

ARTICLE 12 IN SCOTLAND



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**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AS ACTIVE
PARTICIPANTS IN SOCIETY**

**MECHANISMS TO FOSTER PARTICIPATION OF
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT LOCAL
NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL**

THE PEER EDUCATION APPROACH

CHILDREN AS ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN SOCIETY

SUMMARY

This short submission aims to raise awareness of, and encourage debate about, the use of peer education as a mechanism for fostering the participation of children and young people at local, national and international level.

In this submission you will find:

- Information about Article 12 in Scotland – a network of individuals and organisations that works to promote children and young people’s rights through the medium of peer education
- A brief introduction to the concept of peer education
- An example of the content and outcomes of an Article 12 in Scotland peer education project
- A structure diagram of a rights based stakeholder/aims/objectives peer education project

ABOUT ARTICLE 12 IN SCOTLAND

Established in 1996, Article 12 in Scotland is a young person led human rights network of individuals and organisations that works, through the medium of **peer education**, to equip some of the most marginalised young people with the skills and information necessary to empower them to operate as equal citizens at all levels of society.

We take our name from Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – “*A young person’s right to express an opinion on matters that affect them and to have that opinion taken into account*”.

UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES

We believe that young people care about their rights and the rights of others, and that given the knowledge, skills and opportunities they will take positive individual and collective action to make the world a place where young people are given access to the information and opportunities necessary to participate as equal citizens at all levels of society.

OUR WORK

Article 12 in Scotland currently operates, in Scotland, the UK, Europe and the Middle East, as a network of individuals and partner organisations, managed by a young person led National Management Committee. Later this year we will begin working with new partner organisations in Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Sudan as part of the British Council’s *Debate to Action Millennium Development Goals* peer education project.

We undertake our work directly with young people via conferences, events and rights based training courses/resources and indirectly via our website: www.article12.org

WHY PEER EDUCATION?

IN THEORY

Peer Education is a non formal learning process that gives empowerment, confidence and independence to children and young people, whatever their background, thus equipping them with the skills necessary to operate as equal citizens at all levels of society.

Peer Education is underpinned by the principle that children and young people are the experts on their own lives and are therefore the best starting point in any learning process.

Peer Education Projects give children and young people the opportunity to utilise their skills and share their knowledge [information] with their peers and other members of their community. Peer Education Projects help create positive images of children and young people. Peer Education Projects help to change attitudes and behaviours towards children and young people and encourage adults to recognise the value that young people's contributions bring to society at local, national and international level.

Peer Educator skills and Peer Education tools and techniques are inclusive and can be adapted to fit the learning and development needs of all children and young people whatever their age or background.

IN PRACTICE — OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

CASE STUDY

INTERCULTURAL LEARNING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION PEER EDUCATION TRAINING COURSE – SCOTLAND (MAY 2005)

BACKGROUND

This was a unique training the trainers project which sought to break away from traditional thinking around the training and education of children and young people (that “adults” are the experts and are best equipped to educate young people) in that the young people themselves were the “educators”.

This project enabled young people from East and West (Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Belarus, Poland, The Netherlands, Sweden and Scotland) to work together to create learning programmes that would enable them to work with their peers at local, national and international level, in the areas of conflict resolution and intercultural learning. All participating countries had responsibility for a specific necessary role within the programme thus ensuring that all participants contributed to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the programme.

OUTCOMES

PARTICIPANTS - LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

The following outlines young people's views in terms of their personal learning and development and the content, context and innovative character of the working methods vis a vis ALL participants contributed to the efficiency and effectiveness of the project:

"My personal learning and development has increased 90%.... It was a great experience to gain more skills and learn about peer education"

"My levels of understanding have increased 75%... This project was a good chance to clarify many terms considering peer education.... From my point of view, and I have many previous experiences, I think these methods helped us to build a good group. Consequently, I will take this experience back home and apply it in the projects which we will hold in the future".

"I learnt a lot about the other cultures".

"I learnt that the Middle Eastern countries people are very strong willed.... I had many exciting and interesting discussions with them".

"I now have more respect and understanding for other cultures... every person has a story to tell".

"I think that I will use these skills in our coming projects and with members of our organisation".

"It did not change my view on how people learn but it changed my view on how I learn. I've realised things I did not know before....".

"I understand more about people's behaviours. Now I have a better understanding of conflict resolution"

"I realised how lucky I am as a western person to have my freedom, in other countries people don't have that".

"The implementation of projects in the community will now be easier. I liked the way that the hosts acted as peers so that all countries were sharing the education and training. This course was even better than previous training I have attended".

"I really appreciate the co-ordinators team for this high quality project". There is no doubt that this project enriched my life and character experiences.... also I learned enough new things here to enhance my skills".

"Every time I attend such trainings I believe more how effective peer education is, this training gave me a lot of new ideas to spread back in my country".

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPANT'S PEERS AT COUNTRY LEVEL

PALESTINE

Planned to organise a work camp in the training course delegate's hometown. This would involve working with young people from area to make environmental improvements. Key outcomes, in addition to the obvious environmental improvements, would be creating better tolerance and understanding between east and west and involving adults and young people alike in the process.

POLAND/BELARUS

Action training on Raising Awareness of Human Rights. Work would be undertaken by Peer 2 Peer Euromed partner organisations with local youth. The proposal is in three parts: 1. Theoretical: partners prepare workshops, 2. Practical: partners facilitate workshops in local schools, 3. Evaluation: partners prepare scenario on how to provide workshops in Human Rights in schools. 10 days action training for partner organisations in Poland would precede project, local youth would also be invited to attend.

SWEDEN

Sweden proposed intercultural learning through music workshops. The project would take place in Sweden during the summer months -not a good idea to go to Sweden in the winter unless you like below zero temperatures and lots of snow!!

TURKEY

Turkey proposed an exchange that would work towards destroying prejudices. This would take place in Istanbul (a place where cultures meet) and involve workshops on peer education, conflict resolution and intercultural learning. A camping experience where each country would have responsibility for cooking a meal from their country would be included in the experience.

THE NETHERLANDS

Holland proposed a partner organisation/project website. This would enable partners to share information not only with each other but also with the rest of the world via the Internet. Each partner would have their own homepage that they would be responsible for updating on a regular basis.

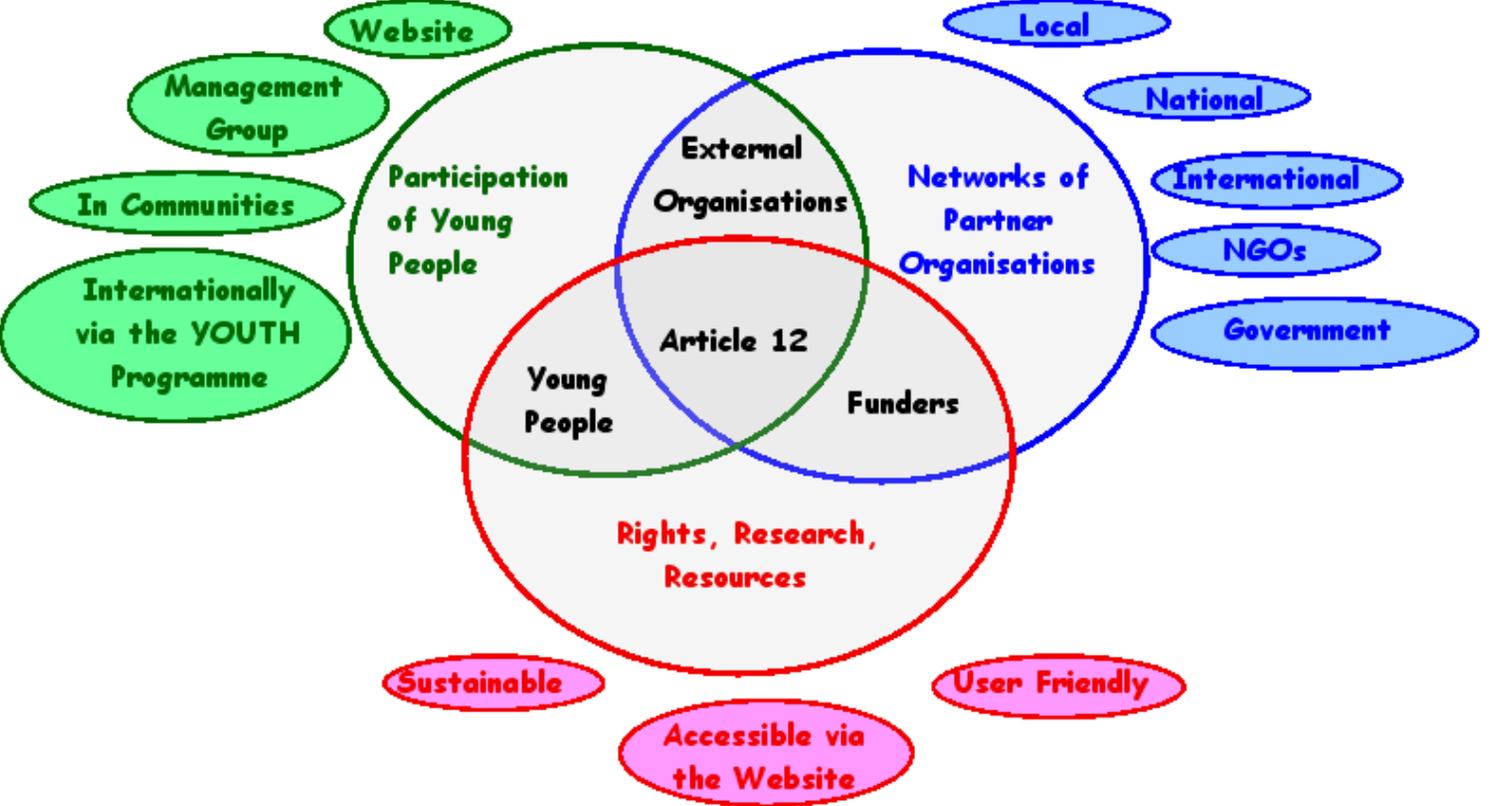
LEBANON

Lebanon proposed a Human Rights promotion based on PEER 2 PEER education among students from different cultures, religions and ethnicities, as a means to decreasing stereotypes and conflicts. The event would be held in a "neutral town". The project would involve three phases: Recruitment of peer educators, training of peer educators, and recruitment of peer group to facilitate the Human Rights promotion.

JORDAN

Jordan proposed an exchange on the theme of Intercultural Learning based on Peer Education. The exchange would aim to enhance and promote cultural diversity in a globalised context using peer education skills. Each partner country would spend a day presenting their culture, beliefs, lifestyles and traditions both from the past and the present with the aim of promoting the view that we are all different but all equal.

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**ANY ENQUIRIES REGARDING THIS SUBMISSION OR ARTICLE 12 IN SCOTLAND
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