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|  | Speak Up – Kōrerotia  Child-led design  18 November 2023 |
| Female | Coming up next conversations on human rights with “Speak Up” – “Kōrerotia”, here on Plains FM. |
| Sally | E ngā mana,  E ngā reo,  E ngā hau e whā  Tēnā koutou katoa  Nau mai ki tēnei hōtaka: “Speak Up” – “Kōrerotia”.    Tune in as our guests “Speak Up”, sharing their unique and powerful experiences and opinions and may you also be inspired to “Speak Up” when the moment is right. |
| Female | Whakataka te hau ki te uru  Whakataka te hau ki te tonga  Kia mākinakina ki uta  Kia mātaratara ki tai  E hī ake ana te atakura  He tio, he huka, he hauhū  Tihei Mauri Ora! |
| Sally | Tēnā koe, Louise. That was Louise Petzold, one of our guests on today’s show.  We’re going to be thinking about child-led design and by extension, child-friendly places, child-led initiatives, these sorts of things. I’m Sally Carlton, your host, and we’ve got three guests with us – Louise who just did our karakia, Rosie and Wendy. I’d love to hear a little bit about each of you, you each bring really quite different perspectives to this show which is really great and really exciting.  Louise, seen as you did our karakia, how about we start with you? |
| Louise | Oh yes kia ora, thanks Sally. Hi, tēnā koutou katoa. He uri ahau nō Ingarani, nō Yorkshire ōku tīpuna. I tipu ake au ki Durham. Kei Motueka ahau e noho ana. Ko Louise Petzold tōkū ingoa. Nō reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.  So yeah I’m Louise Petzold, I’m from the UK originally and now live in beautiful Top of the South and yeah, my mahi is the Project Lead for Child Rich Communities. So that’s a project that’s hosted by Inspiring Communities and backed by a number of other supportive organisations which has its focus on community-led development, that has its focus on child wellbeing, youth wellbeing and whānau wellbeing. Kia ora. |
| Sally | Thanks Louise, that’s great and Wendy, how about you? This show all came about because of Wendy and I knowing each other so it’s really nice to work with you on this project as well. |
| Wendy | Definitely yes, thank so much for that Sally. Kia ora koutou, ko Wendy Hoddinott tōku ingoa. Yeah my name is Wendy Hoddinott, I’m a landscape architect, I’ve been practicing for around 17 years. Since the earthquakes I’ve become particularly interested in how community engages most effectively with designers and so I went back to study and do a PhD on this topic and alongside that, I was actually working post-earthquake with some of the communities within Ōtautahi and some of the low socioeconomic parts of the city, I guess, that seemed a bit marginalised after the earthquakes and discovered that actually through attempting to co-design with communities, actually working with children was a really effective way of engaging wider community.  They essentially become a catalyst for wider community engagement, through the experiences that certainly I had in working in those communities.  And so I just became more interested in working specifically with children, partly for that reason and also just because they are so… They are so much fun to work with so it’s easy to become a child yourself, to tap into that part of yourself again and certainly in terms of design, leftfield thinking is really helpful. Yeah so I’ve started a trust to generate funding for those kinds of projects that are difficult to achieve through traditional avenues, learning as I go. |
| Sally | Very cool, really exciting stuff. And Rosie Murphy, you are quite a recent newcomer to Aotearoa, the beautiful country of Aotearoa, so it’s great you are going to be bringing some new perspectives I think, some new eyes maybe to what you can see going on here and your international experience as well. |
| Rosie | Kia ora, thank you so much for having me. Ko Rosie Murphy au. I’m an architectural educator, designer and facilitator. So my work, my research and my volunteering has always been centred around one fundamental aim which is making a more socially and environmentally responsible built environment and so that has a number of different ways of reaching that fundamental aim.  So I always describe my work in the middle of a Venn diagram with three circles, one being architecture and design, the other being equity, diversity and inclusion and the third being sustainability and climate awareness. So finding ways of addressing these three important but also hugely complex topics at the same time has been where my work has been at the intersection.  So working towards this aim has led me from traditional architectural practice into climate activism, into higher education to community engagement and now to working specifically with children and young people. And I think my journey into working with children and young people has been quite similar to Wendy’s journey where I just fell in love with the opportunity to work with so many amazing young people learning from their ideas and tapping into that energy for my own design and creativity as well.  So I moved from London in the UK to Christchurch just six months ago and while I’m still working towards that one key aim, I’m looking to build new connections and find ways of using my experience from London to support some of the existing, amazing work that’s already happening here. So I’ve just started working with Wendy on a really exciting project through Gather Landscape Architecture. |
| Sally | Thank you so much, I guess as we get into our kōrero today, one of the things to think about is you’ve spoken about how exciting and invigorating it is to work with children but it’s a big part of our population, I think almost a quarter of New Zealand’s population is under 18, so it’s a really big percentage of our population. It’s also a percentage of the population that doesn’t necessarily have much voice or many means in terms of kind of having their voice heard. So super important in that way.  Just to get us started though, I’d be really keen to hear particularly from you Louise, about this idea of child-rich communities and what exactly do we mean by this concept? |
| Louise | Yes it’s an interesting phrase isn’t it, ‘child rich’, what does it mean to have ‘child rich’? So that language came about for this project in about 2014 when there was a lot of words being used around how poor our children were – you know, Child Poverty Monitor and Vulnerable Children’s Act, that kind of thing – all really essential changes that were needed at the time, you know, all that legislation was really needed.  But what it gave also was just an ongoing narrative that there was some deficit in our children and our young people and Inspiring Communities were doing their mahi around the country at the time and they found that that wasn’t the case in grassroots communities. You know, that children were seen as treasures, the treasures that they are, they are valued members of community and in those communities, about 21 of them around the country, Inspiring Communities started to get alongside and see that those communities had certain ways of engaging with their tamariki and their rangatahi and their whānau which brought about community-led development, yes, but child wellbeing, youth wellbeing, you know, incredible health to those young people and the whānau but actually also incredible health to the communities themselves.  So Child-rich Communities, this project, has its kaupapa around really trying to highlight some of that mahi, to highlight the voices of local leaders, to link them up with social service provision and funders and statutory and policy shifts. But what makes a child-rich community on the ground? Well it’s probably really good to you know, talk to the tamariki and rangatahi that are on the ground in those communities and ask them, you know, what’s the difference here, how do you feel?  But it’s really on the basis that you know, children and young people, they don’t live in isolation. You know, they have these place-based connections, in their place they’re connected to whānau, in their place where they live they are connected to schools and organisations and so if you focus community led development on the wellbeing of these tamariki and rangatahi in their community, then there’s this ripple effect also that happens.  So the children themselves, they feel valued, they feel like they have voice, they feel heard, they feel like they are members of the community and that makes a difference to them around how they feel, around the influence that they feel that they can have, around the meaning of their lives. It supports their whānau because their whānau come on board to feel connected into that community too, so they often feel more resourced and more connected to each other and then there’s sort of lovely feedback that happens, you know, so starting with the focus on the tamariki and rangatahi and then there’s this beautiful flow that happens then back into the community where the health and vibrancy of the whole community starts to shift.  So it’s that community-led development way of engaging with its focus really on children and young people giving them voice, giving them space, letting them know that they are heard and valuable. |
| Wendy | Just something that I noticed, community groups already understand the way in which those communities work best together and as you say Louise, the children are in an integral part of those communities as well. Just thinking about an example that we… a project that we were working on in terms of a physical space, the children weren’t visible in that space and in fact adults weren’t either because it was a park that was associated with negative behaviour.  But it was through working with that community from a community-led development model where it wasn’t through surveys or questionnaires, it was getting to understand how best can we learn from that community and then creating events or conversations that aligned with the way that they work and values that they have and a very gentle approach that then discovering how that best worked… How can children also be involved in a very tangible way. A lot of that was through sort of hands-on sort of modelling, actually physically you could see the children’s ideas come to life, but it all happened through that community-led model where it was a listening-first approach, understanding what’s happening at that level of the community and letting it take the time that it took. |
| Louise | And that’s the beauty of a community-led development approach is you know, that you’re doing to, you’re doing with, you’re engaging in certain ways. You’re not seeing children and young people and whānau as things that are broken, the community is something that is broken. If you’re really engaging in such a different and you know, children and young people, they have the most incredible ideas and often as adults we feel like they don’t have anything meaningful to share so we don’t bother including them or we don’t bother asking them. But just being able to give them that space to voice what it is that they want, it’s a big shift for the adults involved as well as the children involved in that space, where you being to see oh yes, there’s a lot of really beneficial things that come from providing space for our children and youth to be able, sometimes to give voice, sometimes to lead out on designs and project or resource them to do what they need to do. |
| Rosie | You touched upon a really important point which is that how do we measure the success of a child-rich community and that is to ask the children themselves. I think so often there is a risk of adults making adult assumptions: because we have all ourselves been children, it is so easy to believe that we know what the requirements, the needs, the wants of children are. But that doesn’t mean to say that we know what the needs, requirements and wants of children are in current contexts or even in the future context. |
| Louise | It’s often just even the little things which are just giving that kind of message which, you know, can also support that sense of yeah, this is a place that’s rich for our children and rangatahi to live in. |
| Sally | Just quickly before we have our first waiata, I know that there’s the Child-friendly Cities which is a United Nations, UNICEF initiative. I presume that child-friendly initiative, child-friendly cities, child-friendly spaces is much the same sort of broad analogy: building spaces for children in the idea that this will then flow onto the wider community. |
| Louise | My understanding of that – and I’m no expert – is, you know, obviously we’re signed under UNCROC which is the UN Rights of the Child Convention, and Aotearoa has been signed to that for some time, and the Child-friendly Cities is something that UNICEF have led out on around the world actually, in your policies and planning and design of your cities, how to embed and sometimes restructure your cities so that it is a safe place, it’s a fun place, it’s an inclusive place for children and young people. So I know there was some investigation in Aotearoa – in Whangarei and Tamaki Makarau and Ōtautahi – some time ago in about 2014, ’15, around whether those cities could take on the Child-friendly City tick box. I don’t know where that’s got to but yes, similar kind of basis although child-rich communities here is about community-led development. So it doesn’t start off with a whole bunch of boxes around this is how we’re going to do it and these are the kinds of things we need to see, it starts off on the basis on the ground really by talking to those children and young people, what do you want to see in your community, how could this place be the best place in the world for you? You know, how connected do you feel to place here, what makes it really special to live in this town, this city? Those sorts of questions. And then there’s a response backwards from that. |
| Sally | Okay well we’ll have our first song. Wendy, you chose for us ‘Kei Hea Tāku Reo’, could you explain briefly why you selected that one? |
| Wendy | Yes this was a song that we learned when I was studying Te Reo Māori a few years ago. Well it was played to us as we did a kind of a meditation. I loved it so much, what it was saying. |
|  | **MUSIC BY WHIRIMAKO BLACK – KEI HEA TAKU REO** |
| Sally | This is “Speak Up” – “Kōrerotia” and today we’re talking about child-led design. I’d be really interested in hearing from you some examples of your work where we can see how child-rich communities or child-led design are playing out. |
| Wendy | There’s a number of projects that I could talk about. I have a particular fondness for the first… well it wasn’t the first but one particular project that did have a big impact and we really didn’t know where it would go. But it was essentially working with the Philipstown Hub Community here in Christchurch and after talking with the manager of the Hub, you know, she was concerned about how we meaningfully engage our communities and how could we do that through the design process.  Yes we essentially used the school holiday programme and just followed the design process to see how we could engage children between the ages of five and eleven in a design process from creating a brief through to actually constructing the final project.  The project demonstrated how children are fully capable of being involved in firstly identifying what is significant to them in their outdoor place spaces, to then talk about those things and to then start to identify, yeah what is missing and what they might like to see occur in those spaces. If there’s a strong framework, if you’re really aware of what that process is, it offers children an opportunity to be involved in a process that adults would typically do for themselves but children are fully capable of being part of that process too.  Briefly the children were invited to explore their outdoor area, we had an aerial plan which they could note down what was missing, what opportunities there were in that space, and then to get more tangible through sketching, making models and exploring what they might like to see created in that space. Just a process of testing, and refining and iterating and working directly with a designer so that they could see how their ideas were developing into the final outcome, how their ideas were taken right through.  The way in which we worked on this project was to ensure that it was modular, so that right from kitset timber elements that they were able to put together, we were able to construct something at a 1:1 life-sized scale that they could also put together with their whānau and of course that was part of engaging the wider community as well, assembling this final structure at a big celebratory event with food and kai and the way in that community would normally come together.  And it really pulled children into that process and gave them that sense of ownership over what they created and a sense of belonging to that community. There were so many things that we learned out of that process that we also struggle with as adults in terms of collaborating, coming to some decisions over, you know we could only build one structure. So we had to move from maybe eight structures to start with that the children had created – again having the strong framework of a design process where we know that we’re going to go from one stage to the next – but that children can be a part of that just as much that adults can and that you can achieve outcomes, something tangible at the end of it that you also involve that wider community in. |
| Sally | Wendy, you mentioned that there may have been eight structures that the kids had initially come up with and you had to decide on one in the end. How was that decision made about which design was going to be the final product? |
| Wendy | All the way through we are encouraging the children to hold lightly to their ideas. So design very much is iterative process and so I think our focus right from the beginning was not so much on specific items. Like of course children often come up with flying foxes, sandpits, swings, these kinds of things, so it was looking at more what is behind what children are looking for out of these objects. So what are some of the themes that are coming through from the children as well as what is relevant to the landscape of that place, what is the cultural narrative of that place and keeping that front of mind for the children and also reflecting and at the end of each session – that was a really important part of the process, was that we would all talk about these structures together and come to some agreement as we moved through that process.  I mean, to start with we had the children working in pairs and then they would work in groups of four – it’s difficult to actually get a bigger group than that to work together – but slowly through the process as we are iterating and changing the form of the structure and talking through that with the children… Children, they understand if you’re trying to justify why you think one thing should be in there and one thing isn’t. The children hear each other talking about these things and come to an agreement over that and so it’s very much about negotiation as you move through the process.  Ideally these common themes, aspirations that the children have beyond the actual form of the structure become integral to that brief going right through from beginning to end. |
| Sally | What a great initiative and I’ve seen the final product, it was very cool. |
| Wendy | Thank you. |
| Sally | Rosie, how about some of your international experiences? |
| Rosie | Yes I can speak to some of the experience that I got while working in London with the amazing social enterprise called Matt & Fiona. Similar to the work that Wendy is doing with Gather Foundation, we would do co-design projects with children and young people on a variety of different scales. So that can be anything from temporary installations made out of cardboard, up to full-scale timber builds over a number of weeks, months and multiple workshops and then more recently moving into the development scale. So engaging with young people on their wants and desires for future developments and much larger scale housing and community projects.  So one of my favourite projects and actually the last one that I worked on before moving to Aotearoa New Zealand, started in 2019 where a theatre in Brixton, so south London, was preparing to move locations. The move of the theatre was part of a really exciting community partnership that involved new homes and community and health facilities, social enterprises as well as a new fully accessible modern theatre.  So Matt & Fiona got involved to involve twenty local ten-year-olds to design and build what would be a temporary performance space for their schools and the wider community to use while the theatre was in construction. So it was a means of engaging the local community and to get excited with the theatre that was going to be built.  But then of course Covid happened around 2020 – so we started with a group of twenty 10-year-olds and they had begun the process and it was just the week before the build was due to happen that everyone went into lockdown. So we had the design proposals, we had the ideas, the kids were ready and then we had to pause the project unfortunately. And it was only until 2022 that we actually got to then re-engage a new group. We made contact with the previous students but as you know children grow up, so they had actually moved onto other schools in other parts of… in other areas.  So our job was to then re-engage the new students, taking ownership of this project. So we made some evolutions to the designs, they were involved in choosing the final finishes and then fundamentally they were involved with the actual build of the project. So over one week we taught the young people how to measure, how to saw, how to drill, how to screw and some of these fundamental DIY skills that I wish that I had learnt when I was younger. And actually part of the reason why I do this job is because I’ve acknowledged areas that I have a deficit in my own life and skills that I wish that I had gained sooner and then in the process of teaching others, it sort of reinforces my own learning.  So it’s a completely co-learning experience for everyone involved and the reason why this was one of my favourite projects is because Brixton in south London is an area with a majority of residents of African and Caribbean heritage. So it’s an area that, like Louise was mentioning earlier, has sustained a really strong sense of community despite having battled poverty, gentrification and youth crime being an incredibly challenging part of that area. So the opportunity to engage with these particular young people was so valuable as an experience for those young people but then the impact that that has on the wider community now as that performance space is being used but also on those young people in the future as they grow up and become adult citizens of the area as well. |
| Louise | Especially for our young people, there can be such bad press, can’t there, and being able to engage in this kind of project supports them but also supports that message out to the community and then helps the rest of the community to be able to refine their view as to, you know, the young people within their community as well. It goes both ways, doesn’t it? |
| Rosie | Absolutely. And one piece of feedback that I’ve often gotten back during builds with young people is that they can’t believe that we’re giving them hand saws or electric drills and power tools. I enjoy so much the opportunity to say over our co-design journey we have built trust, we’ve built a relationship of understanding. I trust you to be responsible with these tools and in saying that, the young people are much more aware of the responsibility of using those tools than adults often give them credit for. |
| Louise | And so often, you know, those sorts of actions just, you know actions speak louder than words and you know we can have all sorts of things that are termed community-led development but really its community development. So it’s like oh what will the kids say. Oh okay we’ll get them to fill out a survey, right we’ve done that bit – tick. Okay now we’ll carry on with our plan and it’s going to be this way, you know. Oh we’ve consulted, yes, yes, done that bit. Community development has its place but community-led development, you know those actions really speak volumes, don’t they, you know. You are part of this, this is how we trust you, you are valued – it’s not just words, it’s really showing the way which is what I love about your project as well, Wendy. Really showing those tamariki that they are valuable by including them and following their voice. |
| Wendy | For example my most recent project at Te Huarahi/Linwood Avenue School, we were working with six-year-old students and I guess my own thinking was when we started, how are we going to involve six-year-olds in, you know, assembling these final structures? And really it was just breaking it down. You know it comes to using a battery-powered screw driver, it’s like how do you break that down and it’s about showing the children a screw, showing them where it’s going to go, making sure that it lines up, getting them to test it. There’s all these ways in which you can break down that task into a way that they can build that skill.  And so by the end of this project we had two structures on the final day that we put together. One was in the morning, one was in the afternoon. Some of the children actually worked on both structures and they were proficient at the end, as six-year-olds they knew how to use a battery-powered screwdriver. You know, it’s quite a hefty thing to be holding but you know, once they learned how to line everything up they were proficient and they were extremely proud. |
| Louise | Yes all these extra benefits that come from engaging in this way that you know, you could never plan… |
| Wendy | No, that’s right. |
| Louise | By having the young people and the tamariki engaged it’s, oh yeah, following their current and the way the hour flows, it’s… |
| Sally | Rosie, you mentioned about engaging new cohorts of children coming through. Building on what you guys have been talking about, about that cohort that’s involved in the design and the build and their sense of ownership – how do you hope or how do the project work to involved, to engage ownership of other cohorts of children moving through? |
| Rosie | So to the example that I shared from the Brixton House Theatre, that performance space was then up for a whole summer, so a few months of programming and the programming was actually done by young people. So we partnered with the Youth Theatre Programme so they were the ones in charge of the use of that space afterwards. So it was an adult-initiated design, a number of adults that decided this is what we’re going to do, and then over the process it became more and more child- and youth-led.  And I think that handing over of power in a sustainable and sensitive way, is what made it successful, where we as adults weren’t saying the young people are involved and it’s their responsibility now, let’s see what they can do in a sort of testing critical way, but we were using our adult power to support in the long-term ability of the young people in the wider community to get involved as well. |
| Louise | That’s some of the crucial parts of this kind of child-led, youth-led development I feel is, yes, give them a voice and a space and let’s hear but don’t assume and expect that you know, they’re suddenly going to run with it. Let’s resource, let’s support, let’s constantly review, let’s learn by doing and ideally it would be like a whole collaboration of you know, this funder and that local authority and you know, this organisation, this part of the community and the whānau and you know, to enable those children and those rangatahi to be able to flourish in whatever way they want to with that particular design. |
| Rosie | One thing I’d really like to highlight as part of this kōrero is a reference that has meant so much to me, which is Harry Shier’s Pathways to Participation. So there’s a number of different frameworks for youth engagement but this one I find really valuable because what Harry Shier has laid out is a number of questions, so it’s quite an interactive guideline for engaging with youth and it starts with the level of “Are you ready to listen to young people?” and moves all the way up to “Are you ready to share your adult power with young people?” So it’s sort of self-reflecting if you’re ready, it’s making sure if you have, like Louise says, the resources and the skills and anything you need to ensure that you can do those activities, but then also it’s about policy and is there a policy requirement to ensure that you listen to young people, that their views are taken into account, that they are part of the decision making and essentially that the adult power is shared with young people.  And so I think whenever going through a project, it’s worth continually going back to frameworks like the Pathways to Participation and constantly self-reflecting on where you are. Because in each project there’s so many different decisions being made that you will be moving forwards and backwards and to some questions you may be able to do the absolute most and say yes, the young people are completely responsible for this aspect but then in other elements, the time or like money or so many different parameters might actually restrict and say okay well the young people can’t necessarily be as involved as we’d like them to be in this instance. But through Harry Shier’s Pathways to Participation, you critically ask yourself where do you sit on that pathway and when the answer to any of the questions is no, I think that’s the most important point because that’s when you get to ask yourself what is preventing us from moving forward in the Pathways to Participation and then that’s how you sort of learn how to increase the power and potential of each project. |
| Louise | Yes and the other aspect here of course is always we’re guided by Te Tiriti o Waitangi, you know before we start to roll out on any community led development it’s always like what’s the pūrākau of mana whenua here, what are the stories of mana whenua, what’s the whakapapa of the whenua here. You know, sometimes it’s like oh I’ve got this great idea, we’ll have the… the kids say that they want a new playground over there so yeah, ka pai, let’s go and put a new playground in there but you know, never really realising that you know, that playground is on whenua that is part of the Tenths Land that was never given.  Those sorts of whakapapa and pūrākau just are really important to hold in our frameworks, aye, when we’re engaging and understanding and honouring of tangata whenua and Te Tiriti. It’s such a great guide for our development in child-rich places, aye, and then building these kind of inclusive places like you have been doing in your mahi. |
| Wendy | Absolutely I just think that’s integral and I think we’re so fortunate here in Waitaha Canterbury. I think after the earthquakes my understanding is that the schools here were given these cultural narratives – that isn’t necessarily an initiative that’s happened throughout the country – but in fact these have been really central to our design process, especially when we’re thinking about whenua landscape. For example Te Huarahi/Linwood Avenue School, that means the pathway and it’s a very ancient trail that tangata whenua used to take past the school, down to Te Ihu Tai, the estuary and so it was how could we help children to understand their place in that landscape and you know, through the use of an aerial plan, through old maps, really integrating whatever we designed together for that landscape.  Like you say, Louise, not just the children’s aspirations but what is that landscape all about that helps them to connect with their tūrangawaewae which was incidentally the topic of their curriculum learning for that term. It’s rich inspiration for design and helps children to feel a sense of belonging and yeah, their place within time and this geographical area as well. |
| Louise | Child-rich places, by that very wording it means inclusive, uplifting the mana of everyone. We can’t begin to do that if we’re trampling all over the mana of mana whenau, tangata whenua. |
| Wendy | Absolutely. |
| Rosie | And that’s why I find sort of working with children and young people so valuable, because when you are adults engaging with young people, the power dynamics are explicit. You are very aware of the power that adults hold and then in turn, what the power of children and young people are and part of co-design is learning to share power, lift up the power of others and most importantly to practice and exercise listening. And in learning to listen one group, you simply cannot ignore another, so by doing that work for children and young people, it’s fundamental to learning how to work with other communities and other aspects of historically marginalised groups or giving back power to land and non-human beings. |
| Sally | On that really beautiful note, we may have our second song. Louise, you selected for us Maisey Rika ‘Tangaroa Whakamautai’, if you could please explain why you wanted this one. |
| Louise | It’s a beautiful waiata and you know, it really speaks to me about the greater connections that we’re all a part of and this kind of mahi is all about connections. |
|  | **MUSIC BY MAISEY RIKA – TANGAROA WHAKAMAUTAI** |
| Sally | Ko “Speak Up” – “Kōrerotia” tēnei. We’ve got Louise Petzold, Rosie Murphy and Wendy Hoddinott and we’re talking about child-led design. In this final segment we’re going to think about all the mahi you’re doing and the various benefits that this is bringing to the communities and thinking about how do we take this kind of work forward.  You have been involved in lots of different initiatives but these kinds of child-led projects are still very much in the minority, they’re not yet very common. So what would you all like to be seeing in terms of your work and the wider concept of child-led design, child-rich communities? |
| Wendy | I guess my goal, having worked in one school earlier this year and working now in another school currently, I just see the value of integrating design thinking in schools. And so I guess that’s part of our exploration at the moment and ultimately I think you know, as we’ve spoken about earlier, children are capable of being introduced to and adopting quite complex thinking. And so design thinking is suited for complex situations and children can be engaged in these kinds of processes at quite an early age and I think if we were to introduce projects in which children can design parts of their outdoor place base or their cities and integrate it into their learning, that’s what I would like to see occurring. I guess that’s my goal. |
| Sally | Wendy, you mentioned schools, is there any way that you see these concepts being played out through the curriculum? |
| Wendy | Definitely and I think they align really well particularly with the new curriculum that’s rolling out at the moment. It’s very much about concept-based learning which is aligned with design thinking and so it can be learning about maths and geography as you learning about designing an outdoor place space. So for example when we are creating models, we typically start from just making cardboard models without scale. But then the children learn about scale through a model that is say ten centimetres high, that they’re creating, we show them what that looks like life sized and we actually create little models of themselves so that they can get a sense of their own bodies relative to what they are making and then we actually prototype what will be the final structure in cardboard, so they get a sense of testing their own bodies again in space relative to that structure.  So for example they are learning indirectly about maths but learning so much more at the same time. So it seems a really natural fit. My understanding where the challenge is, that we sometimes just don’t know how to apply these principles. We know that it’s important and it’s already being talked about within the curriculum, it’s already in there, but it’s like how do we actually apply that?  So I think this has been a value of the projects that we’ve been working on recently is that we’ve been learning how to apply that. I would really love to see that taken forward further. |
| Louise | Yes and I think there’s a lot of work and understanding that we have now about the importance of child and caregiver relationships in those early years. You know, we need to just expand that out into an understanding as to child wellbeing and the relationship with their built environment and start to see more and more where that built environment has had either a negative impact or a positive impact on the wellbeing of those children and youth and whānau and community.  So at a larger scale there’s that around designing our cities and places and safe places for our kids to walk and play, stuff on the way, there’s quite a lot of stuff that’s been happening in that kind of area across the country. A lot of it I think is about how, how to, like Wendy said. So we hear more and more about centrally enabled, locally led and this change that’s needed on government strategy, policy, funding aspects to really put the trust and the understanding in the communities themselves, to be able to then start to create and craft what it is that they need and to understand that you know, an essential part of child wellbeing and youth wellbeing has to be that their voices are heard, that they are integrative members of the community and that they are well resourced and provided for.  I mean this mahi, I would just like to see more and more the emphasis placed on grassroots enabling really, not doing *to* but doing *with* and understanding the really positive impact that that can bring for our tamariki and rangatahi, especially at these times. Some systems need to change because systems are, you know, not working for us and now is the time to really start thinking a little bit more creatively. |
| Sally | I do wonder as you are talking about the value that this brings in terms of sustainability and climate change and climate change-induced changes to our physical environment: if children are given the opportunity to really understand the historical context of the places in which they live – and that includes the habitation of humans but also maybe what was the landscape like before human habitation – that’s surely got to be beneficial for our world as well. |
| Wendy | Absolutely and you know, they’re our future generation aren’t they and how can we support them in their wellbeing, not load them with a whole bunch of responsibility but really resource their places and their connection to place as much as possible. |
| Rosie | In response to any crisis or emergency, be it the climate and ecological crisis or future unknown crises, I think the best way to combat is to have a nation of active, conscious, informed, caring citizens. And part of this work is supporting young people to become those future citizens who care about the people around them and places, what they’ve got to… That have the capacity to critique the spaces around the and know that they also have the potential to enact change. I think as well, for me, expanding upon this work has sort of a top-down approach in terms of policy change and government-driven guidelines as well as sort of that grassroots-level change and I think what I’ve seen in especially London about how this work has evolved massively only in the last couple of years, is when there are so many amazing examples of how this work can be achieved and what the successes are, building network and community among those projects has been so valuable.  So in as much as we’re talking about collaboration over competition in the actual projects that we’re doing, that’s also how the network of organisations work as well. So it’s building that community of people looking to do the same work so we can share each other’s successes, because also the built environment and city and policy makers is the challenging business where it can be incredibly precarious and have lots of reservations and more often than not developers need examples and references in order to have sort of a new concept approved.  So part of the work we are doing is supplying those references, supplying those positive examples and say this is achievable, let us help each other. |
| Louise | It has to be both, doesn’t it? You know, it has to be from the ground and from the policy and the strategy. Ideally it would be… all of that would weave together to support child-led, youth-led, community-led development. |
| Rosie | Well, as a point that I’ve thinking about during this discussion is the difference that I’m seeing between the UK and the work here in Aotearoa, is that in the UK so much of the work with child-led design was coming from predominantly a design standpoint, so it was architects and landscape architects and engineers who were sort of leading the work. And it’s been really amazing for me to learn from the youth and social work sector in New Zealand and how they are just as much if not more involved in this work because they see the value of doing this sort of preventative positive work with young people. So I’m quite keen to see how the design sector can meet the work that the youth sector is already doing and find out ways of supporting each other. |
| Sally | It comes back to that idea of collaboration, doesn’t it? |
| Louise | That was one of the key practices for child-rich communities when they looked at these 21 communities around the country, they all had a similar way of engaging. You know, collaboration was absolutely one of them as well as you know, thinking holistically, how it is that you engage, really the *how* to do this well informed these different practices and yeah, collaboration was crucial. |
| Sally | Do you think that you are seeing more child-led design taking place over the past few years, couple of decades? |
| Wendy | I see it oversees, I don’t see it so much here. I don’t know about you, Louise, you might have a broader view across the country. |
| Louise | I think there’s change in the space to like ten years’ ago, certainly more understanding of the need for community-led development and to be engaging youth and children within that. I think that’s, you know, more to be done of course but it’s definitely… It’s shifted over the last ten years. |
| Rosie | As I was saying earlier, it’s quite serendipitous that I arrived in Ōtautahi Christchurch because of all the places to arrive in the world, I think this is one of the most incredible spaces where there is contemporary conversation about engaging with communities as a whole. I feel so honoured to have arrived here and to be able to continue this mahi with people who already see the value. I don’t feel like I have had to arrive and convince people of the why. |
| Louise | I think there’s been movement on the why in the last ten years, I think really it’s the how, the questions are still being put and that’s where some of the holdup is, while we figure out how to do this, who is doing this, how can we learn about this, what’s needed. |
| Wendy | Yeah I agree, I think there’s definitely more conversation around its importance and it’s just that application that can be quite challenging, especially within our traditional forms of engagement. But I know council here in Ōtautahi have been really forward-thinking in this space and now have a play advocate and yeah, and I was involved in a design jam earlier in the year that was a council-led project and it was inviting children first into that space, of how do we make these streets safer in Aranui before it went out to public consultation. So it was really great to see. |
| Sally | On that really uplifting note, that seems like a really nice place to end up today’s kōrero. I’ll say my thank yous to you, and then Louise will do a karakia whakamutunga. Thank you very much to all of you, it’s been really great to hear your different perspectives. Wendy, you bring such a strong design focus. Rosie, your international knowledge was really, really beneficial to this kōrero and Louise, you’ve obviously done so much work in this space as well. So thank you very much all of you. |
| Group | Thank you. |
| Louise | Thank you Sally for hosting and bringing us together for the podcast.  Kia hora te marino  Kia whakapapa pounamu te moana  Hei huarahi mā tātou i te rangi nei  Aroha atu Aroha mai  Tātou i ā tātou katoa  Haumi ē! Hui ē! Tāiki ē! |