



Day 1

United Kingdom

PROMOTING YOUTH-ADULT CO-MANAGEMENT

- Wake up England! Youth have arrived!

KING ALFRED SCHOOL, LONDON

King Alfred School is one of the UK's most excellent private, fee-paying day schools. Situated in a rich, leafy, North London suburb, it has a strong liberal ethos and does much international work. It recently completed the building of a School in North East Sri Lanka - in an area devastated by the Tsunami and it provides as well regular support for Peace Child India moreover it does annual Model United Nations meetings and involves its students in many and various international initiatives.



We presented our Co-management Booklet to a group of 6th formers on their final day in the school before they left to focus on exam revision from home. It was effectively their last chance to reflect upon their experience of the school.

We started by asking them if they experienced co-management in their family life? Their answers were uniformly, "Yes!" It is part of the liberal ethos to allow children to participate in important family decisions like "where to go on holiday", "responsibilities of the young people in the families" and many other fields.

Karla: "[...] if you do trust young people, they will usually do the right thing."

As we moved on to next level of participation the pupils started revealing their experiences in schools and youth Groups.

They mentioned good experiences like the "6th Form Teaching Day" which gives pupils the opportunity to slip in the role of the teacher for a day to educate the younger classes without the teachers they are normally used to. As well they mentioned student councils and the Board of Governors where the students are represented and contribute to the decisions.

Wanda: "If you give them a little bit of trust just once, they think: 'Oh my God! - we have the power to do anything...' - and they go mad and act stupidly. Whereas if young people get used to making their own decisions, they become used to acting responsibly and making good decisions."



On the other side there were critical points towards co-management or a lack of executive power for decisions made in co-management which got dismissed by a higher adult led institution.

In general the students showed us that you don't have to label everything as co-management to achieve good results in youth participation but if you stick to the principles of equal partners and shared ownership and responsibilities can achieve excellent results.

