Encouraging and supporting children's voices

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Abstract
Children are considered not to be full members of society and that their participation should be limited. Further, that this limitation is imposed by adults. In order to counter these views it is key to afford space for children's voices and that these are facilitated in some way. Philosophy with Children, in all its variety of approaches and practices, lays claim to being a tool that allows children to develop the skills necessary for citizenship such as participation and airing their views. This chapter focuses on the role of Community of Philosophical Inquiry (CoPI), a specific method of practical Philosophy with Children, to empower children and give them a voice. CoPI has a series of distinctive features that makes it especially apt in meeting this goal. Children are able to articulate their views on a particular topic and this is supported by the structure of the dialogue itself. In addition, their statements must build on previous statements by demonstrating dis/agreement and the participants must provide reasons to justify that dis/agreement. The method thereby emphasises the primacy of the children's thinking and the facilitator works to juxtapose speakers in order to drive the dialogue further philosophically. In this chapter, these features of CoPI are illustrated by examples from dialogues on the Good Life, stimulated by the question "What kind of society would you like to live in?" CoPI is shown to give children voice with a view to promoting their participation in society while also eschewing the imbalance in the adult/child power relationship as questions regarding the good life ultimately invite us to reconsider our views of children.

1. Children and the Good Life

1.1 Two perspectives on the good life

Children have an interest in a good life that is a life that is happy, healthy, emotionally and intellectually satisfying, safe and meaningful and so forth. Two perspectives can be distinguished within these different features that constitute a good life (Steinfath, 1998, Fenner, 2007, Krebs, 1998). A first perspective relates to the *subjective dimension* of a good life and defines it in terms of what an individual takes to be good for her/himself. This, in return, depends on how an individual conceives of pleasures, preferences, desires and interests. Because of the close link to an individual's preferences and desires, the lifestyle choices of a particular person may not have the same value for somebody else and we therefore can only give prudential answers to the question "What constitutes a good life?". As the question considers only general features of the good life for the on who lives it. However, we may say very generally that a good life in this subjective perspective is one that a person addresses in positive terms and that he values (Fenner, 2007). The second perspective focuses on the requirements necessary for everyone to strive for a good life and to have, in principle, access to the above

mentioned features (Steinfath, 1998). Within the second perspective the concept of a good life is given a more objective reading by considering the conditions of a good life for everybody. When addressing these conditions, we inevitably coin the concept ethically and politically as we encounter issues of morality and justice.

The question, while discussed, is controversial if the two dimensions are both part and parcel of the concept of a good life and, further, if they are related (Fenner, 2007; Aristotle, 2000). Wolf (1997) indicates that within the subjective perspective a good life is considered to be a happy and a meaningful life and she argues that neither of these terms describes exclusively individual preferences. She therefore counters the view of radical subjectivism and sees the subjective and objective perspective intimately linked. It has also been suggested that the two perspectives can be interlinked as both perspectives lay emphasis on *autonomy* (Krebs, 1993). The first perspective conceives of a good life in terms of the individual's autonomy to choose freely a specific way to live that s/he considers to be good. The second perspective takes autonomy to be the type of good that has to be guaranteed to everyone in order for a person to strive and attain an autonomous good life in the subjective sense. Nussbaum (2000, 2006, 2011) is very explicit on this point and she takes a theory of social justice to define the requirements for a good life, which she formulates in terms of the central capabilities. Capabilities are derived from the innate abilities human beings have and they deliver an answer to the question "What is each person able to do and to be?" (Nussbaum, 2011). The term 'capabilities' hence denotes what a person is capable of being and doing. Nussbaum distinguishes altogether ten aspects central for a good life that relate to life, bodily health, integrity of the health, senses, imagination and thought, emotions, practical reasons, affiliation, other species, play, and control over one's environment. With regard to the capability of practical reasons and control over one's environment, Nussbaum points out that a good life requires that a person can form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life and being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern life (Nussbaum, 2000, 2011).

Obviously, the list of capabilities Nussbaum mentions is not restricted to basic needs for survival such as food, shelter and primary health care. To the contrary: Nussbaum seeks to integrate all aspects that form a human life in the full sense of the term and we can derive from the list of central human capabilities what is essential to a *good life*. Central human capabilities in return give rise to social and political duties. According to Nussbaum, the core role of political organizations within a society is to provide support for the development of those capabilities so a person can choose freely and autonomously a life according to his/her preferences and desires. The core duty of society and politics is to guarantee everybody autonomy so that everyone has the possibility and the opportunity to live an autonomous life; and this is where the subjective and the objective perspective come together.

1.2   Children in our society

It is a generally acknowledged that children are considered not to be full members of society and that their participation is limited (Friquenon, 1997; Mayall, 2007; Qvortrup 2006, 2007). This raises the question to what extent they are taken into account by theories of social justice and theories of the good life. We notice that very little is found in contemporary theories of social (Bojer, 2005). Within a Rawlsian framework, for example, children are explicitly excluded from engaging in a social contract that determines social justice. Rawls justifies this exclusion by arguing that children do not possess the rationality required to engage in the discussions for establishing a social

contract (Rawls, 1971). Nussbaum's capabilities approach seems to apply only partially to children, too. Even though Nussbaum explicitly states that the development in early childhood unites all human beings through shared experiences of common emotions such as sadness, love and anger (Nussbaum, 1999), she also claims that children do not deploy the above mentioned capabilities of practical thinking or controlling one's environment that are considered central for forming a conception of the good and participating in political choices that govern life. If we take, as Nussbaum suggests, that capabilities define what is essential to a good life, the fact that children have not full access to some of them ultimately amounts to saying that they do not (yet) have a good life. This conclusion is puzzling and outright unacceptable given that both adults and children are, in the first place, human being and justice claims hold for both. It raises the question of whether the list of capabilities must be revised or extended in order to suit the specific nature or category of children or if society's view of children must be changed in light of the human capabilities that count equally for everyone, regardless of age, sex, social background, talents, etc. In any case, we have to find clear answers to the question "What can children do and be?".

We delay answering this particular question as despite the deficits within the two predominant theories of social justice, consideration of children has moved on greatly in recent years, partly due to the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989. The UNCRC states that children require special attention to ensure their protection, provision and participation. Participation is associated with the idea of children's voice and giving them the opportunity to express their views freely in matters concerning them, to being heard and to seek information pertinent to their lives (UNCRC Article 12, 13). While voice and participation is high on the agenda of the UNCRC, the implementation of the respective rights still leaves much to be desired. In many areas, children are still not permitted to engage fully or express their views even on questions that have considerable impact on their lives or concern them directly (Lundy, 2007; Cassidy 2012d). Hence, in theory and practice, the children's choices are limited and we therefore seriously fail children. Empowerment of children therefore still figures among the core duties societies and political institutions must take u.

To begin with, we need a better understanding of the shortcomings children encounter in society. It seems worthwhile to have a look at how society views children and see the possibilities and opportunities that are presented to them. By identifying the deficits, we can formulate possible remedies to counterbalance them. In what follows, we first delve in the philosophy of child in order to identify possible obstacles to a fully-fledged realization of social justice issues as well as the implementation of the UNCRC. The basis of the present and prevailing philosophy of child is therefore briefly outlined in the next chapter. It shows the desperate need to empower children because of the adult/child divide that implies a striking disempowerment of children (Part 2). It then is claimed that *Philosophy with Children* (PwC) and in particular the method of *Community of Philosophical Inquiry*, in short CoPI, offers a view on children that allows us to counterbalance the deficit taken upon children by giving them an active role and the possibility to partake and influence the community into which they are integrated (Part 3). CoPI provides by this insights into the views and opinions children have. We then turn to the children's views of a good life, based on data collected in Scotland in 2014 using Community of Philosophical Inquiry as a research tool. Children were asked to discuss the question 'What kind of society do you want to live in?' and express their views upon the subject. (Part 4). Within the concluding remarks we finally address the question of possible recommendations needed to counterbalance the adult/child divide and to empower children (Part 5).

## 2.	From the Philosophy of Children…

One key factor that demands attention if children are to be empowered is around how they are perceived, and also treated, in society. In this statement alone one sees part of the problem – 'how they are treated' implies treatment *by* others. These others tend to be adults since it is adults that currently hold the power in any dynamic between them and children in virtually any setting or context one could mention. Adults make the decisions, adults act, adults set the parameters in which children live, they with-/hold the money (economic resources), and adults impose sanctions on children when they do not do as is required of them or when they try to do what is not permitted by them.

Children are perceived as being qualitatively different to adults (Kennedy, 1992, 2003, 2006; Cassidy, 2007; Stables, 2008). This is because childhood is seen as a time when children are being prepared for their role in society; it is a time for training, when they will be permitted to participate as full members of society (Shamgar-Handelman, 1994; Friquenon, 1997; Mayall, 2007). Of course, the view of children has varied over time due to possible social, cultural and political shifts (Cunningham, 2006; Heywood, 2011), but altogether a deficit model prevails that undermines equality claim with regard to children.

Holding such a deficit model of children permits the retention of the status quo where the status lies firmly in adults' domain. It might be suggested that this situation is perpetuated as adults want to protect children, and they do this on the basis of their more expanded 'life experience'. Lack of life experience undeniably creates a certain amount of vulnerability, yet, it is important to see that the children's vulnerability is to a certain extent a result of the power adults exert upon their lives. For example, adults define what they take to be suitable behavioural norms for children, or adults create private and public spaces that mainly reflect their needs, supplemented by explicit and implicit rules defining appropriate behaviour in these places that often only marginally take into account the children's perspective on them but rely on the adults' expectations Along with this expectation we find the means for sanctions on the adults' side, while children are denied any effective means to sanction adults, thus corroborating the power imbalance and the divide between child and adult, where children occupy a subjugated position (Cassidy, 2006). To this one may add, as Cook (2009) argues, that this manner of behaving is not about protecting children so much as protecting adults' memories of their own childhood, however true or false, a time of innocence without worry or care it actually was. Interestingly enough, children seem at moments to counterbalance this position in power by establishing their own social contract that tells them to play the role of children as determined by adults (Cassidy, 2007).

In any case, it allows children always to be in a state of becoming. They have no locus in the (adult) world, they have limited power or opportunity to make decisions or have their voices heard in relation to the wider issues of the day. This ultimately means that they have even less at their disposal by way of enacting any of their views, particularly were they to run counter to the dominant adult perspective. Unless challenged, and unless children are empowered in some way, their voices and opportunities for authentic participation are stunted.

To redress the power imbalance, to afford children, at the very least, what Griffiths calls 'the theoretical possibility of agency' (2008, p. 7), where they are permitted the capacity to effect and/or enact change, then adults must acknowledge the need to shift power and then actually to accept it authentically with 'conscious and deliberate inclusion of

children, so their participation is not an add-on' (Cassidy, 2012a). This is not to say that children are able to participate by virtue of being included in society more fully. It would not make sense to say that they could participate without an element of induction or training. What needs to be found is an effective means to counterbalance the view that children are beings in their becoming.

3.   …to Philosophy with Children

One approach that can usefully be employed in bridging this divide between non-participation and empowerment is Philosophy with Children (PwC). PwC, in all its variety of approaches and practices, lays claim to being a tool that allows children to develop the skills necessary for participation and airing their views.
PwC emerged in the 1970s following the work of Matthew Lipman and Ann Sharp in the United States where they devised a Philosophy for Children (P4C) programme designed to promote critical thinking (Lipman, 2003; Pardales & Girod, 2006; Gregory 2008). Critical thinking, simply put, involves judgements based on criteria or reasons. It thereby lays the basis for any type of informed decision-making that requires the capacity to evaluate facts and relate them to eventual normative stances, be they social, moral or political in nature (Bleisch & Huppenbauer, 2011).
Subsequent to Lipman and Sharp's programme, the literature on PwC has been fuelled by a variety of approaches and methods all around the world (e.g. Matthews, 1980; McCall, 1991, 2009; Cam, 1995; Cleghorn, 2002; Fisher, 2005, 2008). Despite eventual differences, all the approaches consider PwC first and foremost as a practical philosophical dialogue where children are invited to engage in a structured discussion of philosophical ideas and to scrutinize their conceptual and logical implications. Thus, PwC allows learning something about philosophy through doing philosophy and the different philosophical theses defended through the course of time by different 'academic' philosophers play altogether a subordinate role. It is considered more important that children learn to think for themselves. By this, PwC takes children to be capable of participating in philosophical discussions, formulating their conception on different issues and reflecting them critically, a capacity that some believe children fail to have (White, 1992) or have only in a restrained way (see above).

3.1   Community of Philosophical Inquiry

From Lipman's P4C grew Catherine McCall's *Community of Philosophical Inquiry* (CoPI) (McCall, 1991; 2009). CoPI is a structured dialogue, facilitated by a trained chair/facilitator who has a background in more formal, 'academic' philosophy. Put simply, the philosophical dialogue within CoPI is brought about as a consequence of the structure, with the structure remaining constant, no matter the age or experience of the participants (Cassidy, 2007). Participants sit in a circle in order to see one another and to be seen; they read aloud a stimulus that holds philosophical potential; they raise questions from the reading, though not necessarily about the text; the facilitator records the question and then chooses one to be discussed by the participants. The participants must then raise a hand should they wish to contribute and when called, though not necessarily in the order in which they raised their hand, must make a connection with something stated previously by saying with whom they agree/disagree and providing reasons for that agreement/disagreement.   Contributions need not be the personal

views or opinions of the speaker, participants may not make reference to authorities for their reasons, no technical language or jargon may be used, and there is no search for consensus or conclusion at the end of a session, in order that the participants recognise the need to keep thinking about the issue (Cassidy, 2012b). Essentially, CoPI aims to be egalitarian in nature.

Individual participants sit equidistant to one another; thereby no-one is set apart or in a position of power. The one exception is the facilitator, but this is in order that s/he can see the participants fully and to ensure that contributions are not channelled to or through her/him; the facilitator intervenes only in a quest for further clarification and in the selection of speakers with a view to driving the participants' thinking deeper and in the most philosophical direction possible (Cassidy, 2012b). Given that no-one may use a term or word that is likely not to be known or understood by the others without challenge or explanation there is an equalising factor at play. All should be able to understand and make oneself understood. Each participant is equally entitled to speak. While all contributions are valued, since one contribution must, by necessity, build on previous contribution(s), not all are equally valid. This is not a problem. Indeed, it appropriately mirrors how things are in the wider world, where views are expressed and extended or diminish and fail. The key in CoPI is that all are permitted to air their views and to practise their reason-giving. It is this that is crucial in empowering children.

3.2   Empowering children by doing philosophy

Children have few real opportunities to experiment with their views, to try out their reasoning, to be listened to and to have their views considered carefully. CoPI provides this; for in order to participate, or for CoPI to work at all, it demands that a community is established where all have equal standing and where ideas are freely exchanged (Cassidy, 2012c). Indeed, the notion of community is an important one, one where everyone is required in order for it to function effectively, where individuals have to collaborate to achieve a shared common goal (Cassidy & Christie, 2013). In the case of CoPI, the shared common goal is in the shared search for meaning and understanding, in the shared construction and perpetuation of a shared line of reasoning. In CoPI, through this collaboration, children learn to challenge and be challenged in their thinking, but they are given a structure in which they can do so. Indeed, the structure is transferable, with participants reporting that they often carry it into their lives beyond the classroom (Cassidy & Christie, 2013). This enables children in the taking on board of others' perspectives and the recognition that this is important in living with others. Giving children the opportunity to experiment with ideas in a manner denied many adults, enhances their thinking and their critical reflections on their own and others' views (Cassidy, 2012c). It is this space for speaking about ideas that enables the child – or even the adult participant – to realise their opportunities for articulation. This is the practice-ground where children – and adults – train and continue to practise their thinking and reasoning. PwC in general and CoPI in particular enables individuals to think for themselves in collaboration with others and it allows everybody to participate in the dialogue through deliberation and critical reasoning that lead to reasonable judgements.

Affording children the opportunity to practise CoPI facilitates their engagement with the world around them; it provides space to consider questions and issues that require attention in society. Being able to reflect on complex ideas, to see problems and solutions in conjunction with others, and to accept the need for such thinking can only be of benefit to society. The practice knows no bar in terms of age. It would be untrue to

say that all adults are empowered or enfranchised because they think well. Indeed, many adults do not think well though have the tools and structures at their disposal to participate fully within society. CoPI allows us to question the particular status that adults defend for themselves, too as it incorporates the epistemic stance that everyone is fallible, adults and children alike (McCall, 2009). Adults' opinions therefore reflect no privileged point of view and they are as open to criticism as any other opinion and may be therefore rejected if good reasons can be provided. Eventual power structures are overcome in CoPI by the power of reasoning.

There is a case to suggest that children are introduced to CoPI early in their lives, but that the practice is continued, thereby empowering society and the individuals within it. By inducting children into good thinking practices then they are empowered, if, and only if, they are given a proper space, that their views are listened to and that they have impact (Lundy, 2007). This, in turn, allows that children are more than mere becomings. This affords them the opportunity to *be*.

4. The Good Life

In 2014 we began a project "Children on the Good life" in Scotland in a range of schools across the country in very different socio-economic areas, i.e. extreme socio-economic deprivation and middle-class rural settings. Different parts of the society geographically and in terms of social class are thus represented in the data. Seven groups from four primary schools and three secondary schools with altogether more than 130 children between the ages of six and seventeen were asked 'What kind of society do you want to live in?' using CoPI as the method for eliciting the children's views. This allowed wide-ranging perspectives to be shared and discussed at length in sessions running over a minimum of thirty-five minutes and maximum of one hour, with the time being determined only by the class timetable rather than the ages of the children.

The different groups, all engaged in CoPI sessions on a regular base, discussed a broad range of topics such as wellbeing, relationships between people, education, money, discrimination, tolerance, companies, media, exploitation, the right to privacy, equality, freedom of choice, charity, etc. and thus picked up several strands traditionally associated with the concept of good life. The individual groups did not explore each and every one of these topics, but having fun, relationships of an individual to other people, equality, and money were recurring topics in most of the groups. We provide below a small sample of illustrative quotations to highlight some of the key themes that emerged within the observed sessions.

4.1   The subjective and objective perspectives of the Good life

These different topics were addressed in a way that allows associating them with the two perspectives distinguished at the beginning of the paper, namely the subjective and the objective dimension attaining to the concept of a good life. The subjective perspective was for example addressed when children in a Primary 2/3 aged 6-7 years discussed places they would like to live in, for example "I agree with Laura, because usually in Lochside there is a lot of noise because when I went in to go with my Gran there was an awful lot of noise in the room" (Fingal[1], Treefield Primary) or "Oh yes

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[1] All names of the children, the schools and some references to names in the citations have been changed in order go guarantee anonymity.

Australia, because there's lots of different things you can do and you get the seaside every day – you could get hot chocolate and candy floss …" (Fib, Treefield Primary). These statements express personal desires and preferences regarding places to live in. The subjective dimension can be found in the following statements from a Primary four (eight year-olds), too: "I agree with Dale and Samuel because a tropical paradise is really good because you could have a hot tub and everything and cocktails so everybody would have a good time" (Jed, Glenwood Primary). This statement describes particular f characteristics the boy would like to find in the society he would want to live in such as 'tropical paradise' or 'hot tub'. Even though other children may share a particular view, objections regarding the different features mentioned do not entail any contradiction that has to be further addressed, as the preference are purely subjective.

Subjective statements as the ones above were more often found amongst the very young children, though this is not to suggest it was their only focus. When children from Primary 3/4 (aged seven and eight) were talking about the importance of having "fun" or "a great time" or being "happy" as for example in the following statement "I agree with Dale because I would make it [society] really good, so everyone could have a great time" (Samuel, Glenwood Primary), they often implied that an individual is entitled to these and that the features alluded to were indispensable for a good society which has the duty to guarantee happiness and fun to everybody. The statements thus move at the fringe between the subjective and the objective perspective concepts of the good life.

However, in the vast majority of cases the children's statements explicitly refer to the objective perspective within the concept of good life. This has probably to do with the wording of the opening question asking 'What kind of society do you want to live in?' by which the children were invited to reflect on society generally.

4.2   Attitudes and Relationships

In responding to this question the children laid emphasis on the attitudes people should have towards each other and suggested ways in which people should treat one other as within the two following statements: "I agree with Becky 'cause I want that country to be like that and I want everybody to be friendly, even if someone wasn't your friend and you don't know who they are, they just say *"are you coming out to play with me?"* and you would say *"yes""* (Ena, Bayside Primary), and "Where everybody is kind and friendly and if they do something wrong, they would apologise for it and learn their lesson". (Rosanna, Stonefield Primary). Being friendly and kind, respecting and helping each other were considered crucial. Respect and care are in fact two central concepts in many ethical theories, some even believe them to be the essence of morality and providing the foundation of all other moral duties and obligations. The pupils also talked about forgiving people their wrongdoings: "because forgiveness is vital to having a good society …". (Bert, Dykefell Secondary)

Moreover, the pupils in this dialogue suggested that a country should exclude people that inflict harm intentionally: "I would like the country to be like no bullying allowed" (Becky, Bayside Primary) and described a good society in the following way: "When people don't go about smashing your property and where people could just get along" (Rick, Stonefield Primary). The concept of harm is, again, central in morality.

Underlying many of these statements we find reflected the golden rule that was referred to explicitly by a girl in one Secondary School "… you've got to be fair to people and treat the society like the way you want to be treated" (Carla, Dykefell Secondary).

While talking about these different attitudes and the form of interactions that should shape society, different groups were discussing if a good society was possible at all "I

agree with Elsie because you can't go through life without doing something bad" (Nash, Stonefield Primary) or if it were at risk of being boring: "...because if everyone was too nice or if people were all really nasty and each other, people become bored so I think you need a balance [of good and bad]" (Ray, Daleside Secondary).

4.3   Justice and equality

While the very young children focussed, in the dialogues we observed, on topics such as friendship and other relationships they entertain (parents, siblings, grandparents, teachers), the circle of people considered grew considerably and with this came issues of morality and justice that were explicitly addressed in at least five of the seven sessions. Statements that lay emphasis on equality can be found in recordings from children in primary and secondary schools alike: "If I'd to make a society, I'd probably make everyone fair, I'd give everyone the same kind of status and opportunities like everyone else". (Verity, Dykefell Secondary), and "So I don't think that there should be a small group of really rich people, I think everyone should be a bit more equal than that ..." (Verity, Dykefell Secondary), and "I want to be able to live in a society where there is no superior group, where everyone can still be equal, there is no subtle racists or homophobes and everyone is still counted as the same" (Sallie, Dykefell Secondary). The topic of justice, equality and equality of opportunity are taken to hold a society together, and the childrens discourse reflects in many instances modern and democracy and principle of humanism.

Some pupils suggested that the society should provide each person with the means necessary for obtaining welfare and fairness "... I also think that Society should also suit everyone's needs and that everyone gets their fair say on what they think and everyone has a responsibility" (Masha, Highfield Secondary), and that the government has a special responsibility with regard to this: "because, I think everybody should be equal ... the Government should get everybody a job but you get a certain amount of money depending upon the job..." (Penelope, Dykefell Secondary). These statements again, relate to ideas underlying the theories of social justice presented at the beginning of the paper and they make clear that the pupils are well aware that specific conditions need to be fulfilled in order to guarantee everybody a good life, which, in turn, endows duties onto the society and the state. If these duties hold unconditionally or should be restrained to people with special needs was a question debated in several groups. While fairness and equality were considered important, other children suggested that they were not the only principles that matter within a society "because people should be equal, but the people that are rich worked for their money, like they worked really hard to get to where they are to earn that money..." (Charlotte, Dykefell Secondary). Individual effort should be recognized. Similarly, qualifications people have should be rewarded: "people who work in McDonald's would then get the same pay as someone that has worked hard and gone to uni[versity] and studied so much to become a doctor which I don't think is fair, that's just not right. Someone's worked really, really hard to get a good job to help people and then somebody's getting the same as someone that works in a lower job, I don't think that's right and it's not fair either" (Gina, Daleside Secondary). If merits and qualification lead to inequalities, this was still considered fair "I don't think you should say *oh that shouldn't be allowed*'" (Gina, Daleside Secondary). The pupil thereby referrs to the principle of liberal neutrality that requires governments not to interfere with an individual's life. This is corroborated in statements such as "I think that the only way to success is if you work hard and people that don't work hard, you shouldn't have to worry about them, you should worry about yourself and yourself

trying to succeed" (Juliana, Daleside Secondary). These statements counterbalance the responsibility of the society with regard to the individual and stress the individual's responsibility. The role of the individual with respect to the society was controversially discussed in many groups and which lead to discussions around companies and individuals that exploit and commit fraud „ because the law has a giant loophole in it which they [companies] can just exploit and take money off poor people so they can get even more money, and I know people say it's a democracy so they should be allowed to get richer, yeah, but they shouldn't be allowed to break the law to get richer because the point of the law is to put rules in a country".

In discussing issues around justice and equality, three groups introduced the thought experiment of a society with "no money" and "everything in that country's free" (Johan, Glennwood), and talked about "Free Country" and "Free Land" respectively by one group. One of the pupils who introduced the thought experiment in Secondary school said that a society without money would be "a good society", reasoning "because money will separate people from poor people to rich people in inequalities" (Penelope, Dykefell Secondary). The very possibility as well as the consequences of this scenario was intensively discussed and rejected by some "because there wouldn't be a point in you having a job because you're not going to get any money, and there would be no point in having money if everything's free" (Evelyn, Glenwood Primary), while others approved of the idea and argued "I think it will be possible if everyone thinks about it and shares and everything …" (Mik, Highfield Secondary).

5. From philosophy with children to a good life for children

This brief overview of some of the main topics occurring in the different CoPI sessions shows that children between the ages of six and seventeen have very differentiated views about the world in which they live. If given the opportunity, children critically reflect the role of society, the state and the government as well as the individual and pick up many strands scattered around the concept of good life. Altogether, the children from primary school take on a very political stance with regard to the subject and display their ability to participate effectively in (political) discussions and philosophical debates on issues that govern their life. CoPI provides children with a genuine space to try out ideas and to practise their reasoning about these ideas. The space, and the dialogue, crucially, is owned by the children and shows what children are capable of being and doing. This space and the experimenting with ideas and development of critical thinking is obviously vital within democracy as the children learn to ask question and not to take what they hear at face value, to enable them to and imagine situations different from and for themselves. The possibility of criticising entrenched structures can furthermore lead the children to associate great importance to the task of thinking and reason (Nussbaum, 2010). This is perhaps the first step in supporting these children in airing views that may subsequently bear fruit in terms of empowering them to action and should be given special attention when the capability approach is considered in the context of education, as it has been suggested more recently (Walker and Unterhalter, 2007; Hinchcliff et al. 2009).

The children all had views on what kind of society they want to live in, yet they have no authentic means of expressing this in the wider world and even less to have it effect change. In most of the dialogues the children discussed society as it is and the subject was addressed in relation to issues that stem from the adults' world such as working in order to receive an income and raising a family, taking up loans, getting Government

social security benefits, paying taxes, and so on. From this fact we can see that children have views about society but we may also infer that the children participating in the different CoPI sessions see society as being managed and organised by adults and that they lack an awareness of their own voice and participation; that in effect, they are not empowered members of the society they discuss. Indeed, this may suggest that they themselves have not thought to challenge the hierarchy established by adults and conformed to by them in their 'becoming' in society.

Securing for every child the flowering of present and the development of future capabilities means that children must be provided with the opportunity to discuss their views and practise participating in a community via dialogue in order to assume their role as citizens in the society they live. In the same way that the children were asked about their view on the good life, CoPI can provide them with opportunities to discuss the question if and how children should participate in society and if they should be given more control over their environment, be that in terms of enfranchisement or otherwise, by this they may also begin to ask on what grounds the participation is denied to them and why many equality claim seem to make a full stop before them. For the older children that have participated in the project overcoming major obstacles to their participation may be nearer than in any other country in the world, since in September 2014 all those aged sixteen years and older will be enfranchised in the Scottish Independence Referendum. As an aside, though, it is worth noting that this unique situation will become even more interesting following the Referendum when it has to be determined whether Scottish children, over the age of sixteen, receive full enfranchisement or universal suffrage.

6. Conclusion

Questions regarding the good life invite us to consider our view of children substantially. Philosophy with Children in general and the method of Community of Philosophical Inquiry in particular has been shown to have an impact on the philosophy *of* child, by giving children a voice and promoting their participation in society. It allows children to develop the ability to take up their place in a community while also eschewing the imbalance in the adult/child power relationship. In the first instance, it provides a platform owned by the children where they are able to raise issues they deem important or significant. They are able to undertake this task in a structured setting that enables all voices and views to be heard and arguments to be rehearsed. All comments are open to scrutiny and challenge; weak arguments will flounder. It is not sufficient, though, to provide only a forum for discussion, though this is crucial for the generation of a thinking society, the crucial factor is in enabling the voices to be heard and to be taken into account. This would entail more children being able to participate in such dialogues, in a range of settings. Schools are easy to use as all children attend these, though other groups or for a may be formed, such as Scotland's Youth Parliament or smaller community groups that would reach out to all children. Those in power (adults) should be able to hear the views of children, and this is challenging as it seems to retain the notion that adults are permitting children to air their views but only adults will act on the views if, and only if, they deem it appropriate to do so. In order for a meaningful shift in the power relationships between children and adults, and that children's views are heard and acted upon by whoever is most well-placed to act (be they children or adults), there must be an acknowledgement of children's capabilities. Indeed, perhaps the likes of lowering the age of political enfranchisement or suffrage is one way to begin

this. Our project shows that children have views about society, some more considered than others, but this is the same for adults. With opportunities for politically and morally focused dialogue through the likes of CoPI we might be assured that the electorate – whatever their age – has critically reflected, as Nussbaum would desire, and that the views they air, the votes they cast, the acts they perform are measured and move towards creating a good life for all. This good life for all, with the inclusion of children's views, is the only way to move towards addressing the adult/child power imbalance.

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