



England Wales Northern Ireland

Issue 19: January 2013

# Newsbrief

**International Play Association EWN**  
**Promoting the Child's Right to Play**

## The Work of IPA

Welcome to Newsbrief; the quarterly briefing from IPA EWN. Our members tell us they find it useful and informative. As well as news from members, there are important opportunities to contribute to events and the work of IPA.

We focus this edition on the work of IPA locally and internationally. Following our recent members questionnaire we have included much more 'committee business' for you to read and in places comment on. Please send all comments to the Communications Group c/o [mail@ludemos.co.uk](mailto:mail@ludemos.co.uk)

We also welcome articles from our members that promote play for children; please send contributions to [mail@ludemos.co.uk](mailto:mail@ludemos.co.uk)

**Please note that if you have not renewed your membership for 2013 that this will be the last Newsbrief that you receive.**

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### Editorial statement

**IPA EWN aims to inform, invigorate, critique and enhance research, policy and practice relating to play, environments for play and playwork**

The views expressed in articles in Newsbrief and the IPA EWN website are those of the author and may not reflect the policy of IPA EWN, nor should publication be taken or assumed as an endorsement by IPA EWN of those views.

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Human beings have a biological drive that includes hunger, thirst and sex. We also have another long-recognised drive: to respond to rewards and punishments in our environment. But in the middle of the twentieth century, a few scientists began discovering that humans also have a third drive – what some call 'intrinsic motivation'.

*Daniel Pink 2010*

## IPA's purpose

IPA is an international non-governmental organization founded in 1961. It provides a forum for exchange and action across disciplines and across sectors.

IPA's purpose is to protect, preserve and promote the child's right to play as a fundamental human right – Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – General Comment on Article 31; Update

In the last issue of Newsbrief we were hopeful of news on the UN General Comment on Article 31. We have recently been told that the Comment is due out in February 2013, so we will feature this in our next edition.

The General Comment will define all elements of article 31, in addition to the statement on play, and will explain their importance in the growth and development of children and their impact on children's overall well-being.

When agreed the General Comment will call on 'state parties' to support the statement; for the UK that will be the UK parliament in Westminster.

For more information visit <http://ipaworld.org/category/general-comment-on-31/un-general-comment/>

We welcome comments from members on the General Comment that we may feed back to IPA World and eventually the United Nations.

## PlayRights – new and improved!

Many members have been asking about PlayRights, the international journal from IPA World. Normally all members would get a copy of PlayRights as part of their annual membership. However a change in the Committee responsibilities coincided with other serious events to affect production of PlayRights; however we expect normal circulation to resume shortly.

The magazine has been completely redesigned to add a playful zest that the editors hope is contagious. Over the course of 2013 they will be working to take IPA's communications in an exciting new direction beginning with a members' survey. The website will be entirely redesigned with an eye towards social media making it possible for members to easily share ideas from around the world.

Cynthia Gentry, IPA's Director and Communications Officer said, 'Please thank everyone for their patience over the past year. I believe they will think it was worth the wait!'

## Towards an IPA Declaration of the Child's Right to Play – IPA World

– The replacement statement to the 'Malta Declaration' – see: <http://ipaworld.org/category/about-us/declaration/>

Members of IPA have increasingly expressed comments about the existing IPA Declaration of the Child's Right to Play. It was written in 1977 in preparation for the International Year of the Child (1979). Its content reflects interests from that time and thinking has changed a little since then; research into the benefits and effects of play has been improved considerably. IPA felt it was time to update the Declaration and has asked IPA EWNI to coordinate the work.

In order to do that, we have prepared a programme of work to allow us to gain views from all world branches in order to complete the task by spring 2014. In addition to coordinating comments from other branches, we need to seek comments from our own members, i.e. yourselves – see below.

# The work of IPA EWNI

## IPA EWNI Contribution Meetings Programme

IPA EWNI like other IPA branches has been asked to prepare contributions to the new IPA Declaration of the Child's Right to Play. There is a tight window to facilitate this from January to May 2013. As a three nation branch we feel it is important to seek contributions from all three countries. To this end we plan to organise three meetings for members to contribute (in addition to email contributions); those meetings are shown below.

### Considerations for preparing a new Declaration

- A pragmatic approach to production to be taken with a limited budget
- Social media and other electronic tools to be used in order to complete the task in 15 months
- Responses to be accepted through IPA branches to encourage local discussion and consensus
- The working language of documents to be English

### Work Programme

| Date                 | Task   | Lead         |
|----------------------|--|--------------|
| <b>February 2013</b> | Call for papers from IPA branches<br>- A suggested framework for responses has been prepared | IPA EWNI     |
| March                | IPA branches prepare their statements on the Declaration of the Child's Right to Play        | IPA branches |
| April                |  |              |
| May                  | <b>Deadline for papers from IPA branches – 31 May 2013</b>                                   | IPA branches |
| June                 | Editorial group receives papers and prepares first draft                                     | IPA EWNI     |
| August               | Editorial group update to agree Published Draft  | IPA EWNI     |
| October              | Published draft available for circulation to contributors                                    | IPA EWNI     |
| December             | <b>Deadline for responses from IPA branches on Published Draft – 5 Dec 2013</b>              | IPA branches |
| <b>January 2014</b>  | Editorial group meets to draw up Final Draft   | IPA EWNI     |
| March                | Final Draft presented to IPA Board for decision  | IPA EWNI     |
| May                  | IPA Board Meets – 20-23 May 2014   | IPA Board    |
| June                 | The IPA Declaration of the Child's Right to Play published                                   | IPA Board    |

### Opportunities for IPA EWNI Meetings

| Date             | Place/Venue                                       | Lead                  |
|------------------|---|-----------------------|
| January/Feb 2013 | Northern Ireland                                  | Jacqueline O'Loughlin |
| March 2013       | National Playwork Conference, Eastbourne, England | Perry Else            |
| May 2013         | Spirit of Adventure Play, Cardiff, Wales          | TBC                   |

## How you can help

Members are encouraged to attend the meeting in your country or send in comments by email – see the 'Responses' document below.

In addition to contributions from individual members, we are also seeking members willing to serve on an editorial board. IPA EWNI has limited resources and all work is carried out on a voluntary basis;

most expenses are covered by members of their organisations. For this reason we expect that much of the work of the editorial group will be carried out on line, though emails and phone conversations. Contact us if you think you can help.

## Towards an IPA Declaration of the Child’s Right to Play – Responses

**Deadline for responses from IPA branches – 31 May 2013**

### Response from (Name):

Please try to format your responses using the following guidance; this will help us collate views for the final Published Draft.

| Declaration Content  | Comments/Guidance  |
|--|--|
| Summary statement  | What are the key messages/points that your branch has agreed?  |
| Main Points  | A clear list of the key/main elements of your statement on the Child’s Right to Play and benefits as your branch sees it   |
| Discussion/ Evidence   | How did you arrive at your main points – what evidence from research or practice can you offer to support your views? How does play as you see it benefit children or society? |
| Links  | How does play contribute to other agendas?<br>What partners do you/could you work with to promote the child’s right to play?   |
| References   | What sources did you use to support your views?  |
| Contact details<br>Name:<br>Branch:<br>Role:<br>Email:<br>Phone: | How may we contact you if we wish to clarify statements?   |

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Please send your papers to: IPA EWNl Declaration Coordinator – Perry Else c/o [mail@ludemos.co.uk](mailto:mail@ludemos.co.uk)

**Deadline for responses from IPA branches – 31 May 2013**

# What do you think?

IPA EWNI December 2012

## Members Summary

In November 2012 all IPA EWNI members were asked their opinions on a range of questions. We received 19 responses (38% of current membership) by the deadline. The key messages, the things that members said they would like from IPA EWNI follow; our detailed comments are shown below:

- A chance to debate and comment on new initiatives esp. a three year strategy of work for IPA EWNI
- More, regular articles by email
- To join with other play organisations to agree strategies for change
- Join others campaigns to promote play
- To help more [e.g. working party, submitting articles for Newsbrief, offering a workshop at an annual event 37%]
- IPA EWNI to shine the spotlight on itself more so as to promote the work of IPA

|  | Responses   | Score | Comment from the Committee   |
|--|---|-------|--|
| <b>Why are you a member of IPA?</b>  | I want to promote the value of play   | 74%   | Noted  |
|  | I like belonging to a community of like minded people   | 37%   |  |
|  | I want to contribute to play promotion globally   | 68%   | Noted  |
|  | I want to share ideas with play people around the world   | 58%   | Noted  |
|  | I want to attend events and conferences with people with an interest or impact on children and young people's play, environments for play and playwork  | 47%   | EWNI plan to hold three 'national' meetings in 2013 and a conference in Jan 2014 |
|  | Other: I want to directly engage with play provision<br>I want to learn from my peers and continue my CPD and that of my team<br>Raise an awareness of the part indoor play can play in promoting the importance of play globally |       |  |
| <b>What do you want from IPA EWNI (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)?</b> | Nothing, I'm satisfied that you are doing the best you can  | 0%    |  |
|  | Regular updates and articles on play, environments for play and playwork  | 47%   | Noted  |

|   | Responses   | Score | Comment from the Committee  |
|---|---|-------|---|
|   | A chance to debate and comment on new initiatives in EWNl that impact on children and young people's play   | 63%   | Noted   |
|   | To meet members once a year to debate and discuss the importance of play in children's lives  | 47%   | All members are invited to the AGM every year. For 2013 we will be in Cardiff 15 May. We intend this to be a workshop/forum rather than 'just a meeting.'   |
|   | To join with other play organisations to agree strategies for change that offer more play opportunities to children   | 53%   | Noted – we will do this as opportunities become available   |
|   | To organise national demonstrations and events to promote Article 31 to everyone who has an influence in children's lives   | 32%   |   |
|   | <p>Other: IPA's distinctive appeal is that it is international and I'd like to see IPA EWNl's work focus on this. There are plenty of orgs working solely within the UK and its nations.</p> <p>Information on the work of IPA and how this applies to EWNl. (I don't necessarily think children need more play opportunities, I'm not sure that's a helpful way of thinking about it). I'd be interested in some co-ordinated work regarding EWNl responses to the General Comment when it's published.</p> <p>Work with parents on a national campaign</p> <p>IPA could have an important role in creating a better climate of awareness for the need of children to play, by such means as challenging the well established bodies</p> |       | <p>Reaffirmed in 2010 – our aims are:</p> <p>Promoting the premise that playing is a universal behaviour that the benefits to children and young people achieving their right to play are shared by all races and people around the world</p> <p>Fostering and facilitating evidence gathering and exchange (beyond and between international borders):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to inform, invigorate, critique and enhance research, policy and practice relating to play, environments for play and playwork</li> <li>recognising that international professional networking and relationship building encourages mutual support and promotes understanding</li> </ul> |
| <b>How could IPA EWNl improve our service to you?</b> | More, regular communication by email  | 47%   | Noted – we are exploring ways of improving our communication and website  |
|   | More, regular articles by email   | 63%   | Noted – we are exploring ways of improving our communication and website  |
|   | Discounts at IPA events worldwide and for IPA EWNl Publications   | 47%   | All members receive discounts at IPA sponsored events   |
|   | Regionally based meetings   | 53%   | Noted – but we do not feel that this can be a priority in the coming year   |
|   | A day long annual event or conference   | 32%   | EWNl plan to hold three 'national' meetings in 2013 and a conference in Jan 2014  |

|   | Responses  | Score | Comment from the Committee   |
|---|--|-------|--|
|   | <p>Comment: Not sure. I'm afraid I haven't been very active at this level, and it's difficult to know what level of services are realistic given the budget and budget and people's time</p> <p>IPA EWNl could attempt to fundraise to start up a small secretariat to be able to act as a point of contact, promote membership, interact and manage the work with a degree of paid work</p> <p>It is my impression that many people are willing to sign on well designed political campaign sites, but get impatient if bombarded with paperwork, and find meetings expensive of time and money, so such means of communication should be used with discretion, recognising the possibilities of waste.</p> <p>Want forum to discuss play in other countries – research into comparative play and ??? (no text shown)</p> <p>Sessions at conferences – informal meetings where members / prospective members could come together to discuss IPA EWNl with a Committee member. Promotional information at conferences.</p> |       |  |
| <b>What do you want to comment on with regards to the work of IPA EWNl?</b> | IPA EWNl's annual plan of work   | 42%   | This will be published through News brief  |
|   | IPA EWNl's Statement for Play and Playwork   | 37%   |  |
|   | The draft of the updated IPA Statement for Play  | 47%   | EWNl plan to hold three 'national' meetings in 2013 to discuss this – members are welcome to join the planning working group |
|   | A three year strategy of work for IPA EWNl   | 53%   | This will be published through Newsbrief   |
|   | The content of our annual event or conference  | 47%   | This will be published through Newsbrief – members are welcome to join the planning working group                            |
|   | The content of Newsbrief and articles  | 16%   |  |
|   | Other: As a member, I would like to have the opportunity to comment on all these areas in a timely and structured manner (even if I don't avail myself of every such opportunity) but there's nothing that I want to say about any of these issues right now.  |       |  |

|  | Responses   | Score | Comment from the Committee                                |
|--|---|-------|---|
|  | I cannot promise to comment, but I'd like to have the opportunity   |       |   |
| <b>How do you think we could encourage new members or raise the profile of IPA EWNI on a grassroots level?</b> | Advertise our work more widely using email  | 37%   |   |
|  | Advertise our work more widely by buying space in national play publications  | 21%   |   |
|  | Join others campaigns to promote play   | 53%   | Noted – we will do this as opportunities become available |
|  | Organise local or regional meetings   | 32%   |   |
|  | Set up regional or local IPA 'cells'  | 37%   |   |
|  | Produce IPA information packs for members to use at their own events  | 42%   | Noted – we will do this as opportunities become available |
|  | <p>Other: Do not limit yourselves to the play sector, think and act more broadly, across sectors and disciplines.</p> <p>I think there is scope for contributing editorial material about IPA to publications such as ip-D!P, the Fair Play e-newsletter, CPIS Play Update, before considering the expense of paid advertising.</p> <p>Raise awareness' with other associations / create partnerships with other associations for a stronger voice – perhaps joint membership offers</p> <p>React to media items about play by stating you are a member of IPA EWNI (in addition to your professional role if appropriate)</p> <p>Use of social media, particularly Twitter</p> <p>Use other social media besides email</p> <p>We should try using the media to focus on the failure of government to care for our kids out of school and make the case for more and better preventive facilities for all age-groups.</p> <p>Work with other existing play networks</p> |       |   |
| <b>How would you be willing to help IPA EWNI do our work?</b>  | By paying my membership   | 74%   | Noted   |
| <b>Comment</b>   | By attending regular meetings   | 37%   |   |

|   | Responses  | Score | Comment from the Committee   |
|---|--|-------|--|
|   | By joining the national committee and contributing to the committee's work   | 26%   |  |
|   | By contributing to a working party on agreed tasks   | 47%   | Thank you we will follow up your offers  |
|   | By submitting articles for Newsbrief   | 37%   | Thank you we will follow up your offers  |
|   | By offering a workshop at an annual event  | 37%   | Thank you we will follow up your offers  |
|   | <p>Other: Being retired means that (a) I no longer have day to day practical experience in play or playwork, and (b) I have nowhere to claim travel expenses from. The first point affects my ability to contribute writing or presentations; the second point affects my ability to attend meetings</p> <p>Hard to answer this – not ruling out other involvement, but much depends on specifics – circumstances, topic, and timing.</p> <p>I would love to offer more, but not sure this is realistic over the coming year.</p> <p>Providing info on local news linking up with re:play</p>  |       | IPA EWNI has limited resources and all work is carried out on a voluntary basis; most expenses are covered by members of their organisations. This limits our effectiveness (as it does IPA World) and we will explore options to generate more resources.   |
| <b>Anything else you'd like to add?</b> | <p>All members to be offered a poster/sign to confirm membership and the opportunity to use the IPA logo on website/Facebook/ communications – linking to IPA website to drive interest and potentially new members</p> <p>At the moment I am very tied up with working for xxxx and would not have time for much additional work. However, I would be happy to allocate 3 days per year by contributing to an annual 'sharing' meeting or conference.</p> <p>I was thinking of maybe a 18 month meeting, half way between the IPA international conference, so only one meeting /conference not two.</p> <p>I would like to attend an event soon</p> <p>I would like to see a much stronger profile for IPA around Playday, which is after all meant to be the UK celebration of Article 31 – a fact which often receives little attention in Playday publicity. Maybe this is an area where we could get some sponsorship.</p> <p>I'm very grateful that people keep the work going</p> <p>IPA EWNI is a union of highly talented and committed individuals – but it needs to shine the spotlight on itself more so as to promote the work of IPA</p> <p>Thank you to all your hard and dedicated work on behalf of play people everywhere</p> |       | <p>Noted – There is the IPA EWNI Statement (see our website About Us) but we can make it more explicit when people join the organisation.</p> <p>This seems practical and will be trialled in Jan 2014 as we are planning three meetings in 2013.</p> <p>The next IPA World event is May 2014 in Turkey.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted – with thanks</p> |

## IPA EWNI – Three year Work Programme January 2013 – December 2015 Date of Review December 2013

Every year IPIA EWNI reviews its annual programme of work. Members (see above) asked for the chance to contribute to a three year plan of work. Following on from the recent Members' Questionnaire and with awareness of the existing tasks of the Committee, we have prepared the following work programme. Contributions from members are very welcome. Regular updates will be given through Newsbrief and the Annual General Meeting.

### Overall Aim of IPA EWNI

IPA EWNI aims to uphold the right of all children and young people to time, freedom and space to play in their own way by:

- Promoting the premise that playing is a universal behaviour
  - that the benefits to children and young people achieving their right to play are shared by all races and people around the world
- Fostering and facilitating evidence gathering and exchange beyond and between international borders:
  - to inform, invigorate, critique and enhance research, policy and practice relating to play, environments for play and provision for play
  - recognising that international professional networking and relationship building encourages mutual support and promotes understanding

| Key Objectives   | Activities (what we do)           | Lead Name | Timeline                         | Indicators<br>Quantity & Quality      | Comments |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Debating in all relevant national and international areas, the philosophical and practical rationales for intervening in children's play and the appropriateness and effectiveness of the various responses that have arisen from them | Focus on UNCRC Articles 12 and 31 | All       | Annual                           |                                       |          |
| Advising and supporting the IPA International Board to effectively work to influence international bodies and agencies   | Support IPA International Board   | MG        | Dec 2013<br>Dec 2014<br>Dec 2015 | Annual Review                         |          |
|  | Support IPA Training Group        | BT        | Dec 2013<br>Dec 2014<br>Dec 2015 | Annual Review                         |          |
| Facilitating the international exchange of evidence and experience   | Communications strategy           | PE<br>PH  | January<br>April<br>July         | Produce four news briefs annually for |          |

| Key Objectives  | Activities (what we do)   | Lead Name | Timeline   | Indicators<br>Quantity & Quality             | Comments |
|---|---|-----------|--|--|----------|
|   |   |           | October<br>each year<br>2013<br>2014<br>2015               | members                                      |          |
| (for instance events, articles, papers, contribution to PlayRights magazine, website and supporting study visits) |   | PE<br>PH  | Two e-bulletins produced each year                         | Produce two e-bulletins annually for members |          |
|   |   | PE<br>PH  | Content updated monthly each year<br>Annual Review of Site | Develop/ maintain IPA web site               |          |
|   | Present an overview of the current play issues around the world – ideally through the magazine and website  | PE<br>PH  | Dec 2013<br>Dec 2014<br>Dec 2015                           | Annual Review                                |          |
|   | Identify key themes for Newsbrief <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• News from IPA EWNi</li> <li>• News from IPA World</li> <li>• General Comment on Article 31 – Update</li> <li>• Report back on members questionnaire</li> <li>• Articles request</li> <li>• What is IPA?</li> <li>• Meeting NI/England/Wales</li> </ul> | PE        | Dec 2013<br>Dec 2014<br>Dec 2015                           | Annual Review                                |          |
|   | Arrange Study Visits to other countries   |           | 2013   | 1x Study visit offered to members            |          |
| Contributing to global consultation initiatives   | Better links to IPA World <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Policy Areas</li> </ul>  | MG        | Dec 2013<br>Dec 2014                                       | Annual Review                                |          |

| Key Objectives   | Activities (what we do)   | Lead Name                     | Timeline  | Indicators<br>Quantity & Quality  | Comments |
|--|---|-------------------------------|---|---|----------|
|  |   |                               | Dec 2015  |   |          |
|  | <p><b>Replacement statement to Malta Declaration.</b></p> <p><b>IPA EWNI to lead on this.</b></p> <p>February 2013: Call for papers from IPA branches</p> <p>March: IPA branches prepare their statements on the Declaration of the Child's Right to Play</p> <p>May: Deadline for papers from IPA branches – 31 May 2013</p> <p>August: Editorial group update to agree Published Draft</p> <p>October: Published draft available for circulation to contributors</p> <p>December: Deadline for responses from IPA branches on Published Draft – 5 Dec 2013</p> <p>January 2014: Editorial group meets to draw up Final Draft</p> <p>March: Final Draft presented to IPA Board for decision</p> <p>May: IPA Board Meets – 20-23 May 2014</p> <p>June: The IPA Declaration of the Child's Right to Play published</p> | <p>MG</p> <p>PS</p> <p>BH</p> | <p>2013</p> <p>June 2014</p>                    | <p>3x meetings held 2013</p> <p>NI</p> <p>England</p> <p>Wales</p> <p>Targets met</p> <p>An IPA Declaration of the Child's Right to Play produced</p> |          |
| Facilitating 'cross-fertilisation' between disciplines that have an interest or impact on children and young people's play, environments for play and playwork | Clarify identity and promote consistently worldwide and in all communications   | All                           | <p>Dec 2013</p> <p>Dec 2014</p> <p>Dec 2015</p> | Annual Review   |          |
|  | Promote IPA EWNI's view of play and playwork  | <p>BH</p> <p>PE</p>           | 2013  | Contribution to IPA Declaration   |          |
|  | <p>Support an IPA EWNI Conference in 2013/14 –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Theme to be agreed</li> <li>- Date to be agreed – Jan 2014?</li> </ul>  | All/WP                        | <p>Dec 2013</p> <p>Dec 2014</p>                 | Annual Review   |          |

| Key Objectives   | Activities (what we do)  | Lead Name      | Timeline                         | Indicators<br>Quantity & Quality                 | Comments |
|--|--|----------------|----------------------------------|--|----------|
|  |  |                | Dec 2015                         |  |          |
| Setting up working groups as necessary to support activities in line with our aims | Communications Working Group   | PE/WP          | Dec 2013<br>Dec 2014<br>Dec 2015 | Annual Review                                    |          |
|  | IPA Declaration Working Group  | WP             | Jan 2013-June 14                 | Declaration completed                            |          |
|  | IPA EWNl Conference Working Group  | WP             | June 2013-March 14               | Conference completed                             |          |
| Operating efficiently and using resources wisely                                   | Encourage both individuals and organisations concerned with play to join IPA by providing a clear package of benefits. |                | Dec 2013<br>Dec 2014<br>Dec 2015 | Membership 60<br>Membership 80<br>Membership 100 |          |
|  | Seek project funding for lead initiatives  | All            | Dec 2013<br>Dec 2014<br>Dec 2015 | Annual Review                                    |          |
|  | Comply with charitable trust standards   | PS<br>BT<br>MG | May 2013<br>May 2014<br>May 2015 |  |          |

IPA EWNl Committee 2012-13 Mike Greenaway – Chair; Blanche Thompson – Treasurer; Paul Soames – Secretary; Bob Hughes – Membership Secretary; Perry Else – Vice Chair/Communications Lead; Felicity Sylvester; Keith Cranwell; Paul Hocker; Karen Wilkinson; Jacqueline O’Loughlin

WP = Working Party

## Berlin research trip for London Play's Pop-Up Play Shop project, 24 -27 May 2012

**Paul Hocker, Play Development Team Manager, London Play July 2012**

Over the first weekend of June, I flew to Berlin to undertake four days of play research. The visit was funded by the Lady Allen of Hurtwood Memorial trust with my aim to meet with groups that were providing local play opportunities that were staffed in part by volunteers. This was to serve as preparation for a Natural Play Shop project we were developing with Haringey Play Association.

With the gift of a London Play 'Play Priority Area' sign tucked under my arm I went to my first appointment, Sooja Boehm manager of the Kiezkind café in Prenzlauer Berg. The neighbourhood has earned the nickname 'pregnancy hill' such is the popularity of the area with young families. Sooja provided me with a fascinating interview on the development of the café, its freeplay ethos and the involvement of young volunteers.

**Sooja Boehm, manager of the Kiezkind café with a London Play sign**



Kiezkind (Kiez is Berlin slang for patch or manor) was established after the dividing wall came down in the city in the early 1990s and is housed in a 100 year old former electrical substation. Prior to Kiezkind there had been a children's second hand clothing market occupying the space, something that lives on in shops that surround the square that Kiezkind shares with two playgrounds and tennis courts. It receives no government funding. It's a location that Sooja told me brings people from all over Germany to visit for 'the combination of the park, café and children's playground'.

'Yes children are important and we give them the indoor sand playground and we have toys but we are open for everybody,' Sooja told me, a consideration for the history of the space in the local communities' hearts. I noticed people without children coming into Kiezkind for a coffee or to meet as the play went on around them. The space also plays host to a flea market, a children's cinema, disco and theatre and subsidises its work through private hire for birthday parties. I asked Sooja if she employed playworkers on site but she described the play as much more spontaneous and fluid, 'From what I see,' she said, 'People do things from their own inspiration.' Kiezkind offers informal opportunities for volunteering and for 8th grade (aged 14/15) students they work at Kiezkind for two weeks to, as Sooja puts it, 'Come and be part of the process.'

## Kiezkind café, Prenzlauer Berg, Berlin



Toys are picked up from the city's many flea-markets but according to Sooza they 'disappear as soon as they get here – giving and taking if you want to call it that' she said wryly. 'We could have more security but we want the place to be open and we get lots of donations as well'. There have been cuts all over, schools, after schools, the cuts have been really hard,' Sooza said, upsetting my idea that Germany was recession proof. These cuts she said have resulted in parents forming groups to provide leisure time activities for their children at local level.

It was clear on talking with Sooza that Kiezkind is very much a product of the community rather than a project imposed upon them. This has created sustained loyalty from the community and a flexible approach from Sooza and her team in meeting the communities' expectations. This was a vital reminder to not lose sight of local people's involvement and support as we develop the Pop-Up Play shop in Tottenham. Consulting with children and the wider community to ensure what we are offering is what is required should be continual throughout the project.

The next day I visited Khalid Sharif, an Apprenticeship Programme Developer at BildungsWerk in Kreuzberg (BWK) that places young volunteers, mostly from the Turkish community, in apprenticeships across the city, including services for children. Khalid showed me around a bicycle repair workshop and I met with the young people. I interviewed Khalid and his colleague Kerem Uygun and found out about the challenges of recruiting and retaining volunteers on programmes that require a firm commitment from those involved.

'We work in areas in Berlins where there are a lot of migrants, socially deprived young people and those are our main clients,' Khalid told me as he showed me around a bicycle workshop that was offering apprenticeships. Young people sign a contract for a three year programme with 80% finding employment at the end of their scheme. 'If what you're offering clearly has value and young people can see that then it works. Getting the message right is the starting point and then with luck good word of mouth in the community takes over.' BWK also works very closely with youth workers who refer young people onto them. Karem is responsible for Vocational Education at BWK. 'In Germany there are 1.2million youngsters learning on the job,' he told me, 'but at BWK they need to spend two days out of five in a week in the classroom getting the theory.'

Both Khalid and Karem talked about making it as easy as possible for young people to join the programme, keeping paperwork, initially at least to the minimum and focussing on each young person's unique skills and ambitions. One size does not fit all for them. Creating a fast track into the work and removing as many obstacles as possible will be something to be mindful of as we develop our volunteer programme for young people.

Karem talked about the wider impact of his work, 'A young person's success on their programme can raise the confidence and ambitions of their whole family.' This has meant the BWK is trusted and held in high

regard by the community that it serves. It was a useful reminder that the integrity of a project itself is as important as the integrity of those delivering the project. For our Pop-Up shops to flourish, to get the good word of mouth that serves BWK so well, our project must be up front about what it can offer young people that want to get involved and not promise anything that cannot be delivered.

### **The entrance to a City Farm in Kreuzberg, Berlin**



The third day was dedicated to a cycle tour of playgrounds and city farms across the city which Khalid Sharif offered to take me on. After a dizzying whistle stop tour of a random sample of Berlin's City Farms and playgrounds we stopped at a popular waterpark in the former communist south-east of the city. The largely concrete space was populated with a variety of fountains, sprinklers, jets and mists that came to life for 10-minutes in between 10-minute intervals. Around the perimeter were three hand-built play structures with a pirate theme and opportunities for sand play and as it was located in beautiful woodland, endless opportunities to play within the natural environment.

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The park's sole employee carried out his work in speedos and flip-flops, reasonable attire given the nature of the work and the heat Berlin was enjoying. During the ten-minute intervals children with freshly loaded water guns gave the park worker a soaking. Part of the game was the man would act oblivious to the jets hitting his back and then when the children would least expect he'd turn around and spray them with his hose. This interaction was entirely good-natured with what appeared to be a mutual unspoken understanding on both sides, perhaps evolved over many summers, as to the rules of the game.

The cycle tour culminated with a circuit of the former Tempelhof Airport, now given over to Berliners as a vast city park; a central section between the two runways given over to 'guerrilla gardening'. Traversed by a network of crooked pathways were a wonderful collection of wonky allotments and improvised summerhouses. Each was a unique expression of their creator. Some used car parts to pots their plants another had created a beach paradise complete with rickety lifeguard's high chair made from scrap wood.

A group consisting of six children and two adults were loading up wheelbarrows from a big central pile of earth and transporting it to their own patch of ground. As each wheelbarrow unloaded its cargo the children, using spades, hands and feet, moulded it purposefully into mounds. In total four hills were being worked on, each around three foot in height, creating valleys and shade to be used for who knows what. I'll return another day to see what they were up to.

The day after I returned from Berlin I was interviewed at City Hall in my bid to become one of the London Sustainable Development Commission's cohort of 2012 London Leaders. I gave a presentation on my proposed London Leaders project, the Pop-Up Play Shop, and told the panel about my learning from the Berlin trip. As a 2012 London Leader I am getting tailored support from the GLA team and mentoring from a GLA commissioner to help roll out London Play's Pop-Up Play Shops across the capital. The first of these, named Mud Pies etc., was to open on Tottenham High Road in August 2012.



**Paul Hocker, Play Development Team Manager, London Play July 2012**

## IPA EWNI Newsbrief Themes 2013

Over a third of members asked for the chance to contribute to Newsbrief; this is very welcome.

Our aims through the Newsbrief and related web pages are to:

Share information that promotes the premise that playing is a universal behaviour

- Provide a forum for exchange of ideas that:
  - Inform, invigorate, critique and enhance research, policy and practice relating to play, environments for play and playwork
  - Recognise that international professional networking and relationship building encourages mutual support and promotes understanding

We will share material that meets these aims.

In addition to editing to fit within the style of the magazine, we reserve the right to edit the content of or reject material that:

- Is offensive, abusive or potentially litigious material
- Contains confidential information
- Is unsolicited advertising or similar information

### Your contributions

Here are the dates of the next Newsbriefs with their planned content. We welcome new articles that 'promote the premise that playing is a universal behaviour'.

If you would like to contribute articles or updates, please send them to the Communications Group c/o [mail@ludemos.co.uk](mailto:mail@ludemos.co.uk)

| Date                   | Content  |
|------------------------|--|
| April (15 March)       | News from IPA EWNI<br>News from IPA World<br>AGM items<br>Progress on the IPA Play Declaration<br>Summer event<br>General Comment on Article 31 – Critique |
| July (15 June)         | News from IPA EWNI<br>News from IPA World<br>Progress on the IPA Play Declaration<br>IPA EWNI Statement on the Play Declaration                            |
| October (15 September) | News from IPA EWNI<br>News from IPA World<br>Report on the IPA Play Declaration  |



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## Join IPA EWNI

If you would like to join IPA EWNI, an organisation devoted to promoting and protecting the child's right to play please visit: <http://www.ipa-ewni.org.uk> see 'Membership' and download an application pack.

## Keeping in touch

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## Contribute

If you are an IPA EWNI member and would like to contribute to future issues of this Newsbrief please contact the editor, Perry Else: [mail@ludemos.co.uk](mailto:mail@ludemos.co.uk)

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## Playing the Long Game

'Playing the Long Game' is the friendly title of a report on a four nations play policy symposium held in November 2012. The aim was to stimulate discussion, debate and dialogue in relation to the development and implementation of play policy and strategy that will benefit children in each of the four nations of the UK. It would help set the context for a UK response to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) General Comment to support Article 31.

The symposium was hosted by Play Wales, working in partnership with PlayBoard Northern Ireland, Play England, Play Scotland and SkillsActive.

Each nation was represented by approximately 15 participants including a Government Minister (Wales), Children's Commissioners, representatives of play organisations, play professionals and others with a key role in developing and furthering the play agenda in respect of policy.

The symposium included presentations on the 'state of play' from the four nations, as well as briefing on workforce support from SkillsActive. Following discussion by participants, action plans from thematic discussions were recorded.

Members reading the full report will be able to form their own judgements of the various formal and informal contributions from the four nations.

Access the full report from:  
<http://www.playwales.org.uk/eng/playpolicysymposium>

**Please feel free to share your stories of organisations surviving and thriving... it's tough out there.**