



## **Children, Play and Nature Standing Committee Minutes:**

**When:** Wednesday March 15, 2017 4:00pm EST

**Where:** Internet Web Conference (Skype)

**Attendees:** Amanda O'Rourke (Co-Chair), Helena Bjarnegard (Co-Chair), Matias Honour, Julie Guimond.

### **Minutes:**

1. Apologies were made by Amanda on behalf of Lisa and Sarah who all were excited to be part of the committee but weren't able to attend.
2. Introductions:
  - Helena, one of the co-chairs, introduced herself as the City Head Landscape Architect of Gothenburg, Sweden.
  - Amanda, the other co-chair, introduced herself as the Senior Advisor for 880 Cities, a non-profit organization that focuses on creating all-age friendly public spaces.
  - Matias introduced himself as a project coordinator for MiParque, an NGO that continues to work to improve the communities through the design and construction of green infrastructure in communities all over Chile since 1998.
  - Julie introduced herself as the lead for environmental education of Calgary Parks.
3. Background information about World Urban Parks presented by Amanda.
  - The WUP was created to fill a niche where there was no international advocacy voice for urban parks. The Children, Play and Nature Committee falls under the umbrella of advocacy. Children, Play and Nature was indicated as an important area from the members of the WUP. We are at the very beginning stages of this committee, where we can decide which areas we would like to focus our energy and how we should structure ourselves.
4. Considerations of Structure: Smaller Working Groups?
  - Helena mentioned that if the committee grows we might want to consider the creation of smaller working groups within the larger group.
  - Julie cited an example from a similar team in Calgary where they have built a collective impact model, and that we should make sure that we collectively determine where to place our focus. Julie agreed that working groups are a good idea to address down the line, however she believed that the focus at present should be on coming up with some primary initiatives that the working groups could stem from. Julie was then asked to send over material from her work in

Calgary to be used as a reference point.

- Helena then suggested that the committee be structured by way of the processes of making of urban spaces, for example divided into categories such as 'urban planning' and 'management'.
- Julie stated that it would be important perhaps to define 'Play' prior to defining the structure of the committee.

5. The importance of definitions:

- Julie stressed the importance of definitions. Julie is wary of the use of the term 'Safe Play' stating that this does not align with the definition of Play. Julie states that our definition of play should be built off of existing ones, aligning with other existing organizations which would form the basis upon which to layer best practices.

**The group agree that definitions would be a good place to start.**

6. Amanda asked the group what they are hoping to gain from this committee, personally?

- Matias believes that this committee would benefit Child and all over South America through the discussion of nature and play. This is an issue which is focused on the physical structural way rather than focused on the interaction with nature. Matias believes that an understanding of the practices of other parts of the world would be greatly beneficial.
- Julie, who works closely with recreation, wants to work on bringing connection back to parks, nature and play through the networks built in Calgary and Canada. She wants to bring what is discussed in this committee back to other committees and to make sure that all of the existing committees working in this area are working together for a common good.
- Amanda agreed that intersection is important.
- Helena is looking to get inspired, to learn new things and she hopes that this committee will be able to somehow influence others such as the UN Habitat. She believes that the UN Habitat, although acting as a point of reference, can be improved and she wishes for the WUP can also be an international voice akin to that of the UN Habitat, working to make the world better.
- Amanda agrees that her interest is similar to the other members. She wants to help raise the level of discussion on parks internationally. Amanda stresses the need for a sense of urgency surrounding parks and vulnerable populations. The goal in her mind is to have a little bit of an impact.

7. Terms of Reference Discussion

- Terms of Reference has been sent to all attendees for review. Amanda asked for comment.
- Julie restated the need for definitions of some elements, to make sure that Children, Play and Nature is aligned with other organizations on an international scale. Expressed concern about use of terms such as Safe Play, Challenging Play and Deep Play references these terms not being used in other international organizations. Julie raised the need for the Why? to be expressed more clearly in the Terms of Reference. For instance Why do our children need to value parks and play in those spaces? Why do they benefit in the short and long term?
- Matias expressed the importance of education and the connection of education with nature,

children and play. He stated that these spaces need to be created with education in mind, as support for the teachers in schools. Matias references the initiatives at MiParque which use interior playgrounds to give the schools public spaces inside the schools. This is due to the fact that in Chile, almost all of the schools are largely lacking playground infrastructure. Matias stated that the outside spaces are largely dust or open space. He also references the use of these otherwise barren spaces as outdoor classrooms.

- Julie agreed that nature needs to be defined, stressing that we often disregard small pockets of space, and emphasizing larger spaces - despite these smaller spaces being useful in terms of play. We also need to define what we consider a child. She questions the focus of age group.

**- Julie to put down some definitions in collaboration with Helena and other interested members: Specifically definitions of Child, Nature, and Play.**

8. Invitation of Other Members?

- Amanda wanted the group to suggest other possible members.

- Julie had a few suggestions, specifically someone who is a policy expert and risk and injury experts. Julie suggests Tim Gill and Maria Vesoni.

- Amanda agreed that those are great suggestions, especially that Tim Gill would be a great addition.

- Helena suggested that there are some great researchers in Sweden who might be valuable because of their different point of view. She will add them to the list for the group to then review prior to their being asked.

**- Everyone will send some suggestions for other people to invite.**

9. Structure of Committee to be agreed upon.

- Amanda referenced the structure of this committee in comparison to that of Large Urban Parks which has a small executive committee of 3 or 4 and a general committee of 15 members. There will also be a larger network of unlimited membership which can review the minutes and be included in the case of a webinar or session.

- The group agreed that anything larger than 15 will be too many.

10. Suggestions moving forward?

- Matias suggested that future meetings should have a set of objectives to touch on, perhaps an itemized list.

- Amanda agreed, stating that the first meeting was just to get to know one another and to make sure that everyone has similar objectives. Amanda stated that the committee is proposed to meet around 3 to 4 times per year. The group agreed.