

Get ready for change! project update August 2008

Get ready for change!

We've investigated how well children's rights are respected in England and reported our findings to the UN in Geneva – it's now time to campaign for change. To show we mean business, we even have a new name – **Get ready for change!** We'll also have a new website soon, which will be up and running later on in September.

The next phase of the project

Over the last two months the steering group, website team, investigators and Get ready staff have been working out how to make sure the project is ready to start campaigning for change. Here are some of the decisions that were made over the summer:

- There will be three campaign teams made up of web team members, investigators and champions, working on children's rights issues
- Other interested young people will be able to apply to join these campaign teams
- The campaigns will be monitored and supported by the steering group and Get ready staff
- The campaign issues will reflect recommendations from the Get ready report and must be based on human rights principles (such as fairness, equality, dignity and respect)
- The final decision on the campaigns will be made after the UN Committee issues its concluding observations (recommendations) on the UK in October.

We will be planning the campaigns at the October residential (see *date for your diary*).

Reporting to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

In June, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child sent the UK Government a list of questions, based on the things it heard from children's charities and others at the pre-session working group in Geneva. Lots of the issues in this list were ones that the Get ready for Geneva delegation had raised in the meeting, and that we had talked about in our report!

You can download the list of issues from http://www.getreadyforgeneva.org.uk/childrens_rights/committee_on_the_rights_of_the_child

On 23 and 24 September, Kat Terry and Imogen Schon (volunteers from the project) will be travelling to Geneva to observe the UN's examination of the UK Government. They'll be taking lots of notes, and you'll be able to read their reports on the Get ready for change website at the end of September.

Children's rights investigation – research report

Ciara has been working really hard all summer to complete the research report based on the children's rights investigation. Web team members and children's rights investigators have now selected a design company and the final report will be published in November. The report will be launched at CRAE's annual conference (20 November).

Outreach

Krishna has been busy promoting the project this summer, and it looks like the rest of the year will be jam-packed too! She has worked with over 80 young people in Plymouth, Surrey and Nottingham, delivering workshops and training sessions. The participants have discussed local issues that affect them, the decision-makers they can get to make children's rights pledges, and how they can make change happen where they live.

If you would like Krishna to run a session near you or help you spread the word about children's rights, e-mail her at kmaroo@crae.org.uk

What have you been up to? E-mail Krishna and let her know: kmaroo@crae.org.uk

Informed and Influential

On Wednesday 20th August, Carla and Krishna made the 5 hour journey to Cornwall to deliver the very first Informed and Influential training day outside London. Jacob (steering group) and Hanna (champion) helped plan and deliver the children's rights training to 16 young people. Julia Goldsworthy MP came along to talk about her role as an MP and the issues that affect young people in Cornwall.

Jacob also persuaded her to make a children's rights pledge, which can be found here:

http://www.getreadyforgeneva.org.uk/take_action/pledge_archives



Champions

This summer children's rights champions have been busy campaigning for children's rights!

- Hanna from Cornwall has been speaking out against the curfew in Redruth. The curfew says that anyone under 10 has to be indoors by 8pm, and those under 16 have to be home by 9pm. Read what Hanna said in a BBC interview: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7550221.stm>
- John from Salford has been busy planning a local Informed and Influential training day for children and young people. He has just applied for some money from the local council to help him out. We are keeping our fingers crossed!
- Laura-Liz from Staffordshire is really passionate about promoting and improving the mental health and wellbeing of students. Read all about her 'Stress and strain of school' campaign here: http://www.getreadyforgeneva.org.uk/take_action/article/stress_and_strain_of_school/West%20Midlands

November 2008 – pledge month

Pledge month is all about action. We want local decision-makers to make public promises on our website to improve the lives of children and young people where YOU live.

We will be in touch with more information about pledge month in the next few weeks.

Let Krishna know if you would like to run an activity during pledge month, or e-mail her for more information – kmaroo@crae.org.uk



Spotlight on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 23 says that disabled children have the right to a full life, and to be part of the community.

Here are some of the things that are included in this right:

- Disabled children should be able to do all the things that non-disabled children do - they have the right to get support to help them do this
- Disabled children have the right to use play and leisure facilities
- Disabled children have the right to services that will help them have the best possible life
- Disabled children have the right to express their views and for these views to be taken into account.

The Get ready for Geneva report found that disabled children in England are often not given the opportunity to express their views and make decisions about their own lives. You recommended that the UK Government take action to change this. The report also found that youth clubs and leisure centres often don't meet for disabled children's needs.

Get ready for Geneva advisers

Adam, Imogen and Charlie-Maud did an excellent job as Get ready for Geneva advisers this summer. Here's what Adam had to say about working in the CRAE office:

For most people, summer means going on holiday – time to get out your buckets and spades, build sandcastles on the beach, and catch up on all the extra hours of sleep you'd lost in the hectic whirl of your daily routine.

But not for us. Instead, three young people – myself included, the others being Imogen and Charlie – spent their holidays working as young advisers for CRAE, at their offices in Islington.

It was certainly a valuable experience, and we've all come away with our own new skills. Even if nothing else, we've hopefully helped out, relieving some of the stress on all those diligent workers who – like us – are spending this time of year stuck in the office.

So what were we doing? Well, there were a number of tasks to be carried out, all covering slightly different topics. For example, I was given the job of finding out about different international treaties the UK had signed up to, and how far it had got in reporting back on its progress. On another day, I was asked to find out which – if any – of the backbench Labour MPs had legal experience, though it turned out to be very few.

It's always good to do work with CRAE, and even better when you learn so many new things. All of the skills we've developed, and all of the knowledge we've gained, will certainly be invaluable in the future. This wasn't the first time CRAE brought in young people like us, and neither will it be the last. It's certainly worthwhile, and I'd recommend it to anyone in the future..

It's not often you get the opportunity to gain this type of experience and make such a valuable contribution at the same time; CRAE does so many things for young people like us, and it's always good to try and give something back. It might not be sunbathing on the coast, but I know where I'd rather be.

Read more from the advisers:

http://www.getreadyforgeneva.org.uk/about/steering_group_comments/my_summer_as_a_young_adviser_by_imogen/

http://www.getreadyforgeneva.org.uk/about/web_team_comments/young_adviser_working_with_crae/

Campaign packs

Do you know anyone who might want copies of our 'Get ready for change' campaign pack? If the answer is yes, e-mail skistnah@crae.org.uk with details of how many packs you would like and where they need to be sent.

Date for your diary – 27 and 28 October

We will be running a big residential for all Get ready for change volunteers on **27 and 28 October in Birmingham** – steering group, web team, investigators and champions – to plan our campaigns. Your invite will arrive on your doorstep next week – places are limited so it will be first come, first served!

Other dates:

30 October Informed and Influential in Camden, London

20 November CRAE's annual conference, London

29 November Informed and Influential in Rochdale.