



LEADERS OF THE FUTURE?

By Kym Francis, 16, Deputy MYP for Hampshire

The British Museum was once again the backdrop for 2009's Circles of Influence. Talent and Leadership was the theme and the day was kicked off with a speech by Robert Sassoon, MYP for Reading, and some very lively Procedure Group reps!

The morning was filled with workshops, firstly on the three UK-wide campaigns. We got the chance to contribute ideas to the campaigns and to hear about all the work being done. In the Fares Fair group everyone had personal experiences to tell and lots of these were recorded to be used in the campaign.

In our second workshop we had discussions on the topical questions:

- Do young people feel like citizens?
- What do young people need to be a leader?
- What works well and not so well to support leadership in local areas?

Everyone immediately launched into debate, seizing the opportunity to draw on personal experience as an MYP or complaints in their constituency to present their arguments. It was a great chance to highlight the problems young people suffer when trying to promote their cause in their local area. It was interesting to discover that we had difficulties with things like transport to meetings even though the local authorities were willing to listen to us. Others had no





problems in accessing meetings but the decision makers in their area would not listen. Our discussion was broad, covering issues from the cost of public transport to the attitudes of councillors.

The afternoon kicked off with a much anticipated speech from Liberal Democrat leader Nick Clegg. Many had burning questions to ask him about the economy, education, political disillusionment and pensions for our generation. Mr Clegg was certainly kept on his toes by the audience but his answers were thought provoking and interesting.

Next up was Lord Taylor of Warwick, who was to chair our debate. His speech was inspiring, enforcing the message that "it's not about politics, it's about passion". The theme of the debate was "Do older people make better leaders than young people because they have more life experience?". Both sides gave an impassioned argument and then the floor was opened for debate. Everyone seemed to have something to say, with responses from all sides.

It was surprising to hear that there were quite a few of the older generation on the side of the young people and vice versa. There were also arguments in favour of mixed leadership and plenty of

people highlighted the style of debate in the House of Commons! Lord Taylor kept it light hearted and much of what was said was certainly thought provoking.

The day overall was fantastic and many went home feeling

inspired and passionate about their cause. Many ideas had been swapped and UKYP certainly proved that there is a generation of young people today who are destined to become fantastic leaders.



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