities, youth council members navigate a wide range of community and placemaking issues and seek to represent the interests of other young people in the process. Alongside this, digital technologies are now offering significant promise for youth participation – for example, social media platforms are helping youth activists to organise, publicise and take action on various civic issues.

This paper explores the emerging and potential role of digital technologies to support the activities of youth councils in their attempts to make cities “child-friendly” – namely, improving the city on their own terms for them and their peers. It centres on a discussion of empirical, embedded research taking place with several youth councils in North East England. In the paper, I evaluate the opportunities and limitations presented by using digital technologies in these settings – for example, contrasting the affordances of digital technologies to enhance communication with the realities of using them in the “low tech” setting of a 1960s local government building. I also reflect upon attempts to design and create digital technologies as a novel form of civic participation with youth council members. In doing all of this, I draw attention to the exciting possibilities presented by young people’s inclusion in placemaking processes, initiating and sharing decisions (after Hart) around the realisation of child and youth-centred cities.

About the presenter

Sean is a PhD researcher based at Open Lab, Newcastle University, UK. Working in a research group that investigates digital forms of participatory citizenship, he is researching how digital technologies can support young people to make better cities for the future. His professional background is as an urban planner, working in London and the North East of England before returning to university. Through his research, he has developed expertise in designing methods and tools to amplify youth voices in placemaking and urban design processes. He also serves as a board trustee of A Place in Childhood, a Scottish charity promoting child-friendly environments through research, advocacy and action.
Designing Better Spaces for Play

Daniel Rees-Jones

Parallel session 4A

Abstract

The way children respond and react to spaces is in some degree a polar opposite to the way adults react…. but this difference is commonly overlooked within the design and build process resulting in spaces that can be inappropriate for children and in essence designed totally with the adult in mind.

Using two of the widely accepted and acclaimed frameworks for maximising play value; The First Claim and Simply Play as a framework and essential methodology we developed an auditing process of spaces that we have done with schools, parks and play settings across the city that helps guide the thinking and development of better spaces for children’s play to great success.

This process has enabled managers of these spaces to consider the affordance and assess the ‘play value’ of their setting and in turn help support decisions in the development of spaces much more playful and with children’s needs at the fore front.

Through this workshop I intend to share the key aspects of this process and give examples of how we have used it to support the design for better playful spaces. Even though we have mainly used this framework in schools, and early years settings the application of the key principles I will outline would also be effective and applicable in different design contexts Using this approach as a framework for observations the process consists of four main steps.

- Identify and highlight the current and missing aspects of a given play environment
  Maximise on the environmental affordances available. “the possibility of an action on an object or environment.” James J. Gibson
- Understand the physical components necessary to create exciting and dynamic play spaces
- Help assess the play value against a methodology which in turn will help avoid duplication and utilise available resources more effectively.
- Take an informed and considered approach to improving the play offer in a space.
Can I influence urban change?

Chinese young people’s participation in an age of globalization

Dr. Yupeng Ren and Dr. Jenny Wood

Parallel session 4B

Abstract

In western democracies, approaches and methods to improve the participation of children and young people in planning are receiving increasing attention. With this, there has been scholarly work on the growing potential for positive outcomes from more inclusive participation for all involved. However, in China, this is a new concept and is under-researched. Using a participatory methodology, we begin filling this gap to explore Chinese young people’s understanding and their potential interests and willingness to engage in formal processes of urban planning. 26 Chinese university students in Harbin participated in the study, and serve as a proxy for Chinese young people. They were asked to reflect on the dramatic urban transformations they experienced during childhood, and ways they may seek to be involved in the past, present and future. The findings illustrate how dominant institutional arrangements and discursive and cultural barriers inhibit young people’s time, space and permission to participate. The findings suggest that young people hold essential knowledge about the urban environment in China and can reflect on urban environmental problems to open up new possibilities for change. This research thus promotes the value of young people’s participation in a global context, and reflects on how narratives of children’s rights fit with competing priorities in a nation with differing social and political values to the Western nations that lead this debate.

About the presenters

Yupeng Ren is currently lecturing in the department of Town and Regional Planning at Yantai University, China. Yupeng has been taught and trained in both China and the UK, and has a wide range of knowledge of architecture, urban design and urban planning. In 2018, Yupeng completed his PhD at the University of Dundee. His general research interest is in the Chinese approach to planning and the emergence of young people’s participation within the processes of urban transformation in China. He is keen to gain a theoretical understanding of the role of children and young people in planning governance, and to examine the structural and institutional and related factors which shape opportunities for children and young people to participate in planning decision-making. Yupeng is also an advocate of participatory research methodologies. He is motivated to see the values of working with and for children and young people in shaping future urban environments.

Jenny Wood has seven years of experience in engaging, consulting and researching for and with children. She completed her PhD at Heriot-Watt University in 2016, entitled ‘Space to Participate: children’s rights and the Scottish town planning system’. This was the first
Scotland-based study on planning and children, and one of few in the UK context. This built on her prior training as a planner and life-long interest in child development, play and human rights. Through both her research and prior experience, Jenny has helped change physical spaces to better-reflect the needs and ideas of children. She has given a keynote on her research in Seoul and also advised on government-funded research into what makes a child friendly environment in the Korean context. To further these impacts, Jenny co-founded A Place in Childhood (APiC) and has been managing the day to day running of the charity ever since. When not engaged with APiC, Jenny is also a Research Associate at the Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research (I-SPHERE) at Heriot-Watt University where she contributes to a range of projects and publications on poverty, homelessness, and child-friendly policy.
Child-friendly cities = human friendly cities

Aminah Ricks

Parallel session 2B

Abstract

Children are naturally curious as they traverse our streets, and they see the city at street level. What does or does not happen at that low level, is a huge indicator of how successful a street or community is to its residents. Therefore, our work is to change the thinking from children as an added consideration in city planning, to utilizing a youth-oriented point of view that blends into city and community development.

How do we support a child’s right to the city and ensure these rights are not compromised? Inclusion is the answer. It costs nothing to listen and how empowering it would be to make children the experts on what they see and share. Children all over the world are/can become powerful proponents of change, which benefits everyone because when we consider city-zens of all ages, we create walkable, bike-able, safer, better shared spaces for all.

Supporting children in their right to the city is fundamental for the future success of creating inclusive streets, neighbourhoods, townships and cities. This presentation will cover the tangible ways that Future Planners works with children and institutions, in New York and Italy, to apply their innovative approach to child-friendly cities.

About the presenter

I love cities. I have visited over 100 cities around the world and lived in 9 cities in the U.S. and Europe. Cities reflect our shared humanity; cities create exciting experiences as well as our greatest challenges.

I am the founder of Future Planners, offering architecture and urban design workshops for children in the U.S., Europe and the Balkans. Our mission is to support a child’s right to the city by igniting their passion and creativity for the child-friendly placemaking within their community.

Further, I am an architect with seven years’ experience working on the restoration of public, private and hospitality buildings, villas and towers in Italy.
Making cities for people

Focus on our youngest

Jeff Risom

Opening plenary session

Abstract

As a global urban design consultancy, Gehl works to understand people’s daily experiences as a way to leverage systemic change through design. The onus of the global obesity epidemic has traditionally been put on the individual, while more recently, research has identified the role our environment plays on obesity and health trends. Gehl’s approach to public space and public life (study and interventions) expands this knowledge by interpreting the factors that influence how people engage with their surrounding foodscape and air quality in their neighbourhoods. In this way we can leverage our surrounding environment as an opportunity to positively influence our everyday choices. This is people-first sustainability.

For food systems: how can my neighbourhood make it easier for me to choose healthier food options? The goal is to make healthy, delicious and low-carbon food affordable and accessible for all. We are working with a focus on youth aged 13-19 to address their food habits at that pivotal age where they have more freedom and more money to make their own food related choices.

For air quality: air pollution has the potential to damage every organ in the body – and babies and toddlers, who breathe up to 4x as fast as adults and whose lungs, hearts and brains are still developing, are among the most vulnerable. In collaboration with numerous foundations, cities, and private sector partners, Gehl analyses hyperlocal air pollution data from Google Streetview cars, with rigorously observed data on how small children and their caregivers experience Copenhagen. We are using this data to design interventions that address the following questions:

• What levels of air pollution do children under 5-years encounter as part of everyday routines in Copenhagen?

• How might cities use urban design and planning interventions to invite people to spend time where the air quality is good, and make air quality better where people already spend time?

About the presenter

Jeff Risom is Chief Innovation Officer at Gehl, leading a team dedicated to service development and applied innovation. His focus is on the relationship between human experience and design and works to apply people-first design principals to communal
ecosystems, such as streets, public space, food systems, and energy. With degrees in Architectural Engineering from the US and City Design and Social Science from London School of Economics, Jeff’s multi-disciplinary background has shaped his cross-cutting holistic approach to all projects. He has worked with both public and private clients as well as non-governmental organizations in Europe, USA, Latin America, India and China.
Children’s right to the good city

The politics of play and everyday life

Dr. Wendy Russell

Opening plenary session

Abstract

Children’s right to the city is more than an individual right to access to services. It includes the collective right to shape the city through participation. The perspective presented in this talk understands playing as a way of participating in the everyday life of the city. Bringing a spatial analysis, and particularly one that acknowledges the politics of space, offers the opportunity for thinking differently in terms of the assumptions embedded in instruments such as the UNCRC.

Drawing on my experience of researching the Welsh Government’s Play Sufficiency Duty, together with the conceptual tools we have used in this research, I argue that children’s right to the city is a matter of spatial justice. I will use Henri Lefebvre’s work on The Right to the City, together with Ash Amin’s four registers of The Good City (repair, relatedness, rights and re-enchantment) to present the argument, illustrating this with examples of practice and policy.

About the presenter

Wendy is the Senior Lecturer in Play and Playwork at University of Gloucestershire, teaching undergraduate & postgraduate online courses on Perspectives on Play, Perspectives on Playwork, Social Policy, and Ethics. Her transdisciplinary approach draws on geography, philosophy, sociology, psychology and biology.

Wendy has worked on adventure playgrounds and in development, research, training and education with local, national and international organisations. Her research focuses on supporting children’s right to play, particularly in terms of the politics of space, policy and ethics. She is a co-founder of the biennial international Philosophy at Play conference.

Wendy’s published works include, with Stuart Lester, Children's Right to Play: An Examination of the Importance of Play in the Lives of Children Worldwide (Bernard Van Leer Foundation, 2010), commissioned to support the campaign for General Comment 17 on article 31 of the UNCRC (2013) and, again with Lester, Play for a Change, Play, Policy and Practice: A review of contemporary perspectives (NCB, 2012).

Wendy is currently researching the implementation and impact of the Welsh Government’s Play Sufficiency Duty.
Children’s participation in urban policies

The Citizenship Chart

Manuel Jacinto Sarmento and Gabriela de Pina Trevisan

Parallel session 2B

Abstract

One of the main problems in the context of children's urban participation policies is the modalities in which their participation takes place. The adoption of Children's Councils is the one that became most usual. However, several problems can be considered in this embodiment. Firstly, in its constitution: how is the representation of truly all children ensured, namely in the diversity of their age, gender, ethnicity and social status subgroups. Then, in adapting the forms of intervention within the Councils to children's cultures: will the parliamentary-type modalities of representative liberal democracies be the most appropriate so that the voice of children can be heard in the multiplicity of their languages? verbal, iconographic, gestural, etc.

We have been arguing that child participation cannot be reduced to an intention, nor is it the yielding of a paternalistic authority that grants fragments of power to younger people; even less, it cannot consist of simulated forms of autonomous expression of children, token modalities or role playing where co-optation for adult positions is exercised. The constitution of “contexts of participation” requires persistent work, prolonged in time and continuously directed to the imputation of the expressive voice of children in municipal democratic decision.

The Children and Youth Citizenship Chart is an attempt to address these issues. The Citizenship Chart is the document that expresses the political choices of children, formulated through a prolonged process of opinion formation and the construction of proposals and solutions, with implication in the municipal political decision. The Guimarães Children's Chart (a municipality of Northern Portugal, with close to 200,000 inhabitants) was carried out in a process of broad child participation and forms the basis of the Plan of action of the Municipality as a Child Friendly City.

Developed through the partnership of the City Council, the coordinating body for actions to protect children at risk (CPCJ), the University and an NGO focused on the promotion of social rights (ADCL), the Citizenship Chart involved three essential components: a broad study on indicators of well-being and affirmation of children's rights; listening to key informants and decision-makers about the worlds of childhood through interviews and discussion forums, and children's participation through focus groups and assemblies distributed across the different neighbourhoods and residential areas of the municipality and with a concern of comprehensiveness and representation.
The citizenship chart expresses children’s proposals for the different areas of city governance. Its profoundly inductive construction based on the opinion of children expresses domains of action rarely identified in municipal policies, such as the construction of conditions of emotional comfort, involving families, in a logic of “intimate citizenship”. The Citizenship Charter is the framework of a participatory city and children’s rights.
Youth Council Participation in City Planning

The Case of Oslo

Taylor Sawyer

Parallel session 3B

Abstract

There are numerous studies about custom-designed participatory urban planning projects with children and/or young people that have given us rich knowledge about what works, when, and where. Lacking however, is understanding about systematic, on-going methods of involving children and young people’s ideas and opinions in planning. This paper presentation asks about the ways in which youth councils are participating in Oslo’s urban planning and the conditions of participation. Both the Ladder of Children’s Participation and the International Association for Public Participation’s Spectrum of Public Participation are used to critically analyse interviews with 19 youth council members and 7 youth council [adult] secretaries, in addition to case documents and meeting minutes from 2017-2019.

The paper is exploratory in nature. The findings describe the topics of built environment and types of planning cases youth councils receive, as well as the process of reading and commenting on those cases. Key analysis points are: the crucial role of youth council secretaries, points of entry into the planning system, conditions of participation, and the [un]fulfilled promise made to youth councils.

The main conclusion is that youth councils are being used to meet minimum requirements for participation according to Norwegian legislation, and their involvement can be classified as a form of nonparticipation. Finally, the research suggests a reformed process around the inclusion of youth councils in urban planning – allowing secretaries more paid time to support the members, using more creative methods of involving the youth council members, and delivering planning and built environment cases with a clear ask and subsequent feedback after the submission of input.

In relation to the conference themes, this paper links directly to the question within Activism and children’s voices: How do child-friendly cities support children and young people as active citizens? It looks in-depth at one measure of supporting children and young people as active citizens - youth councils - taking a critical stance and offering recommendations for improvements. Of the crosscutting issues, the paper connects to Responding to all ages, because the youth councils are an example of young people with a special responsibility to represent their peers, as well a younger children.

About the presenter

Taylor is a PhD Urban Studies researcher at the University of Glasgow studying methods of
young people and children’s participation in urban planning. Her fieldwork was based in Oslo, where she was hosted by the University of Oslo’s Department of Education during the 2018-2019 academic year. Her background is in policy and sociology, and prior to becoming a researcher she worked as a teacher and an afterschool programme manager.
How child-friendly are the school routes in Germany's most bicycle-friendly city of 2019?

An analysis of Bremen's school routes based on the Buntentorsteinweg all-day primary school

Presenter: Céline Schmidt-Hamburger
Co-author: Eva Hoßfeld

Parallel session 1C

Abstract

In 2019, the German Cyclists' Federation (ADFC) named the city of Bremen Germany’s most bicycle friendly city in the category of over 500,000 inhabitants. On closer inspection, the school grade of 3.5 (on a scale from 1-6) was enough to win, which leads to the conclusion that there is still room and need for action. In the family friendliness category, a similar grade of 3.5 has been awarded. This score again reflects the general underrepresentation of children in our society. The importance of better integrating children's concerns into urban planning processes is undisputed. This case study on the situation in Bremen looks at bicycle friendliness for children in a field of urban mobility that is probably the most important area of everyday child friendly transport: school routes.

The study builds upon Caterina Eilt's guideline for child-friendly transport planning (Eilt, 2017) and applies it to examine the child friendliness of bicycle paths in the school environment of an all-day primary school at Buntentorsteinweg in the south of Bremen. The study analyses further empirical data from participant observation focusing on conflicts of use with other road users at the start of school, and an experts interview with the headmaster. In addition to the points raised by Eilt, the study also assesses quality aspects related to cycle paths in the school environment. It further identifies conflicts of use with public transport and motorised private transport and highlights their causes. The result is an adapted checklist that can be used in other schools to better represent children's interests and to motivate and encourage children to ride bicycles at an early age.

About the presenter

Born and raised in an idyllic town, Céline Schmidt-Hamburger moved to Leipzig to study economics and sociology. She graduated in 2018 with a Bachelor of Science. and Arts. Reasoned by an inspiring placement at the Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering in Stuttgart, she began a master's programme in Urban and Regional Development at the University of Bremen. Through her engagement in an office for urban and traffic planning, she was involved in a project with primary school pupils. Together with the children she analysed their school environment and made them think about improvements. The insights gained led her to focus on the lack of representation of children's needs in urban development processes.
Her aim is to identify methods that could advance the equal treatment of children in urban planning processes. She is currently working on a comparative study on school routes in Bremen and Lyon.
Ten commandments to becoming a city with child friendly public space

Wim Seghers

Abstract

Parallel session 1C

“If children are not designed into our cities, they are designed out,”

George Monbiot

Global warming is hot! In order to address the biggest challenge ever to humankind, many cities are making climate mitigation and adoption their top priority. All around the world local governments are making the transition to sustainable cities. These ambitions are translated in big strategic masterplans to make the city greener with more water in sight, more sustainable and with more active mobility, less carbon emission and pollution. These actions make the city more resilient for the heat island effect, extreme weather, droughts ...

Cities that already made the transition towards becoming more sustainable (e.g. the European Green Capitals: Stockholm, Oslo, Bristol (!), ...) have proven that sustainability is good soil for more child-friendly public space.

In my presentation / workshop I want to build up a strategy (in interaction with the audience) with 10 commandments to make sure that the change to a sustainable city is also a change to a child friendly city!

It all starts with correct data: does your city have (enough) (geo)data about children/youth? Is information about the demographics of youth, playspace, sports fields, greenery, water, cycle paths, ... available?

Secondly, it’s important to have a political supported vision and an own masterplan with high ambitions and concrete actions. Antwerp, other cities in Flanders and the Netherlands realise this through ‘play space webs’.

In order to be climate adaptive a lot of cities (like Antwerp) are making new plans to address climate change. Plans like a sustainable mobility plan, a green plan, a water plan, a heat/drought plan, ... My plea is that these plans do not only make the city sustainable, but also child friendly at the same time. This strategy is not evident, so it’s a permanent point of attention!

I want to make my commandments concrete by showing realised and on-going projects (pictures and video’s) such as: garden streets (home zones with a maximum of greenery), green school yards, play stimuli, water features, ... In a workshop there is also room for interaction with the participants on plans/projects/ actions in their cities.
About the presenter

Wim Seghers has been working already more than 10 years as an expert on play space policy for the city of Antwerp. He studied socio-cultural work but specialized during his career in the themes playspace, child friendly public space/planning and sustainable mobility. He advises the city and it’s 9 districts on their play space policy, reviews designs of playgrounds and guided plans for over 10 play space webs.
An exploration of cross-generational childhood outdoor play experiences in Chinese communities, taking Wuhan as an example

Yuanyuan Shi

Parallel session 1C

Abstract

The three generations in a Chinese family have witnessed significant changes in their life as a result of dramatic socioeconomic changes, which have occurred under the process of accelerating urbanization in China. These process brought dynamic interactions and changes for younger generations with the rapid economic growth, the rise of the Internet and one-child policy over the last 40 years. In China, grandparents are intensely involved in looking after their grandchildren following the tradition of intergenerational support and benefit for the whole family welfare. Simultaneously, the environment and experience that children grow up in are vastly heterogeneous over generations. With such diversity in living material conditions, the intensity of parental care and difference in the social context, how urban children's outdoor play experience have been changed over generations in China has been examined in this research.

The value of outdoor play has emphasized in many research fields with its physical, psychological and social benefits for children's development. This presentation reports findings and analysis in children's outdoor experience from different types of housing areas in Wuhan. As the biggest city in central China, Wuhan witnessed massive changes in national and local policies of urban development in recent decades. Such rapid urbanization has addressed significant challenges in urban green space, transport, and migration. Findings for this research reveal differences across generational children's play experiences in the process of urbanization. These generational differences are expressed in changes in home range, frequency, and duration of play experiences, places, and companions for play, and the range of activities undertook.

This research is innovative, and it makes an essential contribution to an area for which there is currently limited research evidence available in China. It contributes to a body of knowledge that examines changing access to play spaces across generations. More specifically, this research offers new insights into the issue of children's outdoor play which is becoming increasingly important due to rapid urbanization, both in China and within a broader global context. Suggestions from this research would be applied to improve children's play initiatives in outdoor spaces and given for Chinese policies and principles in future settlements to build children friendly communities.

About the presenter

Yuanyuan Shi is in the final year of her PhD in the Department of Landscape at the University of Sheffield. Her research interests include children's outdoor play environments in highly urbanized cities, cross-generational childhood play experiences in communities and children.
friendly city policies. Currently, she is focusing on the children’s outdoor environments as experienced over three generations of families in different types of communities in China. Her research is mainly based on fieldwork in Wuhan over the past three years.
An investigation of youth’s environmental behaviour, attitudes and knowledge
How they are influenced by contact with nature and environmental education
Miss Athina Georgiou Shippi
Parallel session 4A

Abstract

Global climate change has been characterised as “the biggest global health threat of the 21st century” (Doherty and Clayton, 2011). Additionally, earth’s biodiversity has been declining at a rate faster than what was ever recorded (Millennium Assessment, 2003; 2005). Given their ecological and societal importance, environmental protection and conservation of biodiversity have now become a global priority (Tilman et al., 2014).

Addressing current and future environmental issues and promoting environmental protection and conservation of biodiversity requires changes in our behaviour (Schultz, 2002). In particular, in order to promote environmental protection and sustainability in the long term, one must promote young people’s pro-environmental behaviour. Young people will inevitably become those responsible for environmental protection and will be the ones facing environmental problems in the future. Therefore, they need the skills not only to deal with, but also solve such issues (Wray-Lake et al., 2010; Cheng and Monroe, 2012).

To enhance pro-environmental behaviour, we must first understand what influences such behaviours, which entails understanding what influences or determines one’s environmental attitudes and knowledge. Environmental attitudes are a key influencer/determinant of pro-environmental behaviour, examined in a number of theoretical models (Klöckner, 2015). However, given the complexity and multidimensionality of environmental attitudes, more research is still needed to address existing models’ weaknesses and enhance understanding. Additionally, whilst conventional thinking suggests that increasing one’s environmental knowledge can strengthen their environmental attitudes and pro-environmental behaviour, evidence in the literature is mixed (Ignatow, 2006; Prokop et al., 2010; Gifford and Sussman, 2012).

This research not only aims to examine youth’s environmental behaviour, attitudes, knowledge and the interactions between them, but also how contact with nature and environmental education might influence these. Particularly, given that children’s everyday life is shifting to the indoors (White, 2006) and there is generally a lack of contact with nature in urban areas, where most of the world’s population is currently living (UNPF, 2007; Kuo, 2010), we are observing a disconnection between children and the natural world (White, 2006). This disconnection was shown to have negative impacts on one’s wellbeing (Louv, 2008), but is also suggested to reduce one’s pro-environmental behaviour, attitudes and
knowledge (Pyle, 2002). Furthermore, we have yet to fully understand how different types of environmental education (indoors, outdoors or both) can influence environmental knowledge, environmental attitudes and behaviour due to the complexities in play (Morgan and Gramann, 1989; Chipeniuk, 1995; Zelezny, 1999; Bixler et al., 2002; Chawla and Cushing, 2007; Duerden and Witt, 2010).

This study adopts a multiple case design in two urban cities with different socio-cultural contexts i.e. Edinburgh, Scotland and Nicosia, Cyprus. It aims to provide a holistic and socio-ecological understanding regarding what influences youth’s environmental behaviour, attitudes and knowledge and the interrelationships between them. Moreover, this study’s unique and novel methodological approaches allow for a way to explore and examine the effectiveness and generalisability of current and preferred environmental education practices using participatory approaches which allow for youth’s voices to be heard.

References


---

**About the presenter**

Despite having grown up in a city, my connection with nature has always been strong. My love for the environment and my deep need to protect it, is what led to my undergraduate studies in Ecological and Environmental Sciences (BSc) at the University of Edinburgh, which I completed in May 2016. Through my Honours degree I became aware of the extent to which ecosystems are not only influenced by mankind, but also influence our well-being.

Observing today’s generations who grow up indoors, I saw the lack of connection with nature that I cherish. This fuelled my interest in understanding the links between the natural environment, wellbeing and environmental behaviour, attitudes and knowledge. In September 2016, I pursued doctoral studies, in Landscape Architecture directly after my undergraduate degree, at the University of Edinburgh in September 2016 under Dr. Simon Bell’s and Dr Penny Travlou’s supervision. I am currently doing my data collection and analysis and I aim to submit my thesis by the end of this academic year.

During my doctoral studies I have been involved with organising the “Researching with and for Children Conference” which took place in May 2017 and a member of the PROKALO ESALA Postgraduate seminar series. I am currently a teaching assistant for the Landscape and Wellbeing MSc course at The University of Edinburgh.
Increasing playful geographies with puppetry

Dr. Matt Smith

Parallel session 3C and Liminal space

Abstract

This reflective account will introduce the ways Matt Smith has engaged in collaborative workshops and project Puppet City, which respond to urban space and well-being agendas, with his colleagues in Geography (Tara Woodyer) and Architecture (Guido Robazza).

The reflection emphasises puppetry as a valid art form in research that explores the ways participants explore ideas of space and, in particular, those of Portsmouth. The discussion will explore efficacy of puppetry as a form of Practice-as-Research that can enable play with city concepts. This project is part of Journeys Festival a multi art-form.

A summary given at the end indicates issues for the future of puppetry in well-being settings with children and families. The discussion focuses on the outcomes of work developed in the 'Puppet Psychogeographies' project. One of the questions arising is: how can an unusual art form like puppetry be efficacious in providing a space to explore questions about urban living? This is an illustrated discussion with performed examples and interactions, using puppets, images and videos.

The liminal space sessions will involve people interacting with the performance installation Puppet City. It looks at how we can use Puppets and play to build a playful space; build and make a city for puppets to play in and interact with, so we can learn more about what kind of cities we would like to live in.

About the presenter

Dr. Matt Smith currently works as Senior Lecturer in Applied Theatre at The University of Portsmouth. Matt’s work is always eclectic, working across disciplines such as drama, puppetry, masks, media archaeology, and music.

As part of his scholarship Matt has produced articles about applied puppetry and looked at the problems of puppetry in community settings and its limitations, for example Puppetry as Community Arts Practice (2009), The Politics of Applied Puppetry (2012), The Practice of Applied Puppetry: Antecedents and Tropes (2015). Matt is concerned with how a critical view of performance explores power, both in the human and non-human networks and in participatory practices.
10 design principles of great play and public city spaces

Maria Sokolova, Inna Kotliar, Aleksandr Frontov and Sergey Tatarinov

Parallel session 3A

Abstract

Can a city public space be child friendly? Can a city playground be an interesting place not only for children, but also for adults?

The study of existing play spaces in Russia and analysis the process of its creation showed that usually the main question is “what kind of play equipment should be put on the playground for children?”. Such a formulation of the question seems to us unsuccessful. Analysis of the general approaches to design and world successful play spaces projects showed that the focus should be on other issues:

- what age groups of visitors will use this play space
- what basic psychological needs, developmental tasks or ability limitations do they have
- what scenarios of using space are typical for the main groups of visitors we can offer
- what scenarios they can create themselves (possibilities for transforming space).

Special attention is to the most important question – can these future users express their opinions, needs and take part in the design of the environment?

These questions made the basis of the design methodology - 10 principles of creating children's play environment. The basis of this approach lies between Russian and Western psychological theories of the age development of children and the urban theories of visitors activities.

Using these 10 principles, our team created several large-scale urban projects in Moscow and other megacities of Russia. Each of the spaces is both playable and social, offers many opportunities for children and adults to gain sensory experience, provides an opportunity to learn new about themselves and nature and establish social connections. A special task is to create the conditions for a full-fledged quality play for children of different ages, different features and possibilities of health and levels of activity. An important emphasis was placed on using playful landscape and natural materials.

The report will cover 10 design principles, examples of city play spaces created on their basis. In the discussion part we invite the group to analyse the relevance of these principles, the problems of the play behaviour of modern children, and small details that make city more playful and child-friendly.
About the presenters

**Maria Sokolova**
1999 graduated from Moscow State University of Psychology and Education (MSUPE). Since 1999 - ongoing lecturer, teacher, associate professor of (MSUPE) and senior researcher at Centre for Play and Toys in Moscow Russia.
2003 did a PhD research: ‘Structure and dynamics of parent-child relationship in the ontogeny of child’.
2013 graduated Child and youth psychotherapy at the Vienna Institute of Integrative Psychotherapy (Oekids), Vienna, Austria
Since 2013 work also in Landscape Architect Bureau «AFA» consultant in designing children's play environment.
In 2011 joined International play association (IPA) and in 2014 founded a Russian branch of IPA, where works as a general manager.

**Inna Kotliar**
1998 graduated from MSUPE
2004 PhD “Structure and content of the zone of proximal development of productive action”
2010-2011 German Chancellor Fellow Alexander von Humboldt Foundation
1999-2014 Associate professor of MSUPE, Head of the Laboratory of theoretical and experimental problems of cultural historical psychology
2007-present time Associate professor of International university of nature, society and man “Dubna”, Russia
Since 2013 work also in Landscape Architect Bureau «AFA» as a consultant in designing children's play environment.
In 2011 we joined International play association (IPA) and in 2014 founded a Russian branch of IPA, where I work as a coordinator of a project “Let’s play out”.

**Aleksandr Frontov**
2000-2004 studied at the Moscow State University of Geodesy, Aerial Photography and Cartography (MIIGAiK), at the Faculty of Territory Management.
In 2013 founded Landscape Architect Bureau «AFA» designing children's play environment.
General Director of AFA.
In 2014 we joined International play association (IPA) and in 2014 founded a Russian branch of IPA. We made our social project "Let’s play out" where I carry out a general ideological leadership.

**Sergey Tatarinov**
2000 graduated from Moscow Research University of Electronic Technology.
Since 2006 work in landscape field.
2013 founded Landscape Architect Bureau «AFA» designing children's play environment. Executive Director of AFA.
Children’s mobility and right to play in travelling

Elena Smirnova and Maria Sokolova

Abstract

Parallel session 2C

Modern children spend a lot of time traveling around the city and country. National and cultural traditions in Russia - close family ties between generations, traditions to send children for a long summer vacation to relatives to the village or sea, frequent visits to relatives, as well as travel and study abroad, school internships - lead to quite frequent child movements around the country during the year and abroad on holidays.

An analysis of the current situation in the field of transport organization and waiting places at transport for children made it possible to identify the next problems. On most railway and bus transport hubs (stations, waiting rooms) there is a great lack of barrier-free access (for infants and toddlers in prams, disabled children, also suitcases on wheels), heavy doors that cannot be opened by children, missing or intricate navigation in railway, bus stations and transport hubs, the lack of children’s play spaces or extremely poor playing environment, poor quality, often unsanitary conditions (inability to change clothes and wash kids), lack of drinking water in free access, staff unfriendly to children. In the field of bus transportation, where these positions are almost absent and in poor condition, the situation is much worse than on the railway.

Only in the airports, the situation is more positive - there are high-quality play environment in waiting areas, there is barrier-free access and child-friendly personnel, play sets, board games during flight. All these conditions support children mobility, self-confidence and right to play.

In 2019 Centre of Play started project aimed to optimize the conditions for children in transport and collect best world practice in organizing it. Creating a friendly environment for children and families, meeting the basic needs of travellers, creating barrier-free access, improving sanitary conditions in waiting and hygienic rooms, improving navigation, developing a model for creating a high-quality play environment in waiting areas and mobile play sets for children during trips, launching a friendly staff training program, family service during travelling. These steps will make the journey physically and emotionally more comfortable, which will reduce the number of conflict and stressful situations, support child right to play and safety.

About the presenters

Elena Smirnova
1966 graduated from Moscow State University, faculty of Psychology (MSU).
Since 1994 - ongoing Lecturer, Teacher, Full professor of (MSUPE) and head of Centre of Play and Toys in Moscow, Russia.
In 2011 joined International play association (IPA) and in 2014 founded a Russian branch of IPA.

Maria Sokolova

1999 graduated from Moscow State University of Psychology and Education (MSUPE). Since 1999 - ongoing lecturer, teacher, associate professor of (MSUPE) and senior researcher at Centre for Play and Toys in Moscow Russia.
2003 did a PhD research: ‘Structure and dynamics of parent-child relationship in the ontogeny of child’.
2013 graduated Child and youth psychotherapy at the Vienna Institute of Integrative Psychotherapy (Oekids), Vienna, Austria
Since 2013 work also in Landscape Architect Bureau «AFA» consultant in designing children's play environment.
In 2011 joined International play association (IPA) and in 2014 founded a Russian branch of IPA, where works as a general manager.
Playful streets, the child-friendly city, and sense of place

Professor Alison Stenning

Parallel session 3D

Abstract

In the context of an ongoing research project focused on the potential spaces formed through play on residential streets (“playing out”), this paper sets out to explore the starting points for thinking about what outdoor play on their doorsteps might mean for children in terms of their developing sense of place, belonging and attachment. As Tim Gill has argued the street is the “starting point for all journeys” (2007), as children, literally and figuratively, set out to find their place in the world. Play is one of the most important ways in which children start to explore and connect with the people and places on their streets and a means to begin to participate in the everyday life of their communities (Lester and Russell, 2010). The paper rehearses the evidence that demonstrates children’s preference for play right outside their front doors and then develops connections to wider literatures on outdoor play, place attachment, sense of place and belonging. Using these ideas, the paper explores a methodology for researching these experiences and draws on initial fieldwork to reflect further. In exploring the connections between children’s play and their sense of place, the paper also asks what child- and play-friendly streets might also mean for adult residents and their attachments to community, asking how promoting spaces for children’s play might facilitate the reanimation of community amongst all residents and across the generations.

About the presenter

Alison Stenning is a social and economic geographer based at Newcastle University, with interests in everyday and emotional geographies. She is currently researching the potential for ‘playing out’ to remake our everyday relationships with our streets. She also works to promote and develop street play in North Tyneside, where she lives, through Play-Meet-Street, North Tyneside and has closed her own street for play regularly for almost four years.
Playful or painful?

Games as an innovative dialogue format for channelling youth’s voices into urban planning

Anna Szilágyi-Nagy

Parallel session 3D

Abstract

In order to build child-friendly cities, we need to build bridges between young people, urban planners and decision-makers and initiate processes that are not only suitable to engage this very specific target group but also capable of providing meaningful information for urban planning. While municipalities and planners are typically toolless when it comes to youth participation, the creative, playful and informal methods implemented in the practice of built environment education can be fundamental when it comes to designing participatory planning processes for young people.

This presentation introduces best practices of the kultúrAktív Egyesület, a Hungarian NGO active in built environment education, in the field of youth engagement, highlighting the potential of live board games to channel youth’s voices into urban planning. The game Urbanity, a dialogue-based board game, is introduced during its implementation in a participatory planning event in Törökbálint, Hungary, and is compared with the traditional dialogue format of the public forum carried out in the same participatory process.

The game event and the public forum took place during the Public Space Development Day of Törökbálint, 2016. The event was organized to discuss the public space development concept of the city and offered a wide range of opportunities for opinion sharing. In the morning, young people played the game Urbanity and discussed development opportunities of public spaces. In the afternoon, inhabitants and several youths from the game event participated in a public forum that informed them about an element of the public space development concept.

The analysis aims to map and visualize the characteristics of the dialogue during the traditional public forum and within the innovative game while focusing on youth participating in the processes. Analyses includes the participants (initiators, invitees, enablers, facilitators), hierarchy of speakers (roles and relations), the communication content (information, opinions, ideas), the democratic genres of talk (monological, dialogical), (Kelshaw & Gastil 2007) as well as the flow of dialogue (length of individual talk, action-reaction) and emotions (positive, negative, neutral) during the participatory processes.

The presentation draws the attention to the importance of developing tailor-made tools for youth to engage them in planning processes, and positions games as an innovative format to
facilitate constructive dialogue between youth, planners and decision makers while supporting the learning of youth about the participation culture itself.

**References**


**About the presenter**

Anna Szilágyi-Nagy is an MSc landscape architect and a PhD student of the University of Tubingen. She writes her research about the transformation of landscape democracy practices through games. Working for 5 years at the Town Hall of Törökbálint, Hungary, she developed her interest in promoting playful and creative practices that smoothen the dialogue between decision makers and citizens at the local level. She is vice-president of the kultúrAktív Egyesület, a Hungarian NGO that fosters built environment education for children. She coordinates game-based participatory projects for youth in urban development processes, as well as the urban game design processes Urbanity and Playhellocity at the NGO. As a board member of the LE: NOTRE Institute, she is interested in linking landscape democracy to the education, research and practice of landscape architecture on local and international level.
Addressing childhood obesity and the climate crisis through urban design

School street closures and low traffic neighbourhoods

Simon Wasser

Parallel session 2A

Abstract

Childhood obesity is a growing issue across the UK. Nearly a third of children in England aged 2-15 are overweight or obese. Climate change is upon us and how children travel to school impacts on carbon emissions and air quality. Can we design neighbourhoods to reduce traffic dominance and promote healthy modes of travel such as walking and cycling? If we designed safer, more playable streets, what would happen? This presentation explores the potential of school street closures and low traffic neighbourhoods to address these public health issues.

About the presenter

Simon Wasser specialises in collaborative design; community engagement and active travel behaviour change at Sustrans. He has worked on a range of projects across London including the Marks Gate regeneration project in Barking and Dagenham which won the 2018 London Transport Award for Excellence in Walking and Cycling. He is currently working on a new greenway & natural play trail in east London, designed with local children. Alongside this he is working on a project with Guy’s and St Thomas Charity exploring the impact of the built environment on childhood obesity levels.
Children and dogs in school spaces

Activism and the sharing of space with non-human actors

Prof. Debbie Watson

Parallel session 4B

Abstract

Dog fouling is recognised as undesirable, antisocial and illegal, yet it persists. The evidence-base for its effective reduction has been highlighted as woefully limited (Atenstaedt & Jones, 2011). This deficit has not been rectified since then. A new approach that recognises the full spectrum of negative impacts associated with dog fouling and the underlying social and psychological issues enabling its persistence is urgently needed. Toxocariasis is more common in deprived communities, in the UK and globally (Ma et al, 2018) so there are pervasive inequalities evident. Inaction against dog fouling is conflated with perception of poor neighbourhood quality and lack of empowerment for positive change. Yet social action increasingly arises spontaneously, often co-ordinated through social media, and can be effective.

A recent public engagement project in Bristol, UK, invited primary school pupils to design their own logos for stencils and to participate in leaving chalk-based messages sprayed around instances of dog fouling, with local authority support. This activity led to a 60% reduction in the rate of dog fouling after a single day's activity and included raised awareness amongst children and their families as well as press and social media attention. This showed that positive community action can succeed where decades of legislation has failed.

This paper will report the activist activity with the children in Bristol that resulted in dog fouling reductions in the immediate vicinity of their school and will reflect on: the role for children in effecting social change in their local environment; the sustainability of such grassroots activist interventions and the extent to which projects such as this can enable children’s voices on issues that impact their access to play spaces and potentially have serious health affects – including contributing to childhood obesity due to reduced outdoor play in contaminated areas (Page et al, 2010); reduced access to nature experiences (Russell et al, 2013) and exposure to Toxocariasis and resultant health complications.

Theoretically the paper takes a socio-material perspective, which involves decentring experience from the individual child to an understanding of the child in assemblages of material relations and uses Latour’s Actor Network Theory (ANT). This allows for a different perspective whereby human (children) and non-human actors (dogs, faeces, stencils, spray paint, activist posters) come together in a particular discursive framing of children’s everyday lives (Watson, Millei & Petersen, 2015).
References


About the presenter

Debbie Watson is a Professor of Child and Family Welfare in the School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol. Her research considers wellbeing, mental health and identity for children and young people in a number of circumstances. She has a particular interest in research focused on children living in poverty, those who are care experienced and children with disabilities. Most of her research uses co-produced, participatory and arts-based approaches with children, families and professionals. Her teaching is mainly with undergraduate students on the Childhood Studies BSc programme where she teaches units including ‘Play and Creativity’. 
Back to the future

Can we learn lessons from a 1970s council estate?

Sally Watson

Parallel session 2A

Abstract

While children’s outdoor play and mobility in residential areas has decreased in many places in the UK recent years, this decrease is not universal (Matthews et al, 2000). Some estates designed in the post-war years still support active communities of outdoor children (Waites, 2018). In particular, estates built in the 1970s benefited from the shift away from building high-rise to creating low to mid-rise estates, which were considered more suitable for families. They also had to comply with design guidance and space standards for children’s outdoor play as outlined in the Parker Morris report *Homes for Today & Tomorrow* (MHLG, 1961).

One such place was the Byker Estate in Newcastle, designed by architect Ralph Erskine with a team led by Vernon Gracie. In addition to complying with the Parker Morris standards, they incorporated ideas about children and public space espoused by researchers and activists in the post-war years and influenced by Erskine’s experience in Sweden. Their pioneering approach to involving the community in its planning is widely discussed, but less is known about how this impacted on the design of space for children on the estate.

Byker had a long gestation period, with work starting in 1969 and, finally, completed in 1982. Demolition and construction were phased, and after each phase alterations were made to plans following feedback from residents and the local authority. In the years since completion, many of the original play spaces have been altered and equipment removed. There are also reports of ongoing problems with anti-social behaviour, which some people have put down to the design of the estate.

This presentation outlines some of the ideas behind the estate and examines the participatory implementation process. Using archival material, it investigates how the design evolved and how residents responded to the new public spaces. It explores some of the themes identified through the archival research and how these might inform the next stage of the research, which is to find out how children and adults experienced children’s play on the estate when it was first built and what their experience is today.

References


About the presenter

Sally Watson is an ESRC-funded (NINEDTP) PhD researcher at Newcastle University. She has an MA in Architecture from the University of Edinburgh and an MSc in Town Planning from Newcastle University
Experience matters

How children’s travel in their neighbourhood relates to their psychological well-being

Holly Weir

Parallel session 1C

Abstract

How children get around their neighbourhood is part of a complex system, involving not just the built environment but a variety of social and cultural factors too. Measuring the distance a child travels, or how much of it they do independently, therefore, does not always tell the whole story or give a full insight into a child’s experience. A child may be allowed to travel and play out on their own, for example, but chooses to stay at home instead. Or a child may be seen to have independence, but is in fact scared and nervous of their time outside on their own.

This research project takes a psychological approach to children’s experiences within their local neighbourhood, and explores the complex range of factors that influence their mobility within the context of Hackney, east London. It takes inspiration from the seminal studies of Roger Hart (Hart, 1979) and Robin Moore (Moore, 1986), who took an exploratory approach to their work and were grounded in environmental psychology.

The research uses child-led walking tours, children’s photography, children’s travel diaries and workshops with children as a way to engage with them and to find out more about their use of their neighbourhoods for getting around and for play. There is a particular emphasis throughout the research on not only measuring children’s actions and movements, but also asking how they feel about these and how their psychological well-being is affected.

Findings show that although some features of the built environment do affect children’s experiences of it, these on their own do not guarantee that children will spend time outside or that they will enjoy it if it they do. Other factors relating to children’s resilience to risk and crime, parental influence, school policies, community cohesion and social class also have a significant influence on how children use and feel about their neighbourhoods. Recommendations for how to address these influences through urban planning policy will be made, in order to create inclusive environments that work for all children, not just some.

About the presenter

Holly is an experienced urban planner, who is passionate about people-centred planning and creating places where people can be healthy and active. She is currently working on a PhD, researching child-friendly neighbourhoods, and exploring the factors that affect children’s experiences of their neighbourhoods and how these impact on their well-being. She takes
a predominantly qualitative approach to her research, using a mix of methods, and cutting across various disciplines, including transport, planning, environmental psychology and geography. She also works as a researcher at The Young Foundation on the Sport England active places project.

Previously, Holly worked in various planning policy roles within London, including at the Greater London Authority, specialising in healthy places and the provision of social infrastructure, and managing the planning policy team at Royal Greenwich. She was also a peer reviewer on the NHS England Healthy New Towns project, and has supported research into child-friendly neighbourhood design with ZCD Architects.

Holly holds an MA in Planning and Sustainability from Kingston University, where she specialised in estate regeneration. She holds a BA in Psychology & Linguistics from the University of Reading.
A new vision for playwork

Ensuring a legacy of freedom to play

Rob Wheway

Parallel session 1D

Abstract

Those involved in children’s play have consistently and vigorously proclaimed the “child’s right to play”. The child’s “freedom to play” has not been as vigorously pursued yet if children cannot exercise their freedom to play then their “right to play” is pointless.

The strategic responses to the “right to play”, have usually been based on the provision of more or improved facilities. Usually these do not improve the freedom to play for a large proportion of the children living within a reasonable distance of the facility. Those providing play facilities rarely consider the actual catchment of their facility which is usually much smaller than people imagine.

Destination playgrounds, whilst desirable, do not increase children’s freedom to play as children can only get there when their parent decides to take them and it isn’t raining and the parents have not got other commitments. There are limited opportunities for play where children make their own rules, reach agreements, etc.

The experience of the last 50 years is that the number of adventure playgrounds and other playwork facilities is small even when Government is generous to children’s play. At times of austerity playwork facilities are often closed down usually leaving no legacy of the freedom to play for children. Fixed equipment playgrounds for unsupervised use have much smaller catchment areas than is generally realised. They are often located in places which means they are little used so provide limited opportunities for children to exercise their right to play.

The author will recommend that there needs to be a new approach to playwork where the playworker has a responsibility for ensuring that the children of their defined neighbourhood have the freedom to exercise their right to play in the outdoor environment. This approach means that the playworker will need to understand how issues such as planning, transport, mediation, inclusion, casual supervision, encouraging “ownership”, etc.

People will need to move away from counting outputs (number/quality of facilities) and learn to judge outcomes (how many children have the freedom to play and whether this is increasing or decreasing). At present there are no playwork training courses that prepare workers to address these issues. New courses will need to be set up.

The workshop will explore what other aspects this approach would need to cover and how playworkers might be trained/prepared to meet this approach.
References

1 The Author carried out numerous post installation inspections of playgrounds installed or developed as part of the Big Lottery Fund.

2 The Author, with the assistance of the local authority, used GIS to map likely catchment areas for 114 of Medway Council’s fixed equipment playgrounds in 2003. Each playground was additionally visited and assessed for play value and usage.

3 The Author has carried out consultations with children and parents when playgrounds are to be built or developed. These have included questions about whether children can attend unaccompanied (free play) or only with parent/carers (destination play). These have been carried out inter alia LB Richmond, Elmbridge Borough Council, Waverley Borough Council, Midhurst Town Council. In addition the paper “Most Play Strategies are Wrong” was based on observational and interview research within Cardiff. It formed the basis of a paper to the IPA conference in Cardiff in 2011.

4 Child’s Play: Facilitating play on housing estates (Wheway R and Millward A) (1997) pub. CIH & Joseph Rowntree Foundation,

5 Traffic and Children’s Play commissioned by Play England but published in draft by Children’s Play Advisory Service. This is a study demonstrating how children’s transport (walking/cycling) has been misunderstood and ignored with damaging consequences for children’s play. Recommendations are made to rectify this.

6 Observational and interview research at over 20 housing estates in different parts of England for Knightstone Housing. Various residents had been raising concerns about children playing. The research found no widespread problems but made recommendations for a different approach based on mediation.


About the presenter

Rob is director of the Children’s Play Advisory Service and has worked in children’s play since 1971. Previously he was an adventure playground worker in Birmingham, a field officer for Belfast Adventure Playground Association and a regional play adviser for 2 national charities. A leading children’s play consultant since 1990. The UK’s most experienced assessor and inspector of playgrounds and also the leading researcher, by observation and consultation, of children’s freedom to play (or not) in the outdoor environment. This research was commissioned for many local authorities and housing associations. Publications include: Child’s Play: Facilitating play on housing estates (with Dr Alison Millward) (1997) pub. CIH & Joseph Rowntree Foundation; and Most Play Strategies are Wrong (paper to IPA Cardiff 2011).
Making London a child friendly city

Designing for Children’s Independent Mobility (Workshop 2A)

Rae Whittow-Williams and Anna Mansfield

Parallel session 2A

Abstract

In March 2018 the Greater London Authority’s (GLA) Good Growth by Design (GGbD) team appointed Publica Associates and Erect Architecture to carry out a design inquiry entitled ‘Making London a Child Friendly City: designing for children’s independent mobility’, to identify what policy and design guidance is required to make London a ‘child friendly city’. The research inquiry has a specific focus on how the design of the built environment can facilitate independent mobility for children (under 18s), i.e. the freedom they have to get around and play in their local neighbourhood and wider city, unaccompanied by adults.

Child-friendly design and urban planning is an emerging field which advocates an approach to planning and designing cities that improves the health and physical, social and mental development of children and young people, beyond playground provision, and recognises the importance of independence and play as part of the built environment as a whole.

The key motivation for exploring this issue arises from a combination of evidence gathered over the last 40 years and the recently launched Draft London Plan (GLA, 2017), which highlights the importance for children and young people to be independently mobile within their neighbourhoods; in particular Policy S4(B) states that residential developments should not only provide accessible play provision, but also incorporate safe and accessible routes for children and young people which create connections to existing play provision, schools and youth centres within their local area, in order to facilitate independent movement through their neighbourhood.

Building and expanding on research that has already been completed on the subject, the scope of the research inquiry includes investigations and critical analysis of best practice policy and built projects in the UK and overseas, with the intention of identifying a set of principles centred around the key focus areas of policy, commissioning process, design and management.

The paper presentation will include an overview of the inquiry, touching upon the key findings and principles that have been identified along with relevant case studies and precedents, and how this is informing the next steps of the subject area for the GLA, including the refresh of the new London Play Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).
About the presenters

Rae is a Principal Project Officer in the Greater London Authority’s Regeneration Team, where she is part of a small team working on the Good Growth by Design programme; a united programme of work that seeks to enhance the design and quality of buildings and neighbourhoods for London’s inhabitants. In addition to developing best practice guidance and research into project commissioning and design quality management, she is currently leading a design inquiry of the topic of ‘Child Friendly Cities’ to establish what further policy, design guidance and advocacy is required to enable the independent mobility of children and young people.

Anna is Director of Research and Strategy at Publica. She provides strategic advice to public and private sector clients on urban design and integrated master-planning and has extensive experience as a Project Director for major area strategies on complicated urban sites with intricate stakeholder interests both in London and internationally. She recently led the Oxford Street Place Strategy and Delivery Plan for Westminster City Council and her experience covers strategy work in neighbourhoods across London and major infrastructural projects, including Crossrail and London Underground stations. Anna directs Publica’s research, covering policy, master-planning and infrastructure. Anna directed the research publication Vital Neighbourhoods: Lessons from International Housing Renewal, has led research for the National Infrastructure Commission and Neighbourhood Planners London and is leading the child-friendly cities project for the GLA.
Who plays, and where?

An exploration into the influencers of outdoor child’s play in urban host communities and the role of co-design in evoking play equality

Marie Williams

Parallel session 3C

Abstract

Although the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 31 states that all children have a right to play, globally children are repeatedly not afforded access to safe outdoor play areas (UNCRC, 1990). This problem is exacerbated in low income, urban communities where population growth has resulted in spatial constraints, ecological challenges and a failure to prioritise children access to engaging outdoor play. Play is fundamental to children’s language, social, cognitive and motor development (Garwood, 1982), and the negative impacts of play deprivation on children’s mental and physical health are well-documented (Mannello and Wales, 2017).

In urban cities such as Beirut (Lebanon) and Nairobi (Kenya), which increasingly serve as homes for displaced children for a protracted duration of their childhood, outdoor play has the potential to foster social integration (Brown, 2014), outdoor learning (Open University, 2019) and environmental enrichment (Design Council, 2018). However in Beirut, with a population of approximately 6 million, there are less than 5 free public play areas provided by the government. Arguably an integrated approach is required to enable communities to democratise the provision of outdoor play areas, through co-designing outdoor play areas where children can thrive through play.

There is growing evidence that adopting collaboratively and responsive co-design principles can empower users to generate the design innovations that tailored to the needs of the users (Exegesis, 2017) and gain agency to influence the creation of the built environment within their public realm (Huybrechts et al., 2017). However there has been limited inclusion of these tools in the creation of public and social infrastructure in the context of urban host communities.

This paper will present the state of play in urban host communities within Nairobi and Beirut through presenting the social, economic and environmental factors inhibiting children's access to play and children’s right to participate in the development of play in their built environment in these contexts. It will seek to highlight how social cultural similarities and differences between children from the host population and displaced population can influence a child's access to outdoor play within the built environment. Lastly it will propose working model of a co-design methodology to enable play areas to be co-designed with local children and community-based organisations collaborating as active design partners to produce contextual and inclusive outdoor play areas for children from both the host communities.
and displaced population. Play areas that incorporate local culture practises of play and enrich children’s agency, while considering how play can be enhanced within the spatial constraints and temporalities that exist in these urban host communities.

Bibliography


About the presenter

Marie Williams is a senior chartered engineer and a PHD student at UCL IGP (Institute of Global Prosperity) with an extensive background in co-design and product and research development. Her PHD research focuses on the use of co-design to develop resilient play areas within host communities in Lebanon and Kenya. It seeks to examine how through co-design play can be integrated into the unique and fluctuant urban landscape of host communities. Also to develop contextual play types within host communities based on social demographic and social factors.

Marie is the CEO and founder of Dream Networks Social enterprise. Dream Networks collaborates with schools, businesses and communities to build creative and sustainable co-designed play areas in disadvantaged communities. Play areas that are co-designed by children during creative co-design STEAM (Science, Engineering, Technology, Arts and Mathematics) workshops. To date Dream Networks has built play areas in UK, Kenya and Tanzania for over 4000 children.
Learning for Resilience

Eleven top tips for successful engagement

Dr. Sara Williams

Parallel session 4B

Abstract

Children will need to be prepared and resilient as they face a future with a changing climate and the environmental challenges that this will bring including increased experiences of flooding. Children can be so much more than a vulnerable group of citizens for which our policies and practices plan for and about. They have rights (Save the Children, UN convention for the rights of children), agency and the capacity to learn, adapt and be important members in individual, family and community planning and preparedness.

Children are disproportionately affected by environmental disasters yet their inclusion in policies and practices related to preparing and recovering are limited. Research on ‘learning for resilience’ (LfR) traditionally focuses on adult learning and to address this gap our research brings the concept of LfR into children’s learning. Using an action research, child-led methodology, 73 (7-9-year-old) school children took part in facilitated group discussions on flooding, adaptation and agency and revealed that children are interested, informed and open to learning about flooding. Our research findings inform a LfR implementation model containing 11 top tips that we proffer as a guide for those involved in children’s learning to develop effective initiatives that allow children to be included, have voice and agency in matters that affect them.

About the presenter

Sara is the Programme Leader for the University of the West of England’s BSc Environmental Management course in the Geography department and a researcher within the Centre for Water, Communities and Resilience. She graduated with an honours degree in Psychology from Swansea University and completed her PhD in experimental psychology at the University of Bristol. She then spent time working in the field of community development with diverse communities and in a range consultancy roles.

Sara’s current teaching and research interests focus on the field of environmental psychology and particularly on the relationship between the environment and people's behaviour. Her current research projects are particularly centred on children’s learning and their potential roles to act as agents of change within their families in relation to climate change and changing behaviour. Sara believes in fusing together her research and teaching and recently won a Student Union team-work award for her work with students on her course.
Making play normal again
Unbrashing the landscape: child friendly cities need sympathetic environments
Penny Wilson

‘...The innate curiosity and gaiety of children, gifts that are so vivid and creative, have importance for future careers and happiness, but if they are dimmed at an early stage they may never reappear in later life. The task is to create a sympathetic environment in which they can flourish.

‘It is too often forgotten, in our brash, practical, modern world, that twilight, shadows and beauty are as important to a growing child as food or air’.

Lady Allen of Hurtwood

In this presentation I will share experiences of some of the places that have influenced the design of the project in the Kings Cross development in central London, which I am currently running with Assemble studio.

From a small village in France, a closed community of faith, a reinvented area in the Richmond area of San Francisco, a play project addressing social injustice in Baltimore, to a long-term piece of play development work in the east end of London, each of these examples have contributed to my particular preference for working with families and communities to coax into being the changes that need to happen for children to have a good quality experience of play.

The models of playwork that were developed during the postwar years focused very much on the playing child unaccompanied by adults, bringing themselves along to a dedicated play space. This model, typified by the adventure playground, is a beautiful thing. However, the financial burden of the upkeep and maintenance of an adventure playground site, and the relatively rare instances of children, especially young children, travelling anywhere without an adult, has somewhat skewed the effectiveness of this model.

After years of frustration at working on relatively expensive projects, with relatively low numbers of children attending individual sessions, I have been eager to try something different.

When Winnicott said ‘there is no such thing as a baby’ he meant that the baby, in ordinary healthy settings, is always in the immediate presence of an adult. There is always an adult-baby team. Using this insight, why not welcome the adults with children as play supporters and advocates? And why not take the play project to where people already are, rather than expecting them to journey to play? If we advocate for child friendly cities, then we, as playworkers, must think about adapting our approaches to remodel the time and space afforded by the urban landscapes that children live in.
I will lead you to an insight into the role of play provision and advocacy for the right of the child to play, whether within in diverse and challenged communities, or ‘high-end’ locations.

About the presenter

Trained as an illustrator, Penny discovered her dream work when employed as a playworker with children with disabilities. She went on to work at Chelsea Adventure Playground, an inclusive setting, where children played together regardless of ‘ability’. She worked for several years at Play Association Tower Hamlet (PATH), until it had to downsize the organisation to survive austerity.

After a period running a children’s café in an adventure playground, she began to work at Mudchute Park and Farm and established and also runs Play kx with Assemble Studio. She travelled widely throughout the United States rekindling free play alongside Joan Almon. She has written three books about play and many peer-reviewed pieces and other articles for magazines and books, and appeared in several films about play.
Child-friendly planning policy in the UK: a review

Launch of the report

Dr. Jenny Wood, Dinah Bornat and Prof. Aude Bicquelet-Lock

Parallel session 2A

Abstract

A major route for achieving children’s rights in the built environment is to align services that do not take an exclusive child-focus with principles of ‘child-friendliness’. We know that UK planning policies have historically neglected the needs of children, and planning processes rarely give them a true and meaningful voice in decision-making.

Therefore, this new research report reviews the alignment of national planning policies in each UK nation with the ideals set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – particularly Articles 12, 15 and 31, which denote children’s participation in both the process and outcomes of planning. It further assesses whether and how planning policies sit alongside the child-specific policies of that country. We find that children are most notable in national planning policies through their absence. Despite this, there are pockets of good policy and practice that should be commended. We conclude with a set of policy-relevant recommendations to improve the child-friendliness of planning policies in the UK going forward.

About the presenters

Dr Jenny Wood, Co-founder A Place in Childhood (APiC) has seven years’ experience in engaging, consulting and researching for and with children. She completed her PhD at Heriot-Watt University in 2016, entitled ‘Space to Participate: children’s rights and the Scottish town planning system’. This was the first Scotland-based study on planning and children, and one of few in the UK context. This built on her prior training as a planner and life-long interest in child development, play and human rights. Through both her research and prior experience, Jenny has helped change physical spaces to better-reflect the needs and ideas of children. She has given a keynote on her research in Seoul and also advised on government-funded research into what makes a child friendly environment in the Korean context. In 2018, Jenny co-founded A Place in Childhood (APiC) and has been managing the day to day running of the charity ever since. When not engaged with APiC, Jenny is also a Research Associate at the Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research (I-SPHERE) at Heriot-Watt University where she contributes to a range of projects and publications on poverty, homelessness, and child-friendly policy.

Dinah Bornat, Co-director SCD Architects, and design advocate for the Mayor of London

Dinah’s practice in East London includes a variety of projects, from house extensions through to medium sized housing developments, office and commercial buildings. The practice is passionate about socially inclusive architecture and urban design and has published Housing design for community life in 2016 and Neighbourhood design, working with children towards
a child-friendly city in 2019. Both use observational techniques to better understand how children use space. Neighbourhood design is a more detailed study, which involved local children and has led to the Mayor of Hackney’s manifesto commitment to becoming a child-friendly borough.

ZCD Architects are delivering quality engagement programmes arising out of their research that aims to bridge the gap between child and young people’s lived experience and built environment objectives. Dinah is a Design Advocate for the Mayor of London, a design review panel member of Harrow and Hounslow Councils and works with a number of local authorities across the country.

Prof. Aude Bicquelet-Lock is Deputy Head of Policy and Research at the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) where she led projects on housing, urban development, spatial governance and infrastructure planning at national, regional and international levels. She is also Visiting Professor at the WHO Collaborating Centre for Healthy Urban Environments at the University of the West of England and a member of the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (Sub-panel 13: Architecture, Built Environment and Planning).
Building for conversation

Using the environment to promote language development in young children

Dr. Yvonne Wren

Co-authors: Dr. Sam Harding and Prof. Sue Roulstone

Abstract

Learning to talk is one of the most important skills we develop in childhood. The process starts from the moment we are born, continues throughout life and lays the foundations for our abilities to build relationships and learn. In later life, it is essential to becoming economically independent with 88% of employers stating that communication is the most important skill they need in a workforce.

Yet many children struggle to acquire the language needed to cope when they start school. A recent survey by the National Association of Head Teachers and the Family and Childcare Trust found that 97% of headteachers expressed concern about children’s development of speech, language and communication skills with 47% of respondents saying it was the most significant.

Recent research has identified tools for assessing the degree to which classrooms can be considered ‘communication friendly’ and be useful therefore for promoting the development of language skills in all children, including those with identified needs. A similar approach could be developed for the built environment to ensure that space is used to maximise opportunities for talk. While early childhood commentators have emphasised the importance of the physical environment for the well-being of children, to date little attention has been paid to how it could also be used to promote language development.

The Child Talk research project worked with children to understand how they interacted with their environment during simulated speech and language therapy sessions. By videoing the children’s interactions using head mounted cameras to see what the children were looking at and combining this with data from an arts therapist, the research team were able to comment on how children demonstrated their engagement with a task. They were also able to see how changes in the resources and environment affected the children’s participation.

Using participatory visual methods in this way during the planning stage of constructing built environments can help us to determine which designs and materials are associated with richer language from both parents and children. In this way, it can help us to counter the current trend perceived by teachers of a decline in children’s readiness for school due to poor speech, language and communication skills.
In this presentation, we will outline the process of language acquisition, discuss the changes in lifestyles (e.g. use of smart phones and devices) and challenges this might pose for early development of speech and language, and introduce the issues we can consider when planning Child Friendly Cities to ensure that we include opportunities for talking in the design.

References

3. https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/93866/tct_bcrp_csc_final.pdf

About the presenter and co-authors

Yvonne Wren is Director of Bristol Speech and Language Therapy Research Unit at North Bristol NHS Trust. Our focus is on carrying out research which helps individuals who live with any kind of communication or swallowing impairment. This includes people who have problems with speech production, language understanding or expression, stuttering, social communication disorders such as autism, voice problems including laryngectomy and people with swallowing or eating difficulties.

Sam Harding is a Health Psychologist with qualifications in research methods and medical education. Over the last twenty years, Sam has conducted research with and on behalf of the NHS, charities, and commercial research organisations.

Sue Roulstone is Emeritus Professor at the University of the West of England, Bristol. She has been a member of the Bristol Speech and Language Therapy Research Unit since 1992 and was a Director for fourteen years. Sue has worked as a speech and language therapist, a manager, a researcher and an educator and was Chair of the UK Royal College of Speech & Language Therapists from 2004-2006. She has carried out a number of service evaluations and consultations with parents, children and young people. She was a core member of the UK national research programme, the Better Communication Research Programme. From 2010-13, she led a large research programme funded by the National Institute of Health Research (Child Talk) to develop an evidence-based framework of interventions for preschool children which included the views of parents and experiences of children.