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Abstract submission for theme three: Consequences for the human-horse relationships connected to the lifestyle of modern humans – for example leisure, sport, tourism, technology and media.

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Having a voice in the stable – a conditional right for young riders?

The aim with this presentation is to discuss and report on a new project that has just started. The UN Convention on the Right of the Child became a part of Swedish law in January 2020. This means that every leader within sport should make sure that children's rights are secured. In the stable, young people cultivate several skills; learn to cooperate, take initiatives and be responsible even though military traditions and one-way communications still pervade parts of the horse industry. Abuse and harassment of young riders in the stable are heard of but seldom spoken out loud, maybe because of fear of losing the opportunity to ride. Nevertheless, it seems to be a paradoxical situation – the stable context produces leaders and many young riders have a strong voice, but also produces youth who are silent, powerless and vulnerable. We therefore need knowledge about the conditions for young people to exercise their rights in equestrian sports.

The overall aim is to analyse the conditions for a child rights perspective to be implemented in the stable. Research questions: What are the possibilities for young riders to have something to say about their participation: when and on what matters do they have a voice? What knowledge do instructors and trainers have of a child right's perspective, what characterize stable cultures where youths either can or cannot exercise the right to express their views freely and have them accounted for?

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Author Bio:

Therese Waerner, has been engaged in the development of the Equine Science Program for 12 years. She has a specific interest in leadership and is from 2021 a PhD student at GIH involved in the project "Having a voice in the stable". She is particularly interested in how leadership is performed in stable environment and the opportunity for equestrian leaders to give children and young people a start in developing their own leadership skills.