

Evaluation of the JNCTP's Equipe project.

Who we are

JNCTP exists to support and promote playwork education, training and qualifications that reflect the values of playwork.

Joint National Committee on Training for Playwork (JNCTP) is the national organisation for everyone involved in playwork, education and training. Established in 1975, JNCTP is a democratic, membership organisation bringing together all sectors of the playwork field such as: playworkers, Local Authorities, EYDCPs, voluntary and private play organisations, trainers and training agencies, students, colleges and universities. JNCTP represents the views of its members on a number of bodies, influencing the direction for playwork education and training. JNCTP have no offices, no paid staff, no regular funding other than our membership fees, all work is done voluntarily.

Our membership is mainly organisations therefore our target group is much larger than our membership figures. The most current analysis of our members is March 2002 when 77% were organisations.

JNCTP aims

- to promote equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice in access to, and experience of, playwork education, training and qualifications for all playworkers, whether full time or part time, paid or unpaid;
- to represent the views of its members to all those in a position to influence the development of playwork education, training and qualifications;
- to promote good practice, mutual support and exchange of good practice in playwork education and training;
- to promote the recognition of playworkers' skills through the adoption of peer-led endorsement system;
- to work in partnership with individuals and organisations who share our values and goals. JNCTP claims the freedom, however to monitor the policy and practice of public agencies and to make constructive criticisms where necessary.

JNCTP first adopted a Charter for Training for Playwork in 1985. Then in 1993/94 JNCTP took a lead in the major consultation 'Getting Recognition' on the question of peer-led endorsement. Again in 2000, JNCTP provided the impetus for another major national consultation through 'Having Your Say'.

"The new JNCTP Charter for Playwork Education, Training and Qualifications" (Appendix 1) draws from and updates the original Charter, Getting Recognition and Having Your Say and has itself been subject to consultation with JNCTP members. It was adopted at the AGM on 26th November 2002.

This Charter sets out JNCTP's vision for playwork education, training and qualifications. It provides a platform for Executive Committee members when representing JNCTP on national organisations.

What is EQUIPE

What does EQUIPE stand for? Equal in Play and Enterprise.

Equipe is a partnership of organisations funded through the EQUAL programme of the European Social Fund.

The purpose of the partnership is to strengthen the childcare/playwork sector's ability to provide a comprehensive, high quality service that meets the needs of the community, and improves the quality of the sector's jobs.

With the funding, a partnership of organisations was created to carry out new activity to:

- improve the services they provide by sharing knowledge and good practice on the social economy
- drive the creation of sustainable social enterprise in the sector nationally
- carry forward the professional development of the workforce

Childcare and children's play are significant growth areas with rapidly developing professions, which will face considerable challenges in the coming years to respond to government strategies to improve the quality and quantity of play and childcare provision. The EQUIPE partnership addresses this, piloting a range of ways that social enterprise thinking and approaches can inform the way the sector does business.

Equipe aims to assist people who provide or want to provide services for children and young people - developing sustainable businesses and community enterprises. We will do this with technical support from organisations already providing advice and guidance to the social economy and use its network of established partners working at the neighbourhood level to engage with communities, facilitate the development of their business plans and strengthen infrastructure for providing services in the sector.

Equipe is piloting this social enterprise development across England's national regions, including a range of urban and rural locations. We will also undertake locally-led research into ways of improving sustainability, and share with our partners and others in the field the resulting models of good practice.

The involvement of the play sector in particular will allow workers to train for and attain recognised qualifications that will improve the quality of their jobs.

The Equal programme, and therefore the EQUIPE Development Partnership places equality and empowerment at the centre of the work:

The Partnership recognises and values the diversity of their staff and volunteers and of the individuals and groups participating in the Partnership activities. **EQUIPE** will work to ensure that people are not discriminated against on the grounds of disability, sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, age, religion, belief, culture, nationality, sexual orientation or on the basis of belonging to any socially excluded group. **EQUIPE** is committed to the empowerment of target groups, communities and beneficiaries, working together to enable participation in planning and decision-making at every stage of project design, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Both JNCTP's aims and our Charter reflect some of the aims of the Equipe project so we put forward a proposal to the project managers to become an Equal partner.

JNCTP's Executive Committee agreed the final work plans to be included in the Partners Development Agreement in May 2002. It was agreed that we would have no beneficiaries only a countrywide target group that would be of the same constituency as our membership.

Aims and Objectives

JNCTP's **EQUIPE** project is all about dissemination. As part of JNCTP's annual conference programme, **EQUIPE**'s outcomes, innovative ideas, lessons learnt and areas of good practice will be shared with conference delegates and through conference materials.

The aim of JNCTP Equipe project is

- to run three conferences in partnership with Equipe members
- to disseminate information, debate, discuss and independently consult on models of good playwork practice through conferences and a new web site.

JNCTP had an Equal Opportunities Policy in place but it was agreed within the Executive Committee to take this opportunity to update our Policy and clarify our Implementation Strategy. The Development Partnership appointed an Equality and Empowerment Officer who supported groups to deliver on this aspect. JNCTP met with the officer during the project.

A Equal Opportunity Policy and Implementation Strategy was ratified by the JNCTP membership at the AGM held on 12th November 2003.

The Equal Opportunities Strategy for implementation within the project is:

- To appoint contractors under JNCTP's EO Policy guidelines
- To ensure that keynote speakers are aware of our EO policy
- To ensure access to workshops is fully inclusive
- To publicise to the whole target group
- Communicate effectively with our target group.

Funding

As part of the Development Partnership, JNCTP received £9300 over the three years towards running three conferences and setting up a web site. EQUIPE did not fully fund each conference but was matched against payment in kind by our voluntary Committee and members. (The balance of which was actually more in kind than funding given). The Equipe project part-funded conference is only one of three conferences/study days that JNCTP run each year.

Achievements

We had a successful conference in March 2003 in Sheffield helped by the appointment of a conference organiser. The title "Does Quality Training and Education ensure Quality Playwork?" was supporting our newly launched Charter, especially chosen to help build Playwork trainers confidence by reflecting on practice. See No 9 in the Charter 'Reflective practice'.

This conference was the first of our shared funded events with Equipe, part of our commitment is to ensure the dissemination of information through the playwork sector. Sheffield was chosen as a venue as it is an area that we have not visited before therefore fulfilling part of our objective to have countrywide venues..

We made contact with local organisations and Sheffield Out of School Network helped with some of the organisational elements of the event.

Despite the train strikes we received a thirty eight delegates, of which 10 were not JNCTP members, to the impressive surroundings of the Showroom Cinema in Sheffield. The report (Appendix 2) tried to capture as many as possible of the key discussions and debates that took place during the course of the day and from the web consultation replies.

The format of the conference varied from our usual approach with delegates being asked throughout the day to be reflective, both publicly and privately, about our conference title 'Does quality training and education ensure quality playwork?'

The Sheffield conference report (hard copy and on the web) included notes and feedback from the workshops run by two of our Equipe partners. Skills Active Fast track and Training PlayworkTrainers projects.

During the year 2003/4 it became clear that many of our Equipe partners were having conferences of their own to disseminate their particular part of the Equipe project.

To this end we decided to change our conference format to a study day that only focuses on one subject. This gives more time for the delegates to absorb, debate and discuss a topic within a day, it empowers our target audience to become part of the debate and it helps sustain any social enterprise a Playwork trainer may be involved in, to be kept up to date with current issues.

We were able to pay speakers to produce a paper to be debated at the study day and the responses from the day were incorporated into the final report.

It was agreed with the project management that we could change the format of the next two shared funded Equipe "conferences".

We appointed a new Study day Conference organiser in February 2004 and we held our second Equipe event in April 2004. This was "What is a Level Four Playwork Practitioner?" held in Guildford, an area of the country we have not been to previously therefore continuing our aim to hold our events countrywide.

Our charter was again the basis for this study day. Whether you agree with everything in the Charter, with some of it, or none it, we hope it can enable a useful and necessary debate about the standards in playwork education and training.

The debates in playwork, and some of the disagreements, are inevitable given the passion and commitment of playworkers. The discussions illustrate the complex nature of play and playwork.

This study day was organised to give an opportunity to discuss, deliberate and dissect some aspects of that complex nature of play and playwork and the implications for playwork practitioners, particularly in relation to Level 4 qualification.

Keynote speech and workshop using the reflective method gave new networking opportunities for our target audience. The Study day report (Appendix 3) was completed and circulated to delegates and to a wider audience via the web site. All Equipe partners were informed about the study day but none responded or sent material for distribution.

This Study day report was a great success and is being used to inform the debate being held in the wider Playwork field about the qualified status at L4. JNCTP gave a presentation to all members of the Skills Active Playwork and Training Council in July 2004 therefore fulfilling our aim of disseminating our Equipe project work to a wider audience. The change to the format of our conferences to a study day has increased the empowerment opportunities for our target audience. The subject of the study day was such that it helped towards building an individual's confidence that in turn could sustain their business.

We maintained continuity by continuing with the same conference organiser for our third study day. It was due to take place in April 2005 in Manchester the title "Competent Child, Competent Playworker and Implications for Playwork Training". Again taking a study day to an area not visited by JNCTP conferences for some time. With no local support it became difficult to encourage delegates to come so the day had to be cancelled.

Web Site

Our web site has been developed as a new national network for JNCTP. It went live on 1st April 2003.

Our target group, can now join in the discussion on current issues through participation in consultation page of the web site.

Instead of one report going to our organisation member all employees of our organisation members can now see the report simultaneously on the Conference report page.

A publicity flyer for the web site was prepared and distributed widely.

Since the web site was launched the number of visitors has increased yearly. In our busiest months Feb /Mar we have increased the number of hits on our site from 3071 Feb 2003 to 5398 on March 2005.

The use of the web site has not been as we expected. The responses from our members has been poor but requests for our archive material and general hits has been increasing therefore we have decided to open up the site to all, realising that the history of the Playworker is as good a resource for empowering our target audience as any new developments in Playwork practices.

Equal Opportunities and Empowerment

JNCTP executive committee reviewed our Equal Opportunities policy and Strategy document at our residential in 2004 and agreed that this document should be put on our web site and should be sent to all prospective speakers and workshop leaders.

Empowerment:

The change to the format of our conferences to a study day has increased the empowerment opportunities for our target audience.

The subjects of the study days was such that it helped towards building an individual's confidence that in turn will sustain their business.

We also agreed that there should be ongoing promotion of our charter at all our study days as it includes a clear statement about equality of opportunity (7. Playwork education, training and qualifications should be available and delivered in a way that ensures all potential and practising playworkers can access and benefit from them. All playwork education, training and

qualifications should be responsive to the needs of participants and should value the diverse experience of learners and their individual learning styles.)

Innovation

The innovation activity /outcome has not been taken up by our partners as they have all designed their own ways of dissemination but other innovative context have evolved.

Through the ability to pay speakers to deliver a paper at our conferences and the need to have it in electronic form for our web site, the papers that have been presented have been of a high standard, well thought out arguments with challenging questions for our target audience to debate. This in turn has made us look at our conference format and to change this to allow our target audience to have longer time within the day to debate the keynote issue and to build the confidence of the participants. The resulting report is a format that is suitable for use by any executive committee member when debating these issues in the wider forums.

Future

Our organisation was an original partner in the publication of the Training Playwork Trainers Pack. We are a partner in the Equipe project that is updating this pack several members being involved in the writing and proof reading of the documents. This completed Equipe funded project was launched at JNCTP conference held in December 2004 and will be promoted at our future study days and conferences.

All subjects of our conference/ study days have been fulfilling the Equipe aim of carrying forward the professional development of Playwork workforce. As a continuation of this work we have mounted a major consultation with our membership on the proposed Children's Workforce Strategy that may be detrimental to the future development of the Playwork profession.

A complete report containing speeches from the Equipe conferences and others that took place within the three years will be produced during 2005.

Evaluation of Project

At JNCTP's annual residential of their executive committee held in February 2003 a work plan for the three years was developed. (Appendix 4) An evaluation form was constructed for the conferences (Appendix 3) and our venue guidelines (Appendix 5) were reviewed, these to be used by our conference organiser.

We fulfilled our aims to run three conferences although it was unfortunate the last one had to be cancelled. On reflection it was more difficult running conferences in new areas without local support especially when we rely so much on volunteers. It was also more difficult in the climate of so many conferences and EQUIPE roadshows being run during the same time slot. This was not known at the beginning of the project.

JNCTP did not feel like equal partner because very few partners answered the call for information about their projects or about social enterprise issues so that we could disseminate the information to our target audiences.

Our second aim was fulfilled through our new web site and through the distribution of our reports within a reasonable time frame. The use of the web site turned out to be unexpected (see in Web Site section) so we have capitalised on this information by uploading more archive material.

As a small organisation with a small budget we fell foul of the need to pay up front for all the conference services this led to a severe cash flow problem at one time during the project. This meant that we had no funds to allow any committee members to go to other conferences run by our Equipe partners. In our naivety where project proposals are concerned we did not cost in any project running costs, this has meant that our project manager has had to personally pay for all the travel to management and support team meetings as well as the voluntary hours. Unable to complete our aims we have not spent our allocated funds.

The management of the project was done to the best of our ability given our voluntary nature. Most of the deadlines on our work plan were met, only being moved forward when the

conferences themselves fell into a different quarter. I would like to thank the Equipe management team for being patient and giving a nudge when things needed to be done. When you are doing this voluntarily the day job comes first. We believe we have shown flexibility in changing direction (to study day format) and formats (changing website design) during the project.

The added value of the Equipe project to JNCTP was the ability for us:

- to appoint a conference organiser.
- Preparation and printing of conference reports- distributed in a reasonable time
- To hire a venue – so to plan countrywide to reach a wider audience even if this did not always work out.
- To be able to supply any audio visual requirements for our speakers.
- To have a JNCTP web site
- To be able to pay speaker fees which enabled us to improve our pool of speakers for up-to-date subjects.
- A updated Equal opportunities Policy and Implementation Strategy.

Recommendation

If this development work is going to be funded again then the amount needs to be realistic. A paid project manager should be appointed.

Heather Hunter July 2005

Appendix

- 1 JNCTP Charter
- 2 Sheffield report
- 3 Guildford report
- 4 Workplans
- 5 Evaluation form