

Artsplay Highland Action for Children's Arts meeting

6th April 4.30pm Eden Court, Inverness

Purpose: To discuss access to the arts by children and young people.

Introductions:

Julia Nelson: APH chair and early years with NHS, background in drama

Elaine Brechin: ST Joseph's After School and arts provider

Chris King: Zenwing Puppets

Vicky Stonebridge: Freelance Artist and HI-Ex organiser

Bob Pegg: Freelance Storyteller and Musician

Nick Ferne: Arts Officer -Moray Council

Heather MacDonald: Inshes School Club

Margot Henderson: Freelance Poet and Storyteller

Linsey Webster: Childcare Partnerships

Brian o'hEadra: Gaelic Arts Officer

Lizzie McDougall: Artist and Promoter

Roxana Meechan: Youth Development Officer/Drama background

Vicky Ireland: Children's Theatre/Director/writer

Jelica Gavrilovic: APH Projects Manager/Freelance/Writer

Apologies: Kati Kozikowska and Monica Neeling

Julia: Artsplay Highland and Action for Children's Arts working together in the Highlands to make sure arts provision for children (age 0-12) is maintained and improved on. Two questions were proposed to people present.

1. Do we think the arts are a luxury for children?

Roxana - arts can help through difficulties - aid understanding - sharing this knowledge is what's needed

Margot -recorded response

Bob Pegg -recorded response

Acknowledgement that there is an unquantifiable effect of the arts -of what we are doing.

Vicky reminded everyone that ACA focussed on 0-12 yrs - juniors.

Lizzie - Notices how different arts delivery is in each of the schools across the Highlands

Heather -Inshes believe making is really important

Brian - Creative Scotland are shifting beaurocracy and streamlining form-filling - re funding issues and small projects

Roxana - motivation re funding is needed, difficult for artists to access, also for cmtty to access services

Lizzie - Curriculum for Excellence - possibility to explore arts in many different ways. But budgets have disappeared. Schools have small devolved budgets allocated each year -will this carry on?

Margot -is there still respect for creativity and play. Artists working in settings means better provision

Jelica - tradition and modernity need to work together for inclusive approach to arts delivery for the future

Julia -recorded

Brian - digital media/tv/computers don't have to be a negative thing

Vicky S - fantasy art works well - it's an arena that needs lots of creative people

Bob - Christina Stewart not here today, but she did a great project on Gaelic Lullabies
How can all these different things be brought together?

Julia - Scottish Book Trust and book bug project still delivering

Vicky - do we think there is a malaise in society re arts?

Heather - children are alone a lot more now with computer games/dvds and tv

Vicky - Comics and digital media can be useful - HI-Ex is enabling children to use these tools more positively

Bob Pegg - working on avatars online using old stories with new media
Old and new coming together

Linsey - children aren't always interested in performing - they don't like being judged

Lizzie - back to 0-12yrs - it's crucial that children have access to making in 3D world - sewing etc is vital.

Heather - is teaching children at after-school to knit

Nick Ferne - the mechanisms have disappeared to enable things to happen

Vicky - who is supporting artists now in training/education

Brian - Lobbying needs to happen for 0-12yrs. Creative Scotland is getting rid of beaurocracy , getting rid of form-filling

Roxana - Funding is an issue, accessing services in the Highlands

Lizzie - a topic can be approached in many different ways through the curriculum of excellence. Budgets have disappeared, generally and schools have devolved budgets -an allocation each year.

Margot - working with an artist is quantifiably better - creativity and play are improved

Jelica - surely it's all about connecting tradition with modernity -not losing what we like from the past, but also stepping in to the future

Brian - television and computers don't always have to be a negative thing

Vicky - fantasy art needs creative people

Bob Pegg - Chrissie has done quite a bit of work with babies and Gaelic lullabies
There is no one with an overview that can bring all these things together. There is concern over administering of funding and that small groups of people are responsible for it in the Highlands.

Linsey - does a directory of artists who work with 0-12yrs exist

Chris - a pilot project working with puppets has been happening on the west coast

Conclusions:

- There is still a lot of work to be done to connect with early years, primary and care sectors to ensure arts education and play are included
- An artists directory and skills bank would benefit these sectors
- Open access funding would be preferable to closed committees
- We have to acknowledge we are living in a transitory period between tradition and modernity
- How do the arts sit within the curriculum for excellence -are they taught as subjects in their own right as well as part of other areas
- How soon can arts be introduced to children's education and in what form
- Can stimulating creativity happen without a great deal of adult input
- In the Highlands we have lost all arts officers and culture co-ordinators -are these to be replaced at all
- Can the schools decide what artistic input to have and will this be based on equality of access
- The performing arts suffer far more than visual -how do we retain interest in children as they get older

- Creative Scotland - what is the focus on children age 0-12 yrs
- The Government -how will it ensure that each child has access to the arts
- How will the local authority devolve access to the arts
- Literacy - is this on the agenda too

Next possible meet-up could be in October after Music Trains