

our lives

snakes & ladders



Barnardo's Paisley Threads would like to thank the following people who assisted with the development of "snakes & ladders".

Paisley Partnership

SCVO

and most of all the young people who
have been involved in the project

“In order for children to be able to express their views openly and confidently, adults working with them must take positive action to support and enable this and, in so doing, to overcome those barriers that may prevent children’s views from being expressed”.

Harry Shier - Pathways to participation: Openings, Opportunities and Obligations
Children & Society Volume 15 (2001) P107

leaving care... young tenants...
foster care... promoting participation...
benefits... youth justice...
young carers... young parents...
children’s rights...

The 'snakes & ladders' training pack was designed to enable children & young people to raise awareness of the issues that they identify as being important in their lives. The pack originated from a request from Barnardos Scotland for the Paisley Threads project to run a workshop on Social Exclusion at an Annual Conference in November 1999.

Staff and service users at the project came up with the idea of using a game during the workshop to enable participants to experience the feelings associated with social exclusion. Snakes & ladders was chosen because it seemed to highlight the experiences of many young people - a life of up & downs!

The original board was designed by students at Reid Kerr College in Paisley and the workshop proved to be a great success with many of the participants requesting future training sessions for their own organisations. This enabled the Project to highlight to many more people the issues that young people are faced with, in an interactive and powerful way.

Due to this success plans for further developing the pack began in April 2000 with the support of Paisley Partnership and a grant from SCVO Local Social Capital Fund. The result of this partnership working was the reproduction of the 'snakes & ladders' board into a more practical package with eye-catching additions - large inflatable dice!

Funding from Paisley Partnership enabled Paisley Threads to employ a Development Worker to further develop the training in partnership with young people from social inclusion partnership areas in Paisley. This post was initially for a 1-year period but due to ongoing demand for training and additional funding from Paisley Partnership and Barnardos the post was extended until the 31 March 2003.

The funds raised from the sale of the Snakes and Ladders Training Packs, and the delivery of the training, provided a budget with which to pay young people for delivering training. The budget also enabled Paisley threads to provide opportunities for young people to take part in other educational and social opportunities to further develop their skills and confidence to enable the most vulnerable and excluded to have a chance to participate in the 'snakes & ladders' project.



NORTH AYRSHIRE
COUNCIL

Dear Selwyn

RE - A SNAKES & LADDERS APPROACH

You recently delivered the above training to staff within North Ayrshire Council. The feedback from those who participated was excellent with all commenting on the powerful impact of the game.

As discussed recently by phone we would therefore like to purchase this pack for our own use. I understand from our conversation earlier today that you currently have none in stock, but are anticipating getting more soon.

As such can you please advise when another pack becomes available so we can arrange to purchase the game from yourselves at the agreed price of £600.00 at the earliest possible opportunity.

Yours sincerely

Caren McLean

CAREN MCLEAN
SERVICE MANAGER (TRAINING)

young people



Young people participate in 'snakes & ladders' by developing the issue cards for the game and by facilitating training sessions. There have been many personal benefits for young people but they have identified the following as being the most important:

- Acquiring new skills & self-confidence, impacting on future employability.
- Increased responsibility e.g. time management for meetings, attending training sessions
- Experiencing new challenges
- Extending social contacts & networks - meet and share experiences with other young people
- Have a say in their local community
- Opportunity to travel to other parts of the UK
- Earning an additional income
- Learning about the organisations that impact on their lives.

The project has assisted 11 young people to move into employment and a further 10 to access further education through the increased awareness of career plans and educational needs.

"I moved to Paisley in 2000, where I didn't know anybody, wasn't working and had just moved into my first flat, which is difficult enough for any young person. I got introduced to Barnardos Paisley Threads for support, and found out about the 'snakes & ladders' sessions. I was asked to attend one and haven't stopped. Since my first session my confidence grew and it has provided me with a chance to be in control for a change... It helped me to understand the thinking behind the children's panel and overcome the fear I once felt.

Since then I have been to the Labour Party Conference in Brighton, the House of Parliament in London and the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh. I have also had the opportunity to run my own snakes & ladders sessions on a number of occasions with a wide range of organisations.

'Snakes & ladders' has opened my eyes to more possibilities like further education and a change in job prospects. I have now become part of a project with the Scottish

Throughcare and Aftercare Forum in Glasgow, which is run by young people alone! I am also going to represent Barnardos Scotland in an UK Barnardos Young Persons' Forum.

The 'snakes & ladders' project has made a big impact on my life and has helped me plan for the future."

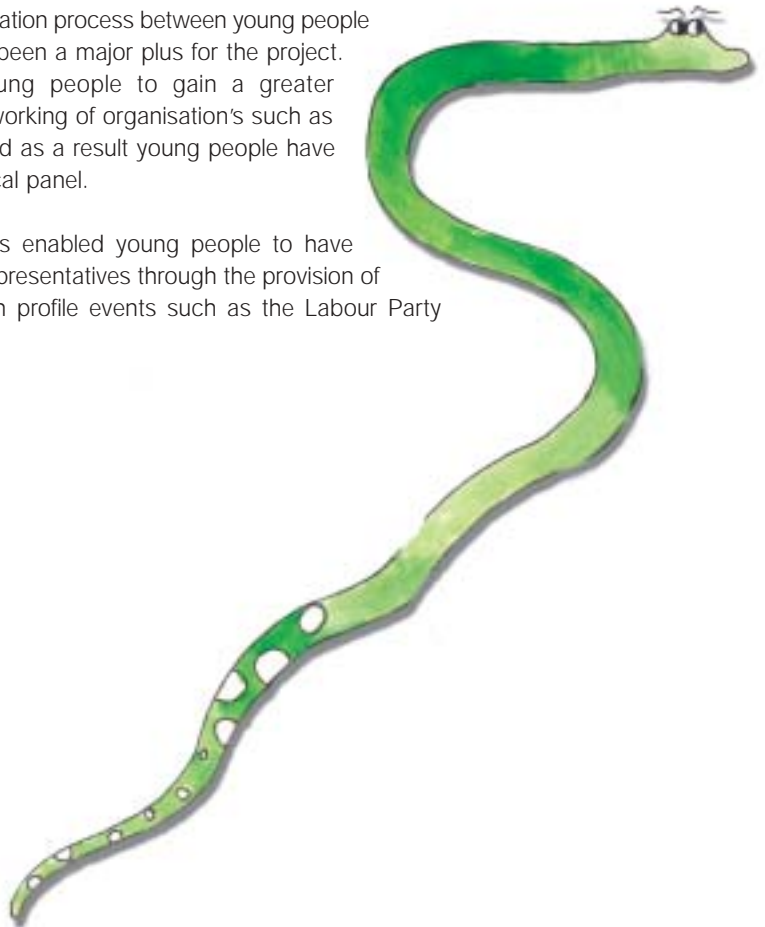
Steven Nicol

"It was fun at the start but the discussions addressed serious issues... It provided me with a chance to help others at the same time as helping myself"

Kevin Milton

The two way communication process between young people and organisations has been a major plus for the project. This has enabled young people to gain a greater understanding of the working of organisation's such as the Children's Panel and as a result young people have decided to join their local panel.

'Snakes & ladders' has enabled young people to have contact with political representatives through the provision of training session at high profile events such as the Labour Party Conference in 2001.



participating organisations

One of the major attractions of the snakes & ladders pack has been its flexibility, which has enabled young people from a wide range of organisations to identify, highlight and address their issues in a fun and non threatening way. Uses of the 'snakes & ladders' package have been:

Lambeth Youth Council - London

The pack is now been used to train Metropolitan Police Officers in Brixton on the use of 'stop & search' which is a very sensitive issue for the local community especially young black males.

Save the Children

Children and young people from Save the Children have been using the pack to raise awareness of environmental issues especially their views on local play parks. The pack is extensively used to facilitate work with children & young people from travelling communities.

"Snakes & ladders has proved to be one of the best resources that I have ever used with young people"

Stephen McGlinchey Save the Children

Queen Margaret Academy Ayr

The pack is used as part of the Academy's Flexible Curriculum Programme to enable pupils who will be leaving to address future life prospects. The pack has been used to develop group work with pupils and parents.

Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA)

Barnardos Paisley Threads in partnership with the SCRA has used the pack to develop joint training for agencies that have a remit in youth justice. Previous experience of individual training sessions with Regional Children's Panel's has highlighted a lack of communication between lead agencies and confusion over agency roles/expectations. The first joint training session involving the SCRA, Barnardos, Children's Panel Members and Community Safety Police Officers was held in June 2002. Ongoing evaluation has proved that there is a need for further sessions to be offered on a national basis.

"After surveying our members on the training they felt was most useful to them, your (snakes & ladders) package was the most frequently requested and rated highest at providing skills as well as information that helped us to work more effectively with young people"

Mary Kyle Glasgow City Children's Panel Training Committee.




Dear Selwyn

Inverclyde Children's Panel

The panel are most grateful to you and your colleagues for the training session you gave us on the 7th March. I think several of us were a bit uncertain of what we were in for that night – particularly after some comments from Barbara Reid about ensuring we had on socks without holes! However it proved to be a very well worthwhile experience for all of us who attended. Thought provoking and a timely reminder that we should always try to listen to the children and try to be fully aware of how they are affected both by the actions of panel members and the various agencies. Those who thought up the "Game", yourself and colleagues who led the session are to be commended.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely,


John O Hawthorn


Lambeth

Dear Selwyn and Stevie,

Just wanted to say thanks very much to both of you for the Snakes and Ladders demonstration you gave last Friday. It was every bit as good as I remembered it.

The session was very well received and I've had lots of positive feedback from the participants. Most importantly, it does look as if Lambeth police want to buy your pack and work with us to train their officers using the format, which is great news. Once we have it our young people will probably want to target other groups of adults who need a little reminder of what it's like to be young – there are plenty of candidates about.

Thanks for bringing Snakes and Ladders into the world – it's a fantastic resource.

Thanks again and good luck with your work.

Yours sincerely,



Andy Hamflett
Youth Council Development Worker



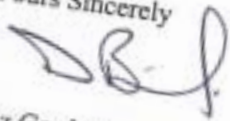
Dear Selwyn,

I would like to thank you for the time and effort your team put into our snakes and ladders training day, on the 12th September 2002, it was thoroughly enjoyed by all, and proved to be very thought provoking to many members of the group and very informative.

As the word spreads around about your excellent course, I'm sure we will be calling on your services again in the very near future.

Thank you once again

Yours Sincerely

PP 

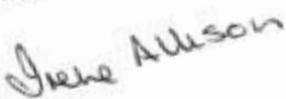
Liz Gordon
Programme Coordinator

Dear Selwyn,

I just wanted to thank you on behalf of North Lanarkshire's Children's Panel for the excellent training night you gave us on Thursday. I think I can speak for all who attended when I say this was a very enjoyable evening but also a very informative one and I can say a very thought provoking one.

Thanking you once again.

Yours sincerely,



Irene Allison
Area Chairperson

participation practice guidelines



The following guidelines are based on the experience gained from promoting the participation of children & young people in the 'snakes & ladders' project. The past two years has highlighted some key points, which need to be addressed before effective participation can become a reality.

Building a Participation Philosophy

Key Points

- Develop a clear approach to promoting participation - 'snakes & ladders'
- Ensure clear understanding of what 'participation' means to both young people and staff members.
- Requires commitment from all levels of staff.
- Be prepared for the long term - development of user participation is an ongoing process
- Be realistic but accept that change may be needed which may be uncomfortable for some.

It will be unrealistic to expect service user participation to become a reality in an organisational culture where not everyone is committed to listening to and acting on the views of children & young people. Organisations who want to involve service users especially those supporting the most excluded young people should ask themselves - Are we ready to listen and act?



Developing the Strategy

Key Points

- What are you trying to achieve - develop aims and objectives
- What would be termed a 'success'
- Acknowledge the role that all staff will play in the development of participation initiatives and support staff by providing training etc.
- Identify potential barriers to effective participation and the procedures/initiatives to overcome these.
- Learn from others and make use of existing networks
- Adopt a flexible approach to participation.
- A realistic marketing plan should also be developed.

'Snakes & Ladders'

- *Strategy based on the needs of the young people - they are the number 1 priority.*
- *Participation works best at a local level - it can then be expanded upon.*
- *Young people learn a lot from each other and this can be vital to ensuring their continuing participation.*
- *Not all young people want to 'participate' in the same way. Snakes & ladders provides young people with a number of options depending on their levels of confidence, interest and other commitments.*
- *Young people are offered ongoing support tailored to their individual needs e.g. - time, confidence.*



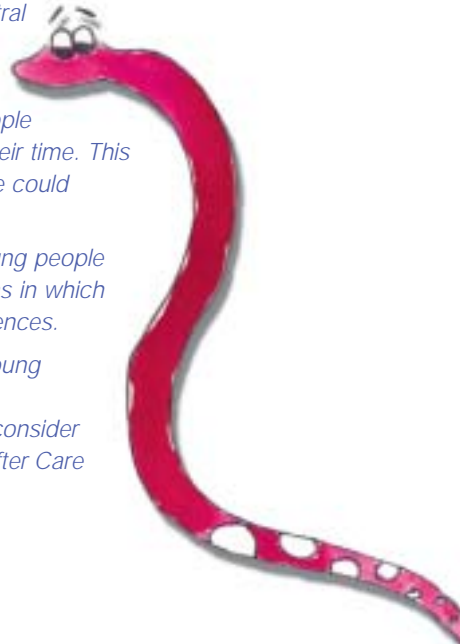
Putting Strategies into Action

Key Points

- Ongoing support for staff and young people is essential. This involves adequate resources and effective review processes to identify problems.
- Effective communication throughout the organisation is essential to ensure awareness of strategies and to ensure that young people are kept informed of all developments. It involves ensuring that young people know who to contact if they have any queries or views.
- Participation initiatives must be flexible and be open to the needs of all service users and not just those with more confidence or time.
- Trust is vital if young people are to participate effectively. This involves ensuring consistency and the ability to take risks.

'Snakes & ladders'

- *Basic communication skills play a vital role in promoting the participation of young people in the project. Skills such as listening, trusting, understanding, advocating, honesty, encouraging and supporting are central to our work with young people.*
- *Income received from training sessions and sale of the packs is used to enable young people to be paid. This acknowledges the value of their time. This ensured that the most excluded young people could be involved in the project.*
- *There was no attendance requirement for young people involved in the project. They attended sessions in which they were interested depending on life experiences.*
- *Extensive partnership working ensures that young people have contact with a wide range of organisations. This enables young people to consider other initiatives e.g. Scottish Throughcare & After Care Forum, Regional Children's Panels.*



Overcoming Barriers

Key Points

- Training for all staff to ensure an understanding of 'participation' and encourage shared learning.
- Making use of existing networks
- Identifying/addressing problems as early as possible
- Prioritise your aims and objectives.

'Snakes & ladders'

- *The project staff are qualified in working with young people and attend regular internal/external training opportunities.*
- *The Development Worker is a member of the Children in Scotland Participation Network. This provides advice and information.*
- *Young people involved in the project received ongoing support to develop their skills and confidence in the delivery of training. This involved ensuring that young people were comfortable with what they disclosed during training sessions.*
- *The project involved a substantial development period, which was vital to its overall success. This time enabled contracts to be made and high levels of organisational bureaucracy to be overcome.*
- *The lack of time has had a major impact on the level of work that could be achieved. This could only be addressed by securing long term funding - ideally for a 3-year period.*



Evaluation

Key Points

- Outcomes must be realistic and measurable.
- Young people's views are listened to and acted upon.
- Must include what could not be achieved and the reasons why. This can be vital for securing future funding.

Conclusion

While it was vital to the success of the 'Snakes & ladders' project to have a dedicated worker responsible for the development of 'participation' it should be remembered that encouraging 'participation' of children & young people is the responsibility of all workers who have contact with service users. We must not overlook the role that each of us has when it comes to promoting the participation of children & young people and treat all service users as individuals in their own right.



Project Outcomes



2090 professionals taken part in training sessions

439 Agencies (182 Public sector) (257 Voluntary agencies)

106 training sessions delivered

295 young people took part in sessions to develop new issue cards

52 young people involved in the facilitation of training sessions - 30 female 22 male

36 packs sold - 26 Scotland
- 10 England

Examples of Training



House of Commons - All-Party Parliamentary Group on Poverty

Labour Party Conference 2001

Scottish Labour Party Conference

Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group for Young People

Association of Directors of Social Work (ADSW)

Crime Reduction Initiative - Sussex

Social Care Association, Annual Conference 2003

Cheshire County Council, Listening to Children Conference

Cambridge City Council

Staffordshire County Council, Youth and Community Department

University of Ulster

University of Strathclyde

National Fostering Network, Bi-Annual Conference 2003

Careers Scotland

Renfrewshire Education Department

Scottish Through Care Aftercare Forum



