



QUESTIONS – DR WANDA WYPORSKA

Being a young carer, did you ever feel like giving up or blaming your downfalls on others? how did you get back up?

I did feel resentful and angry and sad all at once and at different times! Growing up in a single parent family, I blamed my Dad for not being there and to be honest, I blamed him for a lot of things for a very long time. It took a long time to realise and embrace the experience as having made me strong, but at the time it never seems that way! I was always angry enough to want change but needed to find a way to channel it positively.

When do you think governments will take action? (on equality)

I hope we see it soon, perhaps as a result of this horrible pandemic, but it's something we have to fight hard for. It will take decades, and we need to be in this for the long haul.

How do you think inequality in certain areas or conditions affects a child's life?

In so many ways, from the environment in which a child is brought up, the parents' levels of vocabulary, stimulation at home, to the school or nursery they attend, their home spaces and of course discrimination in many forms, including bullying and assumptions made about certain people from particular backgrounds. Also access to things like music, sport, extra lessons and activities, holidays and at a very basic level, food and good nutrition. We know that the effects of bullying can last for over a decade. It also affects how you see yourself.

How does COVID-19 effect equality?

Is it true that this pandemic can cause drastic problems between races?

Hugely – gaps are widening between those who can work from home and those who can't, those in frontline work and those who have the financial resources to survive furlough or redundancy and those who don't have savings. We know that there are huge differences in terms of deaths between Black and White people. Black men are 4 times more likely to die than White men. We'll also see differences geographically as well.

Anger at COVID deaths in part due to inequality, as there are more deaths in poorer areas, and racial disparities have fed into the BLM protests. Also the rather toothless PHE report on COVID has made people very angry!

What has been the highlight of your career so far?

Walking into a room with 25 young equality campaigners for a meeting with the UN Special Rapporteur on Poverty and seeing them present their experiences, a range of young people who were learning disabled, refugees with no recourse to public funds and from some of the most deprived estates in London.

What are your opinions on gender inequality? Currently, the gender pay gap is a huge issue in the world what are your views on this?

I feel very strongly about it and am proud that we are able to work on it at The Equality Trust. We are highlighting the gaps in pay, in bonuses and the fact that women are still not always paid the



same as men for work of equal value or similar work. It's a really key injustice and especially now when we see women doing a lot of the essential work. Many of the jobs seen as 'women's work' are very low-paid, such as caring.

I am currently writing a book however I fear publishing it and taking it forward, do you have any tips please?

You have nothing to lose! Believe in yourself, when you put writing out there, it's like putting a part of yourself out and this can feel intimidating. But you have to realise that some will like it and others won't and you will find your audience! Go for it. How many times was JK Rowling rejected? I had to fight to get my book published, even though a publisher was really interested and offered me a contract, but other people caused some problems, but I persisted and so will you. Good luck.

What should we do next to make a big impact in terms of inequality. How long would such project last for?

Reducing inequality is a long haul, but the best things you can do are to find out more, think about where you live and how you can join with others to achieve change. You can find out about becoming a young equality campaigner with us or start a group at university, college or school! You can lobby your local council on measures they can implement and find out more on our website.

How has being a young carer affected your career?

It has made me very passionate about young carers and the raw deal they often get. But it also allowed me to support work done by charities that support carers. Once I was on a panel for carers' day and afterwards some young carers told me that they found it inspiring to see someone who had been a young carer 'achieve something great'. That really warmed my heart to hear. Sometimes it is difficult to see beyond your time as a carer and think about a future. Being a carer equips you with lots of skills that are really in demand as you get older.

What was your favourite subject at school? Loved History and Classics and French – sorry there wasn't just one!

One of my friends is from an ethnic minority and he is currently going through what you had gone through since you entered the independent school, do you have any tips that I could tell him to help him?

He should always be proud of who he is, and never feel that those who have money are better than him. Find a teacher or TA or another adult to speak to if the going gets tough or a good friend, like you and speak about the difficulties. But there will always be good times as well and we need to think about the good things and the opportunities that you have at a school like that. With my son, we always end the day together telling each other 3 good things that have happened.