

Conference reflections: EUSARF 2012

A Discursive Review of the EUSARF Conference

The 12th European Scientific Association on Residential Foster Care for Children and Adolescents Conference (EUSARF) 2012 was held in Glasgow from 3-7th September. Delegates attended from 35 countries spanning five continents, making for a rich international mix. Shortly after, Iain Matheson, a management consultant, researcher, evaluator and educator in New Zealand, started a conversation on LinkedIn, asking for people's reflections on the conference. What follows is an edited version of this discussion, drawing from those participants who gave permission for their contributions to be reproduced here:

Iain Matheson asked for reflections from EUSARF 2012:

The 12th European Scientific Association on Residential Foster Care for Children and Adolescents (EUSARF) conference (incorporating the 10th International Looking After Children Conference and the Inaugural International Conference of the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland) ran in Glasgow, Scotland, 4-7 September, and several group members were present. Any reflections from those who were there?

Posted by Graham Connelly (Research and Qualifying Courses Manager, CELCIS, Scotland):

Iain, as you have indicated, The EUSARF conference was three events in one: the 12th EUSARF event; the 10th Looking After Children conference; and the first CELCIS conference. During the week, more than 600 delegates attended events in Glasgow. It was a wonderful experience for academics and practitioners in Scotland to listen to and mingle with colleagues from more than 30 countries.

EUSARF President, Hans Grietens, announced a change of name for the scientific society. The acronym stands for European Scientific Association on Residential and Foster Care for Children and Adolescents. In future, 'Foster Care' will be replaced by 'Family Care'.

I enjoyed the plenary talks and presentations in the parallel sessions, but the highlight for me was a four-handed play put on for delegates by two young men, their drama teacher and a volunteer professional actor from Kibble Education and Care Centre in Paisley. The young people had begun their drama course only two weeks before the conference and so it was a marvellous achievement to face a large, international audience and to appear so confident. In fact, that very point was built into the play!

There were many papers presented which dealt with the theme of education in care settings. Some of these were in symposia with the titles 'Education and School', but there were also relevant papers under other themes, such as Benjamin Denecheau's presentation on 'Children in Residential Care and School Engagement or School "Dropout": How Care Workers Could Reinforce Protective Factors'.

Posted by David Baird (Executive Director, Kibble Care and Education Centre, Scotland):

The EUSARF event was both ambitious and extensive. In many ways it was almost too much to take in for me in such a short space of time. Perhaps the importance, as reflected in the previous comments, were the connections made at the conference. The range of research being presented can probably only be taken in over time, but the human relationships made were hugely beneficial.

Posted by Anne Macleod (Digital Marketing Coordinator, CELCIS, Scotland):

The keynote presentations and some short videos are also available on the EUSARF 2012 website <http://www.EUSARF2012.org>

Thanks to these four contributors for allowing us to include their brief reflections in order to give a flavour of the conference to those readers who did not attend.

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