Proposed Title: Engaging with communities through Jungk’s Future Workshop Methodology: A Froebelian way of listening

Presenters: Annette Kearns, Patsy Stafford, Professor Marie McLoughlin & Dr Tríona Stokes

Abstract

This presentation details a Participatory Action Research (PAR) project funded by The Froebel Trust and undertaken by a research team from Dublin City University and Maynooth University. The transformation of communities is critical to the success of PAR (Giroux, 1983). It is also consistent with the Froebelian emphasis on the uniqueness of each child, positioning them centrally within the research gaze and process. To overcome the challenge of identifying specific research tools and methods to underpin this intent, the research drew on the Jungk & Müller (1996) Futures Workshop approach.

In Froebelian research with children, listening enables researchers to attune to and hear the ‘hundred languages of children’ (Malaguzzi’s, 2004). Thus, the authentic interpretation of the voices of young children can be gleaned through the multiplicity of ways in which Froebel (1826:50) contended children represent their ideas, thoughts and feelings:

*‘When he [sic] is at play a child talks continuously, thus indicating that with him talking is not yet distinguished from himself as talker, nor names from the things named. Play and speech are the elements in which the child now lives. So he attributes the same life to all about him. The pebble, the chip of wood, the plant, the flower, the animal — each and all can hear and feel and speak’*.

Insights gleaned throughout the research process are shared as the application of the Futures Workshop model is critically explored for its capacity to facilitate the researchers in offering families and community a listening orientation or a means for ‘listening to thought’ (Rinaldi, 2006).

List of References

Froebel, F. (1826 [1912]) *Froebel's chief writings on education (Rendered into English)* (S. S. F. Fletcher & J. Welton, Trans.). Edward Arnold.

Giroux, H. (2003) Utopian thinking under the sign of neoliberalism: towards a critical pedagogy of educated hope. *Democracy & Nature, 9*(1), 91-105.

Jungk, R., & Müllert, N. R. (1996) *Future Workshops: How to Create Desirable Futures*: Institute for Social Inventions.

Malaguzzi, L. (2004) Walking on Threads of Silk: interview with Loris Malaguzzi, *Children in Europe*, 6, 10-15.

Rinaldi, C. (2006) *In dialogue with Reggio Emilia. Listening, researching and learning*. Routledge.