

World Children's Day: Live Event

Session 2:

If you couldn't attend the celebration on **20 November 2024**, then this document provides you with an overview of the event, outlining the presentations and providing an example of some of the brilliant topics discussed on the day.

This year's event included a session on thinking about the type of campaigners we'd like to be, before a panel with a member of UNICEF UK's (UUK) Youth Advisory Board (YAB) Dev, alongside Nancy, a campaigner on climate. The event finished with a presentation on the incorporation of the UNCRC into Scottish Law, run by Fatou, UUK's Political Affairs Advisor for Scotland, and Finn, a member of the YAB.

Introduction:

The event started by acknowledging that this is the very first time we've held a World Children's Day celebration specifically for children and young people aged 12 and over and opened with a video from UNICEF UK's High-Profile Supporter, and champion of the OutRight campaign, Cel Spellman. You can see this video [here](#).

Issy, Youth Campaigns Officer, asked everyone to think about the many words we hear when considering what it means to be a changemaker, activism, influencing, campaigning. All these words are about how we can make change, and how we can have our voices heard.

Panel discussion:

The panel discussion was held by Misha, our Youth Voice Specialist. She started by asking:

What does being a changemaker mean to you?

Dev answered by telling us that this word really does have a lot of connotations and that depending on who you ask, some people might say it's a troublemaker, or a community leader or activist, but that it's someone who is leading change.

“All we're trying to do is give voice to our story and share that into the dialogue with adults and decision makers”

Misha asked, **‘Why did you join the Youth Advisory Board at UUK?’**

Dev acknowledged that change makers come in every shape and size, so you must forge your own path about whatever topic you are most interested in and spearheading. Dev explained that he was passionate and interested in food and raising the rights of children and young people, so to join a network of other young people and activists and to learn from them was important and this has made him feel more fulfilled as a campaigner.

Misha asked, **‘when there are so many things in the world that we might want to change, how did you decide on the topic for your campaign?’**

Dev started by saying that we don’t need to know what it is at the beginning, but it’s about purpose and passion. Dev explained that he became aware that his local community was considered a food desert, and he didn’t understand what that was, but has learned that it’s an area where there is limited to no access to healthy, nutritious food. Dev said that in the Indian community food is an integral part of his culture, and he saw this as something he wanted to campaign about. Dev shared that talking with friends and thinking about issues you may have lived through can help enact real change!

Nancy added that she has found campaigning on something she is most passionate about to be important, and that often issues are interlinked. If you are not passionate about the issue, then you might become overwhelmed because campaigning is tiring, so we have to have connection to keep going.

Misha asked, **‘campaigning can be a long journey, how do you manage when this happens?’**

Nancy acknowledged that campaigning can be slow and frustrating, but that sometimes when things do go slowly, suddenly, they might move forward, and that’s the nature of campaigning. Nancy reminded us to not be too hard on yourselves and to celebrate the small wins, and to always learn from the mistakes you make!

Dev added that we often think we’ll only be happy at the end of the campaign, but that’s not the right way to take it, we must get our happiness and enjoyment and fun from the process of campaigning. He also added that it is important to tap into your age, and that as young people we have creativity and resilience, so thinking outside the box and regrouping can be important.

Misha finished by asking: **'what would be your biggest piece of advice for children and young people wanting to make change?'**

Nancy said: 'Do what you can, and don't burn out from campaigning! Look after yourself so you have the energy to keep campaigning and enjoy the process'

Dev said: 'Remember that you're not going to be an expert straightaway, you're going to learn and grow on this journey! Activism is not a linear journey'.

"Your passion and your voice is enough. It's all that matters. People want to hear you, and why you"

UNCRC session:

This session was hosted by Fatou and Finn. They talked through the important of the UNCRC, explaining how this is the background of all the work we do at UNICEF UK, and how it is the most complete statement of children's rights ever produced, and it states that governments must protect the rights of children to allow them to grow up happy and healthy. In Scotland, the UNCRC has now been incorporated in Scottish Law, and it took many years to get to this point.

- Fatou explained that although UUK has been around for many years in London, we opened our Scotland office in 2014 and since then we've been pushing for this piece of legislation.
- In 2018 a Scottish Parliament Committee (a group of Parliamentarians from across political parties who come together to discuss important topics) supported the incorporation and in 2018 they committed to the incorporation.
- In 2019, UNICEF hosted a reception to celebrate World Children's Day, and First Minister Nicola Sturgeon showed her support for the bill.
- During the consultation process, children and young people were consulted to ensure their voices were heard.
- In 2020 the bill was introduced in Parliament and passed in 2021, but it was challenged by the UK Government, and this meant that the Scottish Government had to make technical changes to the bill, and this started a lot of back and forth with consultations from organisations and children and young people.
- The bill was passed in 2023 and received royal assent in 2024. This marked ten years of activism and work to get the bill passed, and to celebrate Scottish Parliament held an event with all the organisations who had been involved and children and young people too!

Finn talked about why the bill to incorporate the UNCRC into Scottish Law was so important. He recognised that it protects all children and their rights. Finn confirmed that alongside a legal change, this was also a cultural change for Scotland, and that with the UNCRC being in the public eye, it will ensure decision makers consider children's rights.

Finn recounted his journey as a young activist during this time, and he was personally involved with the consultation in Edinburgh for the bill. Finn spoke about how during the process there were high and lows, and that when it was moving slowly this was challenging as an activist, and he reminded everyone how important it is to take care of your mental health. He talked passionately about the celebration at the end of the journey, including how emotional it made him, and how he was finally able to meet lots of people he'd worked with remotely, and that it as a moment that he won't forget being a part of.

Conclusion:

Issy ended the event by thanking everyone for their time today and reminding everyone that OutRight is an important way to amplify the voices of children and young people. We wished everyone Happy World Children's Day and closed the event.