FCE YOYP Equality Conference + YourSpace

08/11/2018 & 15/12/2018

Evaluation Report
FCE YOYP EQUALITY CONFERENCE
Evaluation Report

SUMMARY

2018 was the Year of Young People and FCE committed to providing a platform for young people’s voices, ideas and experiences about equality to be heard. We hosted an initial event to start off a discussion across young people from different protected characteristic groups about equality and fairness.

YOYP Themes addressed:

- Equality and Discrimination
- Participation

Impact

- **Contribution to Strategic Outcome 1**: Individuals feel respected, safe and have the freedom to lead a fulfilling life where they live, work or study.
- **Contribution to Strategic Outcome 2**: Individuals and groups feel better connected and are able to contribute to public policy and the planning and delivery of local services.
- **Contribution to Strategic Outcome 3**: Groups, whether already established or just getting started, have the tools they need to engage with their local community in a positive and inclusive way.
- **Contribution to Strategic Outcome 5**: FCE is recognised as a centre of excellence for championing equality, diversity and social justice.
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Overview
We were awarded £800 from BEMIS for the conference to invite young people to tell us what matters the most and explain what they would like to do to progress equality. We first invited participants to be involved in organising the Diversity Week 2018 conference and offered supported young people taking part in having their views heard and acted upon at local, national and UK levels – wherever the course of action that was suggested would need to be addressed.

We initially asked for help from the outreach officers from the Scottish and UK Parliament outreach team (Ewan Masson and Gary Hart) and from Fife Council Community Education (Linsey Neilson). FCE Staff Pat Greenhough and Elric Honoré, hosted the #YOYP Equality Conference on Thursday 8 November 2018.

We had an icebreaker to drop our (physically and mentally) our labels with a game of Human Pizzas (click here to find out more) and then we got stuck in more serious discussions around equality and privilege.

(Twitter) Pizza game Young people and equalities – @FCE_Pat

Human Recipes (Pizza edition) – learning about dropping labels

Knowing and Understanding Privilege
To break into the more difficult discussions, we first watched a video that went viral in America last year (see below), that makes the case in less than 4 mins the impact of discrimination (or lack of privilege) on young people’s life chances. At FCE, we think this is still relevant today in Fife and Scotland:

**Understanding Privilege**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4K5fbQ1-zps&t=3s

**What (in) Equality?**

We opened up the floor with a challenge to young people: how to work (as a group) with different characteristics on a theme that advances equality for all of us?

**What Equality?**

- Polarisation, echo chambers, distrust, fake news etc
- Fragmentation, isolation under labels
- Equality: it’s not (just) about you

Simply put, the equality challenge we put forward to participants was difficult because it concerns making things fairer for more people than just you / your cause / your group / your label. It involves looking beyond what we know and engaging with different currents of justice. While it is a difficult challenge but we all recognised the very real issues arising from polarisation / fake news / isolation and distrust.

**Agents of change: working with Elected Representatives**

Ewan Masson from the Scottish Parliament Outreach Team then gave us an insight of how the political system works and how we can make sure participants have their voice heard on the right platform:
Vote of Hands: What matters (now)?

It was then time to vote. We split the vote in 2 sessions to gauge a sense of the most important topics that should be dealt with. First, we held a vote of hands over the ongoing inequality issues that had already been identified at local, national and international level (see Equality in Fife, Is Scotland Fairer and Scotland’s Sustainable Development Goals).

The highest priority topics were:

1. **Poverty and wealth inequality:**
Quick show of hands on today’s most pressing issues for young people in Equality and Human rights

Groupwork: what could next we do to lead progress in equality?

For round 2, we then discussed in groups what would what should be done and why it matters. The challenge was to come up with ideas that were fair, inclusive and sustainable so that not one group would come out as more disadvantaged than another through the proposal.

Through this discussion, we narrowed down all ideas to 3 proposals in a short time – it was not easy and young people agreed that having some practice and training in pitching ideas would be beneficial.
Proposals

The groups came up with 5 proposals that were pitched and debated across all participants in regards to why they mattered and how fair they were. Key points in those are summarised below:

- **Inequality of opportunity by treatment**
  Increasing awareness of barriers faced by minority groups in key areas of life (access to employment and access to education) and resulting poverty.

- **Mental Health Education**
  This involves increasing awareness of mental health, as well as increasing safe spaces, support for families and individuals via mental health first aiders and peer educators.

- **Transition across education**
  To address the issue of people being segregated in education through early tests that do not take into account circumstances and this persisting afterwards (primary, secondary, and tertiary/college).

- **LGBTQ+**
  This involves increasing education on LGBTQ* (with links to TIE – Time for Inclusive Education) and aiming for increased awareness, less discrimination, fair judgement, getting rid of labels and increase use and number of safe spaces.
Teacher Training
Involves increasing mental health awareness and training, and support in addressing bullying; this could be facilitated through peer educators.

Votes

The floor was then open for proposals and we voted on those using the Scottish Single Transferrable Vote system. There were several overlaps in the proposal across Mental Health Education and several ideas for Teacher Training, this came through clearly in the ballots with Mental Health Education in the clear leads at 53.8% in the first round.

We concluded YOYP Equality Conference with this priority and a call to action for young people to design and lead a Mental Health Education project that would address the principles of Participation, Education and Equality and Discrimination.

Participant profile

17 people attended the workshop on 08/11/2018, or representing/attending the following organisations:

- Fife Council
- Scottish Parliament
- Enable
The participants’ age range spanned from 16 to 26. 6 of the participants identify as female and 5 as male, 4 as other / not applicable.

7 participants stated that they have a disability.

8 self-classified as Scottish, 2 as other British, 1 as mixed ethnicity, 6 as Other/not disclosed.

10 of the participants stated they have no religion, and 1 stated Judaism and Buddhism.

5 participants self-classified as Heterosexual/Straight, 1 as Lesbian/Gay Woman, 2 as Gay Man, 1 as Bisexual, 1 as Other / Pansexual.

2 participants had caring responsibilities, for a disabled adult and for a disabled adult and child.

8 were single and 2 in long-term relationships.

4 were in further/higher education, 4 were at school, 2 were employed part-time 1 was self-employed, 1 was at school and employed.

**Feedback**

![Feedback Chart](chart.png)
12 participants scored the workshop. Prior to the workshop, 4 participants scored their own knowledge at 5 out of 5, 7 at 4, 0 at 3, 1 at 2 and 0 at 1.

After the workshop, 6 participants scored their knowledge on the subject as 5 out of 5 and 5 at 4. This marked a significant improvement of their knowledge of the field of equality as a result of this event.

Other Comments:

“I will use this event to inform others of equality issues”

“It will be of use for my own initiatives”

Future training needs/request:

“To allow more time for pitches and to incorporate the high schools”

“Better organisation & time. More discussion needed around protected characteristics. Good starting point for discussion!!”

“To allow younger people/high schools to speak more compared to college students/workers. Maybe approach high schools to have a campaign. To start earlier to allow less time constraints.”
Follow up activity updates: Equality Collective and #YourSpace

Two weeks after the conference, we had our follow up #YOYP Equality Collective planning meeting and thanks to Ewan from the Scottish Parliament Outreach Team, the planning group was lucky to have a quick visit of Holyrood in the quiet after hours before settling in the committee room to plan how to implement the ideas discussed.

What we discussed was how #YourSpace could address the barriers faced by different equality groups, and deal with the stigma around accessing services and ideas for long-term solutions for mental health. A key point we discussed was the importance of young people to have the confidence and know-how for addressing mental health positively and as early as possible. The proposed way to do this would be through an informal, peer-led #YourSpace for young people, that would extend the idea of ‘safe spaces’.

Our next step is to support the participant group to asking young people what this could look like, for example, a one-stop shop, a guide, online portal or building on the ‘safe spaces’ concept.

The first sketch of the #YourSpace logo
We piloted the first consultation on 15 December on a very cold day at the Postings, kickstarting with a series of questions to members of the public who were young people themselves. We also asked people from other age groups to answer as parents, friends or relatives, and anyone who would like to pitch ‘a word of advice to their younger self’. See below for a summary of answers from 25 consultation participants:

**Q1 “What the space could look/be like?”**

- Non-judgemental
- Easy going/friendly
- Informal
- Confidential
- Space to go and talk without people deciding what you need
- Not referring you to a service when all you need to do is talk
- Getting it Culture
- Comfortable spaces
- Discreet
- Rotating rota for the space
- Need to be aware that some youths may feel they can’t join
- Instead of a one stop shop consider having weekly themes or things that tackle different issues
- Make sure is welcoming to all
- Someone to talk about my issues as they change
- Low level support
- Need sofas/beanbags
- Just listening
- Reassurance everything you talk about is private
- More casual/less formal
- People to welcome you into the space
- Visits by different activity leaders and sign ups on the spot
- Stationary as young people won’t go to a moving group
- Pre exam destress points

**Q2 “What do you think causes people to feel anxious or low?”**

- Worrying about the future and having nobody to talk to about it
- Thinking you are different from everyone else
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• Believing all the stuff on social media

Q3 “What can people do to help themselves or others when they feel anxious or low?”

• Talk to others
• Remind yourself that everything is okay
• Remind yourself that it is okay to feel low, how can you identify the high’s
• Learn to know you are not alone and there are others like you
• Learn to talk

Next steps

We are now preparing the next round of consultations to take place within High Schools in Fife following the January 2019 preliminary exams. We are supporting young people to link with the Fife Council’s Our Minds Matter framework, and also with Active Schools Fife who are Equality Pathfinders. We are recruiting more volunteers who passionate about young people’s mental health and equality to help us with the following:

• Tell us about how you would remove barriers in accessing mental health services for minority or disadvantaged groups
• Tell us about projects or campaigns that are taking place
• Help organise and participate at the next #YourSpace event
• Tell us about what kind of information or guidance you would find helpful

Looking beyond: Equality and Mental Health

Mental health is area that spans across the protected characteristics such as ages, disabilities, genders, racial and cultural backgrounds, religious beliefs and sexual orientations. Those characteristics give rise to alternative ways of perceiving, thinking and acting that can increase and enrich our understanding of mental health and recovery. We think that supporting a diversity of discussions in #YourSpace can enable peer-learning and offer a new take on participation.

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Funded by BEMIS Scotland via the Year of Young People 2018. This is a partnership between BEMIS Scotland and the Scottish Government to facilitate diverse, multicultural celebrations.
Fife Centre for Equalities aims to build a collective voice to champion equality, diversity, inclusion and social justice across Fife and beyond.

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