

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

THE GLOBAL AGENDA FOR CHILDREN - WHAT ROLE IS THERE FOR US?

MICHAEL JARMAN

**THE 1st MACQUARIE STREET LECTURE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, 6 APRIL 2001**

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*The 1st Macquarie Street Lecture for Children and Young People,
6 April 2001*

Chair's foreword

David Campbell MP, Member for Keira Chair, Committee on Children and Young People

This report provides a record of a presentation on global issues affecting children made to the Committee on Children and Young People on Friday 6 April 2001 by Mr Michael Jarman, former President of the International Forum for Child Welfare (IFCW), former Director of Children's Services for Barnardo's UK, and currently Chair of the National Foster Care Association in the United Kingdom.

The presentation by Michael Jarman made a deep impression on those attending -- Members of the Committee and staff, the Commissioner for Children and Young People and her senior staff, and members of the Expert Advisory Panel of the Commission for Children and Young People.

Following the presentation by Michael Jarman, the Committee obtained his agreement that his remarks be edited and published as the first of a proposed continuing series of lectures on issues for children and young people, to be termed the Macquarie Street Lectures on Children and Young People.

Last year, at the International Forum for Child Welfare, World Forum 2000, "Children First in the New Millennium: A New Commitment to Children and Young People", held in Sydney 9-11 August 2000, young people and child welfare professionals from more than 30 countries, endorsed the principle that:

"... we are a lesser global community when children in any part of the world are suffering, whether from a violation of their rights, having unmet needs, or the consequences of discrimination, abuse, armed conflict, family breakdown or poverty."

Michael Jarman's presentation, published in this report as the 1st Macquarie Street Lecture on Children and Young People, provides a clear statement of the global nature of issues affecting children and young people. This is an issue of particular importance in the lead up to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children, to be held in several months time (September 2001).

Acknowledgments

With eleven Members, the Committee on Children and Young People is one of the largest of Parliament's Committees, and also one of the most diverse in terms of Members interests and political affiliations. It is this mix of individual views and opinions which, when placed into the general environment of the deliberations of the Committee, will provide a strong basis for the future work of the Committee.

I am grateful for the assistance of the Committee Secretariat: the Manager, Mr Ian Faulks, Ms Violeta Brdaroska, Committee Officer, and Ms Carlyne Allen, Assistant Committee Officer.

I commend this report to Parliament.

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THE GLOBAL AGENDA FOR CHILDREN - WHAT ROLE IS THERE FOR US?

MICHAEL JARMAN

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you about some of the most important global issues for children.

Charles Handy is a favourite management guru of mine, a man with a sharp perception of on what the future holds for us. In his now rather ancient book – "The Age of Unreason" – he illustrates how the pace of major social change over the past two thousand years has accelerated. In Roman times, major changes in society would take possibly several generations. Today, we are experiencing massive social change in one lifespan. It feels as though this cycle of change is down to around seven months and shortening! I know from experience that change can be both stimulating and creative on the one hand, and disorientating and alienating on the other. In the stampede for progress, people get hurt. There are three points:

- The speed and amount of social change will continue to accelerate, posing us with new issues and problems. Children will need to be equipped to deal with this.
- Secondly, the world continues to shrink, and communications have created a global village, with all its opportunities and threats.
- Thirdly, in that shrinking world, children (and perhaps more accurately, women and children) are increasingly the victims of exploitation, abuse and violence of every conceivable manner.

We should remember what a former United Nations Secretary General, Perez de Cuellar, said:

"The way a society treats its children reflects not only its qualities of compassion and protective caring but also its sense of justice, its commitment to the future and its urge to enhance the human condition for coming generations"

You may have heard of the "onion theory" as applied to organisations – peel back a layer and you get a different perspective and, each time, people are primarily concerned with what happens closest to them. They are not concerned with high flown strategies and broad objectives, but with the nuts and bolts of living and working in their locality with their problems.

My contention is that because of the rapid and accelerating degree of change in the world about us, we have no option but to adopt a broader perspective

and to be vitally concerned with what happens in the wider world. We must take an objective look at what is happening to children across the nation and across the world.

So the questions we must frequently ask each other are:

- Do I know what is happening in society that either supports or negates the healthy development of children?
- What do I do, personally, that makes a positive difference for children?

Robert Myer wrote a book called "The Twelve Who Survive" about early childhood programmes in the developing world. He wrote:

"Children need three things to grow and develop – stability of relationships at home, stability of relationships at school, and stability of relationships in their community."

I would like you to hang onto that for the next twenty minutes and reflect on your knowledge and experience..

James Garbarino wrote a book in 1995 called "Raising children in a socially toxic environment". You don't need to read the book to have some idea of what a socially toxic environment might look like. You might even be able to bring to mind some clear images – mine are about seeing dilapidated housing, young children acting as runners for drug pushers, young people sleeping in underpasses, violence among drunk teenagers, a young teenage girl standing on the street corner, watched by her pimp.

Garbarino analyses the needs we **must** meet **because** they are essential to our children's well being. These needs are stability, security, affirmation and acceptance, family time, values and connection to a community, and access to basic resources. The degree to which we meet these needs shapes their social development, their behaviour and their hopes for the future – in other words, the degree to which they will thrive. Garbarino suggests ways in which the socially toxic environment now fails to meet those needs – substituting violence, nastiness, insecurity, isolation and poverty in their place.

CONTEXT

Some international context - Two hugely significant events occurred in 1989 and 1990. In 1989, after ten years of drafting and redrafting, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was approved. Today virtually all countries have signed and ratified the Convention. National Governments send regular reports to the monitoring committee in Geneva, which is prepared to be strongly critical of governments that fail to act on its comments.

Then, in 1990, the UN Special Summit on Children, attended by the world's political leaders, agreed a programme of global goals for children. Each nation agreed to work towards the achievement of those goals, to produce an action plan and to report national progress in mid decade – 1995.

In September 2001 the UN General Assembly at a Special Session on Children will review how far the goals of 1990 have been achieved. It will consider the future actions for children in the next decade. So in September a revised global programme will come into place.

PROCESS

The United Nations system is wonderfully engaging! In order to prepare the programme and draft the agreement for the Special Session later this year:

- Each member nation was asked to produce a report reviewing its own progress in achieving the goals. It also asked what else needs to be done to achieve the current goals, what lessons had been learned, and what commitments could the government give for the future programme.
- In addition, there are three Preparation Committee meetings (PrepComs) held in New York and a number of regional ones – in Europe and in Africa for example.

Is any of this important? Well, I think it is.

Firstly, the UN Convention and the Global Goals mean, that for the first time the world is planning ahead for the good of its children – the first time since the dawn of humankind.

Secondly, the first global programme has been a learning experience. The revised global programme will build on this experience.

Thirdly, some of the major issues for children are common to most, if not all countries. Their manifestations may vary to a degree but the major challenges they pose to children growing up, as a healthy individual, are the same. We need both to learn from each other and to join forces to overcome these challenges.

Fourthly, we are seeing a change in the United Nations process. Instead of being simply a meeting place of nation states, it is recognising the need for dialogue with civil society, as represented often by the Non governmental organisations (the NGO's). So we are seeing the rise in influence of the NGO's on the international stage.

The UN, in order to function in its role of building a better world, must bridge a number of wide chasms. To be successful in doing this, it must overcome differences by consensus building. This process, while cumbersome, deliberate, boring and tiring, has proved to be the best way to arrive at enough common ground to move the progress of the world forward another step.

SOME LEARNING FROM THE REPORTING PROCESS IN THE UK

Let me comment on the UK Government Report to the UN which I helped to draft.

There were consultation meetings in the four countries of the UK, followed by written submissions from NGO's, government departments and the three devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. What did I learn?

- It is difficult for a government to look back ten years, especially when there has been a change of administration. Nearly all government material focussed on either the achievements of the last three years or the initiatives in place now, which will produce positive change in the years to come.
- Devolution is at an early stage and no one has quite worked out how a UK Government Report is put together in this new era. There is great sensitivity to the views expressed by the devolved administrations and many people are surprised when they realise that the Department for Education and Employment, for example, is responsible only for England.
- Devolution is giving energy for change, and in the three devolved administrations there is an examination of policies and resources, leading to different priorities and allocations being made. There is a genuine feeling that they can respond to needs and make a difference for their communities with locally grown solutions.
- The Government is recognising that listening to the voices of children and young people can be really helpful and is not such a frightening thing after all. There is still a long way to go and we are not necessarily very good at supporting young people in speaking out, although there are some excellent examples of good work.
- Everyone complained about short term funding. Good projects were not sustained and innovation and good practice is lost by the constant churning of closure of projects and opening new ones. Since such projects are working with the most vulnerable members of society, the last thing they want is constant change – local people usually want a service to be familiar, local, accessible, responsive and reliable – it does what it says it does, every day. The plea from the NGO sector was for long term funding, with an audit and inspection process to justify continued funding, linked to the outcomes achieved. Interestingly, the local plans for each Sure Start programme has to show a ten year financial profile, with the government grant dropping to zero by year ten. This is recognition that such programmes need time to be successful.
- There were too many government initiatives and many overlapped – Health Action Zones, Education Action Zones, Sure Start, Regeneration

programmes and so on. The same people are often trying to develop several of these simultaneously.

- There is real commitment to give local people a genuine say in what happens in their community, so several initiatives have local residents and parents on their Executive Boards, responsible for running the programme. In Sure Start, usually, on the Partnership Board that directs the local programme, there is one-third local government people, one-third voluntary agencies and one-third local parents with a child under 4.

WHAT IS THE GLOBAL AGENDA?

Let me turn to the global agenda for children.

In 1990 the global agenda was: implement the UN convention on the Rights of the Child and implement an action plan to meet the 27 goals set by the Special Session.

The 27 Goals covered major areas like child survival, development and protection – like infant mortality rates, maternal mortality, suicide rates, road traffic accidents, and nutrition for under fives. They covered women's health and education, child health, water and sanitation, basic education, and early childhood development.

What is the agenda today in 2001 and what do we see as significant for the next ten years?

There is still much progress to be made in the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Professor Eugene Verhallen, from the University of Ghent in the Netherlands has a special interest in children's rights. He notes four essential stages, which must be understood in the exercise of those rights. Firstly:

- That rights have to be agreed, signed and ratified. We certainly have that in the UN Convention - signed and ratified by almost every country. In fact the most ratified treaty in history!
- Children have to be informed of their rights. Whose job is it to do that? Who is doing it? In Holland one NGO designed an attractive poster with cartoon characters and distributed it free to all schools in the country to help raise awareness in children of their rights. How many millions of children do not know that there is a UN Convention and that they do have rights - what can you and I do to help them? Here you have a Commissioner for Children and major strands of activity and engagement with young people. In the UK, the evidence put forward for the recent UN Report was clear – few children in the UK know about their rights, many adults also do not know about children's rights - and government in particular, is wary rather than embracing of

children's rights. It is the local authorities and the voluntary sector in particular that lead the way. Despite considerable resistance to the ideas – I believe that within the next two years we shall see Commissioners for Children in each of the four countries of the UK, and their role widened to cover all children, not just those in public care. In the USA, which has signed but not ratified the Convention, children are not aware of the Convention. The Child Welfare League of America, the umbrella body for NGO's in the US, with over 900 organisations in membership, has only this year decided to campaign and raise the profile of children's rights in the US – over ten years after the Convention was agreed at the UN.

- Thirdly, children have to be able to exercise their rights. How do they do that? How do children who are being abused, or children who are abducted or denied education - how do they exercise their rights - what role does that give all of us?
- Finally, children need to be able to enforce their rights. What does this mean? It certainly means a body of legislation in any country, which enables children to be protected from harm. It means the ability to have their rights and views represented against the power and authority of adults and organisations. It raises difficult questions - how are the rights of street children enforced in Brazil where death squads clear the streets? How are the rights of children held in custody enforced? In the UK there is serious concern about the number of suicides of young people held in very poor conditions in youth prisons. Even the Head of the Prison Service says they are a disgrace – yet they continue. In some countries enforcing children's rights can be tough and dangerous work - witness the work of Father Shay Cullen in the Philippines working for the Preda Foundation with children who are being sexually abused by tourists, who has been threatened with deportation on several occasions and not infrequently receives death threats.

Please think about those four stages - because we all have a role to play in developing them further.

The latest draft outcome document for the UN Preparation Committee is titled – *A World Fit for Children*. It is a long document and I can only give you a flavour – but I have picked out some points, which perhaps have greater resonance in an industrialised nation.

It has a long mission statement – here's an extract:

“We will build a world in which all children enjoy a childhood; a world of play and learning, in which children are loved and cherished, their safety and well-being are paramount, their gender is not a liability, and where they can grow to adulthood in health, peace and dignity

In creating such a child friendly world, we affirm our obligation to safeguard the rights of all children by means of national action and international cooperation, utilising the maximum available resources and according the highest priority to fulfilling the rights of the most disadvantaged children in our societies.

We regard children and young people as resourceful citizens capable of helping to build a better future for humankind. Accordingly, we will create an environment that fully engages and involves them in decisions that affect their lives, in line with their evolving capacities”.

The document contains three clear statements about our task for children. Firstly, we must act in the best interests of the child; secondly, we must protect children against abuse and exploitation, and thirdly, we must focus on some key outcomes for children. The third statement recognises that there are stages in life when a child is particularly vulnerable to risks or exceptionally capable of rapid physical, intellectual and emotional development. Accordingly three key outcomes for children have emerged as a framework for action, based on scientific evidence and experience from practice. They are:

- A good start in life, in a nurturing and safe environment that enables children to survive and be physically healthy, mentally alert, emotionally secure, socially competent and able to learn
- The opportunity to complete a basic education of good quality
- For adolescents, the opportunity to develop fully their individual capacities in safe and enabling environments that empower them to participate in and contribute to their societies

Do these point accord with our view of what needs to be done? Do they give us the means to focus on some key actions?

Certainly, I can identify with this framework in terms of children in Britain and indeed in Europe. I want to spend a little time now commenting on what I see as the Agenda for Children in Britain now and into the future. I suspect it will align in some measure with your agenda too.

1. Child Poverty

Firstly, ending child poverty. Some statistics –

- One third of children in Britain live in poverty, using government definition
- Since 1979 the proportion of children living households with no earners has almost doubled
- Eight in ten people of Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin live in poverty in the UK

As the gap between rich and poor continues to widen (with those in employment doing well), children are bearing the brunt of poverty, inequality and social exclusion, in rural and urban areas. Children born into poverty are more likely to be unhealthy, have a poor education and limited employment prospects. We need to remove the barriers to mainstream health, education and housing services. A secure income and access to those services will enable children to live healthier, better education and safer lives – and make informed choices for their future.

The Government has implemented many major programmes to respond to child poverty, which they see as a disgrace to our society. They have pledged

to lift 1.2 million out of poverty by April 2002 and to end child poverty “in a generation”.

2. Protecting Children

Secondly, protecting children. We have worked hard to build a thorough, comprehensive and sensitive child protection system – and yet it still fails children. 26% of recorded rape victims are children; one baby is killed every fortnight and more than 4,000 infants placed on child protection registers every year. New risks emerge:- over the past five years we have recognised the patterns of behaviour and the signs and symptoms of children who are abused through prostitution - not child prostitutes as the media would say. We know that the best single predictor of future trouble is the first time a child runs off from home. Treat that seriously – find out what was behind it. Another new risk is easy access to the Internet and there are well-publicised cases of Internet chat-room grooming of children, leading to face-to-face meetings and abuse. Treat this seriously; the risk is real. The recent so-called “Wonderland” child pornography paedophile ring was reckoned to have images of around 16,000 children being abused – but in the UK only around 16 have been identified so far

One of our problems is that we know that most abuse takes place in situations where the child knows the adult, either as parent, relative or friend. Nevertheless, there are still real risks to children outside the family, and giving children the freedom to play, and grow and gain competence has to be balanced constantly with safety. This can lead to an overprotection of children and a restriction on their opportunities to grow into independent people – but what a dilemma for any parent to find the right balance!

3. Child Friendly Communities

This leads onto the third issue – building child friendly communities. More than 40,000 children a year are killed or injured in road traffic accidents and the UK has one of the worst children pedestrian death rates in Europe. Almost two thirds of 12 – 15 year olds have suffered some form of victimisation during the past 6 to eight months. One in three has been assaulted on some occasion in the same period. Over half of school children under 12 have had at least one experience with drugs. In Glasgow, the single biggest reason for children coming into local authority care is the parents’ drug habits and their inability to care for them. And, once in care, the family disintegrates and they are there, long term.

Children and young people lead increasingly restricted lives. Fear of violence and crime, bullying at school and assaults in the community, concern about drugs and the danger from traffic are key factors. Children from black and ethnic minority groups face the additional burden of discrimination, racist crime and harassment.

Children are rarely asked – but need to participate in decisions made about their own environment, to contribute towards plans for safe housing, traffic free streets, play and leisure facilities, accessible shops and safe open spaces. If they are denied a role in community life, young people will continue to be disillusioned with and dismissive of, politics, government and the democratic process. This cannot be good for us – and there is increasing concern amongst politicians about the lack of engagement in this democratic process.

There are calls for safe travel routes to schools, parks and shops; an increase in statutory funding for youth work; more neighbourhood wardens, park rangers and police on the beat. Anti crime programmes include, electronic tagging, child curfew orders, increased secure detention places – but also include local youth offending teams with responsibility to support individual children in difficulty with local tailor made programmes.

4. Family Support

The fourth issue is family support. All of the previous issues demonstrate an increasing strain on families. Three out of four babies are smacked before their first birthday. More than one in five children lived in one-parent families in 1999. Only a minority of children will reach the age of 12 and still be cared for by their birthparents living together. There is a major focus on parenting skills and parent support in the UK including a new National Family and Parenting Institute, increased financial support to parents, increased child care, and strategies on crime reduction, education and health designed to improve family well being. The famous phrase – 'joined up thinking across government' – comes into play here. This is easier to spin in the media than it is to deliver on the ground – but greater cohesion in policy and resources is essential to achieve better outcomes for families.

One further comment on parenting. It has always struck me as strange that we complain of the increasing violence in society but refuse to ban the physical punishment of children. How do children learn? What right does a baby under one year old have **not** to be smacked? Is there something important here in terms of our values, our respect for others or lack of it, and our need for self autonomy that would bear closer examination?

5. Keeping Children Healthy

The fifth issue is about keeping children healthy. Habits formed in childhood have a long-term impact on health and well – being. Yet children are increasingly inactive and overweight, leaving them vulnerable to developing illnesses in later life. There is evidence of increasing numbers of young people with mental health problems (20% of children and young people suffer some form of mental health problem) – and a lack of services to help them. Young adolescents are often treated in adult wards for example. The UK has the highest teenage pregnancy rate in Europe – six times higher than that of the Netherlands – which co-incidentally has a much more relaxed attitude to sex

and has a record of providing strong sexual health and education programmes for children and adolescents. Government initiatives include for example a school healthy eating programme – giving out fruit to primary school children to encourage a habit, and a realisation that games, and even competitive sports, after a period in the wilderness in schools, actually have a number of benefits for children. It is also strengthening the health and sex education programmes in schools, and reducing the rate of teenage pregnancies is a government target.

6. Educating Our Children

Educating our children is the next issue. Children face considerable pressure at school. There is a huge pressure to raise standards and a strong government will to do so. Nationally, 46% of children achieve five or more GCSE passes at grades A-C, but only 24% of those from disadvantaged schools do so. 80% of children with families from professional backgrounds go on to higher education compared to just 14% of children from unskilled family backgrounds. Afro- Caribbean children are six times more likely than others to be excluded from school. 75% of children in care leave school with no formal education, compared to 6% of other children. 40% of all pupils say they have been bullied. In some London boroughs, the number of first languages for children is over one hundred.

The challenge is how to sustain a learning climate in schools, which supports each individual's learning needs and provides a supportive and safe social environment for their personal development. The current issue is a shortage of teachers – and quite soon, Australian teachers might well form the largest group of UK teaching staff!

In addition to the Government's determination to raise school standards, is its focus on early childhood. The Sure Start programme, similar to your Families First programme, is the flagship with its aim of every child thriving and learning so that they are ready to profit from school when they arrive.

7. Focussing on some vulnerable groups

Finally, let me focus on some vulnerable groups. The transition from adolescence to adulthood is more challenging than ever before. Whilst many have better access to health and education than their predecessors, they are more likely to have to deal with family breakdown, and exposure to drugs and alcohol. Drinking is a powerful issue in youth society in Europe, and none more so than Britain. One in five 16 – 24 year olds is homeless at some time. 1 in 11 aged 16-18 is not in education, training or employment. Care leavers are 50 times more likely to go to prison, 60 times more likely to be homeless and 88 times more likely to be involved in drug use than children who have not been looked after by local authorities – a shocking indictment of the care system. There is a string of government reports and inquiries and a major government initiative – Quality Protects – designed to improve standards of

care. The fundamental question remains – how do you recruit and retain experienced and confident people, to direct and manage safe care and developmental care for vulnerable and often very difficult young people?

Briefly, I must mention the impact Europe-wide of the migration of people and the number of asylum seekers, both families and unaccompanied children (5,500 unaccompanied children in the UK). They are highly vulnerable people and providing appropriate help is a major challenge.

MESSAGES OF HOPE

This is a pretty heavy agenda and it contains some fairly intractable problems. Are things getting worse or better? Remember the points I made at the beginning – massive social change – the basic needs of children – stability, security, affirmation, connection to community – the heavy investments we are making in order to try and offset the strongly socially toxic environments in which we now raise our children?

Are these local questions or national ones? Are they national or international ones? Does the UN agenda and the Special Summit and new focus have importance and offer some prospect of a way forward or not?

Taking Garbarino's analysis as the framework, the issues I have described all represent major risk factors for vulnerable children. Risk accumulates. The children who live with these accumulations of risk have a heightened vulnerability to the toxins in the social environment beyond their families.

Of all children, those burdened by an accumulation of risk factors most need a safe and stable community – but are most likely to live in areas where safety and stability have declined most. They have the least capacity to resist a drug culture but are surrounded by drugs and the life of the drug economy.

The reverse is also true – opportunities ameliorate risk. People can overcome a great deal if at least some of the needs of children are met in the social and family environment. So we have a mission – in Garbarino's words:

“That mission is to do all we can to reduce risk and increase opportunity in the lives of our children”.

Let me also offer some message of hope in what may appear a rather bleak future. You may have come across the concept of resilience. Why is it that in apparently similar circumstances some children thrive and make the most of their situation and others become demoralised, alienated and unable to perform to their natural abilities? Resilience is the capacity to do well in spite of difficult or adverse circumstances. There are several themes in the concept of resilience, which lead to successful, coping and thriving – and we want more than just coping from our children. Things like:

- Personal anchors – children need stable, positive emotional relationships. Urie Bronfenbrenner put it well –

“Every child has the right to be loved by someone who is absolutely and totally nuts about them”.

That is unconditional; that is affirming; that builds identity.

- Success – Children with a track record of success are more likely to believe they are capable of succeeding the next time they meet a challenge.
- Active coping – children who actively seek to master challenges as they come along seem to do better than children who react passively to stress.

Let me finish with one story and a quotation that illustrate more potently what I mean:

In 1990, I attended the International Year of the Family conference in Malta and took part in a workshop on resilience. One of the presenters was from Egypt and he gave as his example –

Two boys in Upper Egypt had one pair of shoes between them. So they took it in turns to go to school. At the end of each day, the one who had been at school teaches the boy who has stayed at home what he has learnt that day. The following day, the roles are reversed. In that way two children gained an education. The boys accepted the constraints of their circumstances but did not allow them to determine their actions.

That is resilience.

Secondly, Sister Rose McGeady, President of Covenant House in New York, has written:

"My experience, after many years of working with homeless, abandoned, rejected, hurt children is that in spite of what appear to be overwhelming clouds of distance and even despair in these children, there inevitably remains what I like to call the “seeds of resilience” a latent capacity to respond and recover. Those seeds need careful and loving nurture if they are to grow and flower. Patient affirmation, the provision of opportunities for small success, followed by bigger successes with constant support, and the conveying of confidence and hope on the part of the caretaker, are essential elements in the recovery process.

It is therefore important that everyone, especially parents, teachers and others who interact with young children use every opportunity to be affirming, and ready to offer words of approval and confidence building whenever possible. Children do indeed learn what they live, and the more they live with positive strokes, the more likely they are to believe in themselves and, conversely, the more likely they are to be hurt by negative responses."

The message is that children are resilient and as caring adults we can strengthen their resilience by our actions. We all have a role to play with every child we know. Which brings me full circle to the questions I asked in the beginning. I hope I have stimulated some of your thinking and created some reflections on what you can do for the children for whom you bear a responsibility.

ENDPIECE

Charles Handy in his book *The Empty Raincoat* talks about three senses, which we must preserve for the future:

- Firstly, the sense of continuity. He called it the cathedral or temple philosophy – the thinking behind the people who designed and built the world's temples and cathedrals, knowing that they would never live long enough to see them finished. With the issues we are tackling today, we must start knowing that we shall not see the end but that others will follow
- Secondly, a sense of connection. We were not meant to stand alone. We need to belong – to something or someone. Only where there is mutual commitment will you find people prepared to deny themselves for the good of others. Duty and conscience have no meaning if there is no sense of commitment to others, and of others to us
- Thirdly, a sense of direction. Continuity and connection are not enough. Direction adds meaning to our lives by providing us with a cause, a purpose that is beyond ourselves.

There can be no greater cause than striving to improve the world for children.

EXTRACTS OF THE MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The relevant Minutes of the Committee on Children and Young People are included:

Meeting No. 3 Wednesday 22 November 2000

Meeting No. 5 Wednesday 31 January 2001

Meeting No. 6 Wednesday 30 May 2001

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

PROCEEDINGS

**5:00 P.M., WEDNESDAY 22 NOVEMBER 2000
AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE, SYDNEY**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Legislative Council

Ms Burnswoods
Mr Corbett
Mr Harwin
Mr Primrose

Legislative Assembly

Ms Andrews
Mr Smith
Mr Campbell
Mr Webb
Mr O'Doherty
Ms Beamer

Also in attendance: Mr Faulks, Committee Manager.

The Chairman, Mr Campbell, presiding.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr Tsang.

2. Previous Minutes

On the motion of Ms Andrews, seconded by Mr Webb, the minutes of meeting No. 2 were accepted unanimously as being a true and accurate record.

3. Chairman's report

Visit by Mr Michael Jarman, previously CEO of Barnardo's in the United Kingdom

The Chairman indicated that he had spoken to the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Ms Gillian Calvert, who informed him of the visit in April 2001 of Mr Michael Jarman, previously CEO of Barnardo's in the United Kingdom, as part of the Commission's development and education program. The Chairman proposed that the Committee meet with Mr Jarman on Thursday 5 April 2001.

On the motion of Ms Beamer, seconded Mr O'Doherty:

That the Chairman invite Mr Michael Jarman, previously CEO of Barnardo's in the United Kingdom, to meet with the Committee on Thursday 5 April 2000, and that Mr Jarman be invited to present a public lecture during his visit.

Passed unanimously.

6. General business

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 6:20 p.m.. Sine die.

Chairman

Manager

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

PROCEEDINGS

**10:00 A.M., WEDNESDAY 31 JANUARY 2001
AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE, SYDNEY**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Legislative Council

Ms Burnswoods
Mr Corbett
Mr Harwin
Mr Primrose

Legislative Assembly

Ms Andrews
Mr Campbell
Mr Webb
Mr O'Doherty

Also in attendance: Mr Faulks, Committee Manager.

1. Election of Acting Chairman

The Chairman and other Members were delayed to inclement weather. Pursuant to the Legislative Assembly Standing Order 325, on the motion of Mr Webb, seconded Mr Corbett:

‘That in the absence of the Chairman, Ms Burnswoods be the Acting Chairman.’

Passed unanimously.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Ms Beamer, Mr Smith and Mr Tsang.

3. Previous Minutes

On the motion of Mr Harwin, seconded by Mr Corbett, the minutes of meeting No. 4, having been distributed previously, were accepted unanimously as being a true and accurate record.

4. Chairman's report

Visit by Mr Michael Jarman

The Chairman reported that further to the resolution of the Committee in Meeting No. 3 of 30 November 2000, Mr Michael Jarman has been invited to make a presentation to the Committee on Friday 6 April 2001. In correspondence with the Commissioner for Children and Young People, it has been suggested that the meeting with Mr Jarman would also provide an opportunity for the Committee to meet with the Expert Advisory Panel of the Commission for Children and Young People.

On the motion of Mr O'Doherty, seconded Mr Primrose:

‘That the Expert Advisory Panel for the Commission for Children and Young People be invited to meet with the Committee on Friday 6 April 2001 for the presentation by Mr Michael Jarman.’

Passed unanimously.

5. General business

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Chairman

Manager

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

PROCEEDINGS

**9:00 A.M., WEDNESDAY 30 MAY 2001
AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE, SYDNEY**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Legislative Council

Ms Burnswoods
Mr Primrose
Mr Harwin
Mr Tsang

Legislative Assembly

Mr Campbell
Ms Andrews
Mr Webb
Mr Smith
Ms Beamer

The Chairman, Mr Campbell, presiding.

Also in attendance: Mr Faulks, Committee Manager, and Ms Brdaroska, Committee Officer.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr Corbett and Mr O'Doherty.

2. Previous Minutes

On the motion of Mr Burnswoods, seconded by Mr Primrose, the minutes of meeting No. 5, having been distributed previously, were accepted unanimously as being a true and accurate record.

3. Visit by Mr Michael Jarman

The Chair reported that Mr Michael Jarman made a presentation to the Committee at a luncheon on Friday 6 April 2001. The Commissioner for Children and Young People attended the presentation, as did members of the Expert Advisory Panel of the Commission for Children and Young People.

The Committee agreed to commence a series of lectures sponsored by the Committee on issues relating to children and young people, under the series title of "The Macquarie Street Lectures

on Children and Young People", and to use Mr Jarman's presentation as the first of an ongoing series -- Mr Jarman has agreed to this course of action.

On the motion of Ms Burnswoods, seconded Mr Webb:

That the Committee

- (a) develop a program for an ongoing series of lectures sponsored by the Committee on issues relating to children and young people, to be released as reports of the Committee under the series title of "The Macquarie Street Lectures on Children and Young People"; and
- (b) Mr Michael Jarman's presentation on 6 April 2001 be the first of the series of lectures.

Passed unanimously.

4. Consideration of the Chair's draft report: "The global agenda for children - what role is there for us? Michael Jarman - The 1st Macquarie Street Lecture on Children and Young People, 6 April 2001"

The Chair presented the draft report: "The global agenda for children - what role is there for us? Michael Jarman - The 1st Macquarie Street Lecture on Children and Young People, 6 April 2001" (Report 2/52).

The draft report, have previously been distributed to Members, was accepted as being read.

The Committee proceeded to deliberate on the draft report in globo:

Chapter 1 - The global agenda for children - what role is there for us?: read and agreed to

On the motion of Ms Beamer, seconded Mr Smith:

That the draft report: "The global agenda for children - what role is there for us? Michael Jarman - The 1st Macquarie Street Lecture on Children and Young People, 6 April 2001", be read and agreed to.

Passed unanimously.

On the motion of Ms Beamer, seconded Mr Andrews:

That the draft report: "The global agenda for children - what role is there for us? Michael Jarman - The 1st Macquarie Street Lecture on Children and Young People, 6 April 2001" be accepted as a report of the Committee on Children and Young People, and that it be signed by the Chair and presented to the House.

Passed unanimously.

On the motion of Ms Beamer, seconded Mr Webb:

That the Chair and Manager be permitted to correct any stylistic, typographical and grammatical errors in the report.

Passed unanimously.

5. General business

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

Chairman

Manager

REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The first steps ... Review of the first annual report of the Commission for Children and Young People, for the 1999-2000 financial year. (Report 1/52, May 2001).

The global agenda for children - what role is there for us? Michael Jarman - The 1st Macquarie Street Lecture for Children and Young People, 6 April 2001. (Report 2/52, May 2001).

Committee on Children and Young People

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