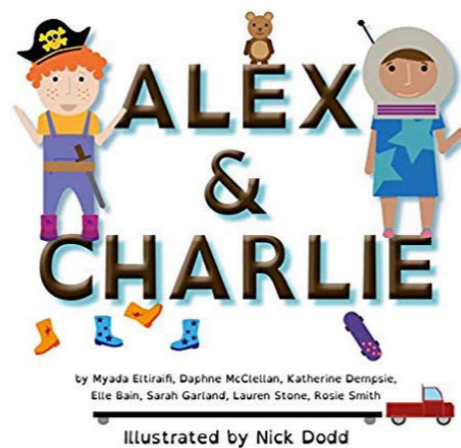


**YEA in Action
Alex and Charlie**

We held an event to get young people's views on gender equality and from there the general consensus was that there was a lack of knowledge on the issue and we needed to tackle it from a young age. That is where the idea of a storybook came from. We decided to base it on a day at school so the children would relate to the story. This way we could include everyday gender inequalities they may face. This was also a way to challenge how gender is talked about with young children. The book was written by seven young people from YEA and we have since distributed the book to all primary and nursery schools in Edinburgh. So far, we have received great feedback!



What has changed in Edinburgh and the Lothians?

Changes that we have made so far include a new post in partnership between the NHS and the Council for a sex education worker, to work on sex education training for Personal and Social Education (PSE)!

Young people's voices were heard in a city wide consultation about mental health services. Young people are now collaborating with adults to revise a resource for teaching about mental wellbeing in secondary schools. We have a commitment that the CEC will support all schools to get their LGBT youth charter.

There is now a closer working relationship between the CEC and young people, and we have been able to connect with other decision-making bodies like the Scottish Government.

Our Projects

Recent action research groups have included stress and mental health, equal opportunities, climate change,

support LGBTQI+ students in school, gender equality, sex education and more. The YEA staff also support Edinburgh's Members of Scottish Youth Parliament.

Partnership work with the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships has led to contributing to academic conferences, events and journal papers. We have also created a short film about "Being Young Researchers".

You can find more information about us in the CRFR research briefing no.85 "Young Edinburgh Action: Reinvigorating young people's participation in Edinburgh".

YOUNG EDINBURGH ACTION PRESENTS...

**YEA,
WE CAN!**

Find us on :

Twitter: @youngedaction

Facebook: @Youngedinaction

Email: YoungEdinburgh.Action@edinburgh.gov.uk

Young Edinburgh Action (YEA) is a collaborative youth project supported by the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) and shaped by young people. YEA gives young people opportunity, space and access to resources; with this we create and shape action research projects on topics that are most important to the young people of Edinburgh.

We are a group of young people who come together and use our ideas and create research projects and present them to the relevant decision-makers to create change. We collect views directly from young people and fit them to existing policies and issues we want to change in order to understand how we can make a difference. In this way YEA is different from a youth council style programme that many communities have. Everyone is welcome and it is unelected; we are a group of young people who care about making a difference.

YEA is a great way to meet other young people. You also have the opportunity to learn practical skills in a semi-professional environment, such as presenting, hosting events and communication. We also have a lot of fun and, most importantly, we see results from our hard work and learning that our voice does matter!

Why young people's voices are important?

"Young people's opinions are valuable and it is important to value them"

"[We] are the next building block for tomorrow's generation"

"There are a lot of young people who have opinions that are valuable. Just as adults opinions are [valuable]"

"Young people are those who are going to be affected by decisions which are made now so it is very important that we take an interest in influencing decisions on issues that are important to us and our future. We are also those who will become decision-makers in the future, and by practising and engaging with a similar process we are equipping ourselves to make stronger decisions when it becomes our turn."

"Young people should have a say in decisions being made for them. Any action for young people should be carried out by young people - or at least with their interests and ideas in mind."

There is an advantage to being part of the Council because we have direct access to decision-makers and resources. It would take a lot of time and work for us to organise these projects alone, but by having the support of the YEA staff we can create more impact, much more quickly.



Centre for Research on Families and Relationships
Research Briefing no.92 October 2018

For a full list of research briefings visit our website: www.crfr.ac.uk

What are our challenges?

Sometimes it can be a challenge to juggle school, work and all our other commitments, but it is well worth it. YEA is a serious time commitment and this must be considered when getting involved.

There is no need to start out feeling really confident. Most of us were shy to begin with but with the support of our friends, in a very inclusive environment, we have become more confident in our abilities and learned so many valuable skills. We want others to have the opportunity to do the same. You will become confident!

How to get involved?

If you want to get involved in YEA you can get in touch with us on social media or send us an email!

Twitter: @youngedaction

Facebook: Youngedinaction

Email: YoungEdinburgh.Action@edinburgh.gov.uk

What are the benefits of being involved in YEA?

"For a while, I saw YEA as just a group I went to, it was fun and something for my CV but as I've gotten more invested and more interested I can see the immense impact it has had on me, my confidence, my thought process, my future plans. I've met the most amazing people, that I know I will know and be able to rely on for life. I look up to every single individual in YEA for individual reasons; YEA has helped me to appreciate diversity. I can't stress enough that I was literally unable to converse with people in the first few meetings, and now I am able to present our research to massive groups!"

We also organise meals out to celebrate our successes and an annual Christmas party to thank all those involved for their great work over the past year.



The creation of this briefing paper was a collaborative project between a group of young people from YEA and an MSc Childhood Studies student from the University of Edinburgh as part of a placement-based dissertation. Keeping in the spirit of YEA, to create this briefing paper we used this opportunity to create a questionnaire to find out about how young people who participate in YEA projects feel about their participation. The questionnaires were sent out to all former and active members of YEA and we used the responses to inform this briefing paper.

This briefing paper was written by:

Sarah MacDonald (MSc Childhood Studies student - University of Edinburgh)

Myada Eltiraifi, Callum Stark, Adam Paton, Isla Jamieson-MacKenzie,

Katherine Dempsie, Mia Watt from YEA

With help from questionnaire responses from YEA participants

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*A consortium of the Universities of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian, Highlands and Islands and Stirling.

What we do...

YEA Leaders' Training is a 40 hour leadership training programme for young people to develop confidence and learn about peer education in order to get others involved. Leaders training encourages young people to take part in the democratic process and provides ideas about how to get others involved. YEA Leaders organise the Gathering each year.

We hold the **Gathering** once a year to choose topics for the next year's Action Research Groups. The Gathering is organised by YEA Leaders and open to young people from across Edinburgh.

Action Research Groups (ARG) take the topics from the Gathering so that young people can learn more about them and create action research projects. Action Research Groups are made up of 6-15 young people who feel passionate about the topic and want to learn more. We then share and recommend at the Conversation for Action.

Conversation for Action (CFA) is where we meet with decision-makers and present the findings of the Action Research Groups, discuss our findings and create a plan of action to address the issues. The CFA is led by the young people and arranged so they feel capable and in control. Decision-makers from the CEC, Scottish Government, NHS Lothian and other key partners have attended CFAs.

YEA in Action Action Research Group and Conversation for Action YEA x LGBT Youth Scotland

In 2016 we worked with LGBT Youth Scotland to find out how schools in Edinburgh are supporting LGBTI+ young people. The project involved creating a survey which was distributed to young people and teachers through social connections, social media, schools and the Council. We wanted to find out what schools were already doing; how much young people knew about LGBTI+ related issues; and what young people thought schools should be doing. After the survey had been open for ten months we came together to examine the data collected and created a report. We presented our findings and recommendations and at a Conversation for Action in May 2018 which included Edinburgh Council, Office of the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland and NHS Lothian.

Potential future action will include:

- Training pupils in schools to lead assemblies and teach classes on LGBTI+ related issues.
- Creating resources outlining the rights of young people in schools related to gender and sexuality.