

Promoting Positive Diaspora Voices



Reflections on working with young people from diaspora communities to explore conflict locally and globally



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Partners



Introduction

Purpose of the toolkit

This toolkit is designed to support youth practitioners working with young people from diaspora communities interested in issues of conflict and development. It offers practical lesson plans and resources, case studies and reflections from our youth practitioners based on tried-and-tested approaches. You can use this resource either off-the-shelf or adapt it for your own purposes.

We hope that the toolkit will help to encourage new ideas and to fill a gap in resources for working with young diaspora members affected by overseas conflict.

Background

Many diaspora communities in the UK have strong links with countries affected by violent conflict. The Promoting Positive Voices in Diaspora Communities project works with young people from these communities to help them understand conflict and development in their country of origin or heritage, and explore the impact of such elements on their lives.

To date, Global Education Derby, Lancashire Global Education Centre, West London YMCA, Y Care International, along with International Alert, have worked with over 200 young people from diaspora communities in Derby, Lancashire and London as part of this EU-funded project. The project has helped to engage young people on issues of conflict and development and to raise awareness of these issues among the wider public.

Learning from experience

This toolkit brings together some of the best practice from our experiences. It aims to offer some practical ideas and suggestions on how to engage young diaspora members on issues of conflict and development. It also shares reflections from our youth workers on challenges they experienced and on ways in which they overcame them.

We hope that this is a useful resource for practitioners working with young diaspora members and that it can contribute to the process of building good practice around engagement of diaspora communities on development and conflict issues.

Further information

For more information about the project, please visit <http://www.international-alert.org/what-we-do/where-we-work/europe/uk/projects/8178>.

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Promoting Positive Diaspora Voices

Section 1: Reflecting on Practice



This section shares the key learning experiences and challenges described by our youth practitioners, as well as their ideas about working with young people from conflict-affected areas.

We asked our youth practitioners to describe how their practice has developed through the course of this project and to discuss some of the different experiences they have had. They have worked with the young people throughout the project almost on a weekly basis. During this time, the youth practitioners have explored issues, raised questions and tried to answer many others posed by the young people themselves.

West London YMCA and Y Care International

Reflecting on the last three years of the Promoting Positive Voices project, what are the key things that happened in your area?

Based in Hayes, West London, we have brought together young people from a diverse range of diaspora communities. Members of this group have different experiences of conflict – either direct experience or knowledge about conflict in their countries of origin (where they were born) or heritage (where their family is from). The young people worked together as one group to raise awareness about conflicts that have been present in their lives – through organising art exhibitions, leading workshops and making films.

The group was composed mainly of unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees. We feel the project has helped to develop a sense of belonging and resilience among the group by enabling new friendships and peer support. This project has given them the confidence and trust they needed to start a new life in the UK.

Beyond awareness raising, we found that the project has helped the young participants to develop the tools to overcome struggles in their own life. Most of the young people have multiple support needs and many have personal experiences of war or conflict, with ‘unaddressed trauma’ from this. For most of the group, English is not their first language and many have been trying to enter study or employment. All of the group have been living on low resources. We were able to mitigate the negative effects of these issues by bringing the group together and engaging them in positive activities.

What did the young people learn from the project?

The young people have gained an understanding of the different reasons behind a conflict – for example, inequality, different views about the same issues, economics, racism or political reasons. However, beyond the various reasons, the group has learnt that, even if their countries of origin are in conflict, they are capable of mixing with others here in the UK. The young people are more aware also of the ways in which conflict can be prevented and challenged through everyone advocating and creating change.

What worked really well and how has this been illustrated?

Youth-led extended sessions have worked really well. The extended sessions have allowed the young people to build their confidence and to highlight the issues of concern to them. They have taken a lead in each session by speaking about a topic; often, this has led to greater discussion and sharing. We often discussed the different levels of conflict – personal, local, national and inter-country.

What could have been improved and what were the challenges?

Hayes is a diverse area with many different diaspora communities. This enabled us to recruit a broad mix of people. However, in retrospect we underestimated the amount of time needed to form and sustain partnerships and cooperative work with other local organisations. This was especially challenging in the first year of our project.

In your area, what external factors influenced the direction of the project?

Hayes is predominately a Muslim community. However, the project has been led by the YMCA, a Christian youth organisation. Some young people told us that this could have caused stigma or discouraged people to take part. However, due in part to the good local links the YMCA has with the community, we were able to explain that the project was for people of all or of no faith. This was often a good discussion point and allowed for deeper personal discussions.

The lack of other forms of psycho-social support for young people aged 16–24, who have been affected by conflict, has been very challenging. While we are identifying unmet support needs, there is a lack of other support and counselling services to refer young people to. Current services have reduced their provision and can be inaccessible to the young people. We have tried to best support the young people, but more specialist services are needed to help them cope with the consequences of the trauma they have experienced.

How are you moving forward from this project? What are your next steps (for the young people, practitioners and organisation)?

West London YMCA is researching funding opportunities that would focus on race equality and broader citizenship issues. If this happens, it could be a step forward for the young people involved in this project, as they have been discussing these two topics during their extended sessions.

Further to this, the local communities in Hayes are aware of the need to work with young people from diaspora communities. In addition, some organisations, such as the Befriending Hillingdon Unaccompanied Minors Project (BHUMP), are ensuring that the young people still have a place

to go to.

Y Care International is seeking to work with a small group of YMCAs that already engage with young people from places of conflict, especially young refugees or asylum seekers. A key aim is to share learning from this project.

What is your most positive memory of the project?

On one occasion, during our ‘deepening understanding’ sessions, the young people had some free time. They spent that time showing each other the different dances of their culture. It was a magical moment, seeing how young people from different parts of the world can get together and share their culture. They discovered that, despite the conflict that forced them to come to London, they can still laugh and share their joy.

What do you think will last beyond the project?

The self-confidence gained by the individuals who took part in the project will remain, as will the relationships they have built between each other. People of different ages and backgrounds have come together, developing connections and a network of new friends that will hopefully remain beyond the project. They have overcome language barriers and have adjusted to each other. The most important thing is that they have supported each other through the project and that this has created a special connection between them.

Lancashire Global Education Centre

Reflecting on the last three years of the Promoting Positive Voices project, what are the key things that happened in your area?

During the last three years of the Promoting Positive Voices project, the most significant development was how the young people took hold of the process and ran with the project. The group took what was planned to be a series of time-bound activities and transformed them into an ongoing process of action and empowerment. Three years ago, I would not have believed that groups of young people from the third generation of the Pakistani diaspora in East Lancashire would take ownership of local actions (for example, bringing together leaders of territorial gangs to address local conflict on the streets); or organise global actions (for instance, establishing ICT links with young people in Pakistan or engaging in dialogue with policymakers at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and in Islamabad). The legacy of the project will be sustained as 20 new 'Positive Voices' (out of 78 applicants) are being mentored by Promoting Positive Voices' participants to take the project's work forward in the community.

What did the young people learn from the project?

The young people have learned that they can be agents of change. As marginalised young people who are not traditionally involved in civil society dialogue on development issues, the young people have been active and enthusiastic participants and promoters of the Positive Voices' project goals. The young people who have taken part in and wanted to remain engaged with the project have brought about change in themselves, in the local community and at a global level.

What worked really well and how has this been illustrated?

The project has enhanced the young people's skills and knowledge. These young people have had very little time within formal education structures to dedicate to development and peacebuilding issues and even fewer opportunities to actively respond to these debates. This project has created opportunities for them to find and use their 'voices' to take action on these issues. From a motivated but uninformed and inexperienced group, the young people have become local activists, parliamentary lobbyists, peer educators, and global travellers and advocates.

On any number of occasions, the young people have readily, knowledgeably and confidently engaged with a wide range of people. They have engaged in dialogue and made speeches around development and peacebuilding debates – be it at community events, with policymakers at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office or with the Governor of Punjab in Lahore.

What could have been improved and what were the challenges?

As with the London experience, we underestimated the amount of time it would take to identify and establish links with key gatekeepers. Negotiating the necessary 'permissions' proved to be a long process. For instance, after having identified the Pakistani diaspora community in Brierfield and Nelson in February 2011 and officially starting the project in June of that year, it was not until the following January before we started working face-to-face with the young people. That said, we were fortunate to find and form a meaningful partnership with Marsden Heights Community College as a partner organisation. Marsden College's

agenda, ethos and approach complemented the project, and we benefited from the experience and ability of its Senior Youth and Community Worker, Mashuq Hussain OBE ('Mash') and his colleague Begum. Their interest and dedication to the project matched ours, and they have proved to be willing, skilled and enthusiastic practitioners who have made the project a definite success.

In your area, what external factors influenced the direction of the project?

Diaspora communities living in East Lancashire are affected by conflict in their country, communities of origin and family caste in many ways. Historical conflicts persist in the second and third generations of the Pakistani diaspora through social and family ties. These conflicts are played out on the streets of East Lancashire on a daily basis in the form of territorial gang violence.

How are you moving forward from this project? What are your next steps (for the young people, practitioners, organisation)?

The project has demonstrated success in building the capacity of young people aged 15–16 in Brierfield and Nelson to act as peacebuilders within their peer groups. As a result of their involvement in the project, the young people have begun to understand how conflict happens and are exploring methods for tackling tension and conflict in a peaceful and constructive manner. This has led to some of the project participants positively intervening and mediating between

young people in conflicting gangs. The intervention is a direct outcome of the project. The young people, practitioners and Lancashire Global Education Centre believe that this outcome needs to be built on to develop an effective mechanism for transforming conflict and reducing violence among young people.

What is your most positive memory of the project?

We have many positive memories of the project. One of the most positive memories is of a meeting held with Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and Department for International Development (DFID) government officials at the FCO. At this meeting, two of our young people were given their first opportunity to chair a meeting (to the government officials' surprise), and a group of 20 youths aged 14–15 from Lancashire spent nearly two hours engaging in a frank and open debate about the UK's role in supporting development and peacebuilding processes in Pakistan. This debate and dialogue was continued with other FCO and DFID officials just a year later in Pakistan's capital city of Islamabad.

What do you think will last beyond the project?

A lasting legacy of the project is the fact that cohorts of young people will become leaders and role models within their community. Already, some are planning to go on to further and higher education to study politics and to 'be the change'.

Global Education Derby

Reflecting on the last three years of the Promoting Positive Voices project, what are the key things that happened in your area?

The community events organised by the young people were a particular highlight. Many events were hugely successful and well attended by a diverse range of people. The links that the young people formed to hold their events were really positive.

Throughout the 18 months when they were meeting as a group, the young people worked with individuals from different schools, backgrounds and friendship groups. Initially, this posed an issue and created conflict within the group. However, through constant dialogue, by treating everyone's concerns as valid and by emphasising the principles of respect, equality and non-judgement, we were able to get to a place where the young people saw the benefits of the project. They now work well with people they would not otherwise have got to know or spend time with.

Another positive impact has come from taking the group out of their comfort zone and visiting new places.

What did the young people learn from the project?

The young people have developed a greater understanding of the power they have over things. For example, when there are conflicts in the group, they know they have a choice – they can choose how they react. If they choose aggression and anger, that is what they will create. However, if they choose patience and dialogue, they are more likely to resolve issues positively. A lot of progress has been made as a result of this learning.

What worked really well and how has this been illustrated?

The youth-led approach worked very well. When we tried to explore the issue of Kashmir and the conflict between Pakistan and India, which is linked to their heritage, the young people were uninterested and lacked motivation. When the topic of Palestine came up, they were really enthusiastic to learn more – they drove the activities. Most of the young people were pro-Palestine; although this was a 'hot topic', their interest provided the backdrop to wider discussions about conflict and looking at it from the different perspectives of those involved.

What could have been improved and what were the challenges?

We faced challenges arising from the youth-led, participatory approach that we take to education. Some of the leaders from the community-based groups with whom we were working were more comfortable with more formal 'chalk and talk' approaches. On some occasions – for example, when organising community events or encouraging discussion and debate in groups – this clash of approach came to the fore. We had to spend time discussing with the leaders why we were taking a youth-led approach and the benefits of it. This would often slow down the development process with the young people, but it was important to do this to build trust and understanding.

Another challenge was on a personal level. As a white female and non-Muslim practitioner, I had concerns about how this would be perceived by the young people and community leaders when facilitating discussions on controversial topics such as gender equality or sexuality. Sometimes, the level of prejudice being expressed needed to

be discussed and challenged, but challenging such things sensitively and without judgement could be difficult. I tried exploring the topics by introducing statistics and stories of people who had faced prejudice because of their gender or sexuality. I asked questions and tried to draw people out to clarify their opinions and how they justified them. A patient, inquisitive approach and not making personal judgements seemed to work well.

In your area, what external factors influenced the direction of the project?

A key factor was the capacity and willingness of community-based organisations to work with us on the project. Capacity was often linked to the widespread council and funding cuts that have had a significant impact on much of the voluntary sector. Willingness was more related to whether the organisations could see the value of the work and/or whether community gatekeepers of communities or services chose to engage.

How are you moving forward from this project? What are your next steps (for the young people, practitioners, organisation)?

The major thing to emerge from this project, which will take us forward, is a new three-year project called Opening Out, funded by the Big Lottery Reaching Communities fund. This project is based on the learning we have gained through the Promoting Positive Voices (PPV) project. Working with our major partner from the PPV project – Jobs, Enterprise and Training (JET) – we have been able to create a Community Liaison post to enable greater and more meaningful community engagement. We hope to take forward the positive outcomes of PPV, such as identity

capital and peer leaders, to form a core part of the new project. With an increased capacity under this new project, we can add to the networks and groups we have engaged with through PPV. For instance, we plan to work with Al Madinah School, along with Bemrose and Derby Moor schools.

What is your most positive memory of the project?

One particularly positive memory was when our PPV group went on a visit to the International Slavery Museum and the Abdullah Quilliam Mosque in Liverpool. We had just spent a few hours in the museum and were walking around the docks to get some fresh air when we came across a group of street musicians and performers. We watched and laughed for a bit, but then the performers encouraged our group to get involved by playing imaginary instruments. During that time, there was much laughter, with no egos or judgement. It was great to see such an eclectic group of people dancing, singing and laughing together.

What do you think will last beyond the project?

The bonds that the young people have formed will be a lasting outcome of the project. The young people forming the core group all come from different schools and have different perspectives, but they still managed to share experiences, challenges and successes. This journey brought them together and helped them to overcome their superficial differences.



Promoting Positive Diaspora Voices

Section 2: Case studies



The case studies in this section provide some personal insights from three of the young people involved in the project. Their personal accounts give a snapshot of how the project has facilitated their thinking and actions on a range of issues (as well as those of other group members).

Within this section, we also provide a case study of a visit to London in 2012 by the East Lancashire group and of a visit to Pakistan by eight of the young people in late October 2013. The Pakistan visit was part of a youth-led research project that is also part of this programme.

Zangeel



Zangeel Nusrat from the Positive Voices group in East Lancashire talks here about the personal impact of the project. She recounts how the initial six-week project developed into two years, how she has taken on responsibility and chaired a meeting at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Zangeel has also learnt more about her Pakistani heritage by visiting Pakistan with the project and now wants to study politics as a result.

New beginnings

First of all, it was just a normal dinnertime. Mash [Mashuq Hussain] came to me and Mohammed and said: "I want 10 boys and 10 girls. We're going to do a group for six weeks and then you do a community event afterwards – one for boys and one for girls." So Mohammed and I chose a mixed variety group, not friends. It wasn't that we didn't want our friends to be in it. It was just a mixed variety.

We started the project and organised the community event. But we had really high hopes for the group. We all wanted to do bigger things: we wanted to go to Parliament; we wanted to explore our country of origin. One thing led to another and the six-week project turned into two years, including going to Pakistan.

Because we grew so close as a group, we wanted to do more. One of the group members said: "I want to go to Parliament. I want to tell them my ideas. We want to go to Pakistan. We've done this project. We did a community event on Pakistan. We want to go see the problems in Pakistan and what its positives and negatives are for ourselves."

So we just did it!

We went to Parliament, we spoke about it. I even chaired a meeting at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Personally, I feel that the project has changed my knowledge and understanding about my country of origin, which is Pakistan. I knew nothing about it. I didn't even know the language properly. To be honest, even though my mum and dad were born there, I still didn't know much about it.

I went to Pakistan with the Positive Voices project. Because we are so British, we have forgotten the Pakistani side to us. But then, this project isn't just about being Pakistani, but about knowing who you are yourself. It has made us realise who we are, what our potential is and what we can do.

How we have benefited from the project

For Mohammed, Akeel and me, the group has changed our viewpoints. I've even applied to a couple of colleges to do politics. We all want to do politics. Positive Voices has really given me a route to different choices, to do different things.

My parents are also pleased that I'm more involved and want to know more about my family. So the project has really helped to make my relationship stronger with my parents. My sister also wants to get involved in the project. She has just started high school and is in year 7. She wants to be in projects like this and because I'm starting to learn the language, she's starting too.

If I hadn't been in Positive Voices, I don't think that our next generation, that my kids, would have any Pakistani side to them. The project has shown me the value and the importance of my heritage, and I want to share this with the next generation.

The project has also given me responsibility. I've been in charge of the girls, and Tayeb with Akeel have been in charge of the boys. Tayeb is now Head Boy. Akeel used to be really quiet, but over the two years he has grown more. Normally, myself or Noor would do speeches, but when we went to Pakistan, Shahoora made a fabulous speech at a conference; it was the first time she spoke on her own. I think the main thing she has gained out of the project is confidence. Akeel can now lead a meeting with confidence. The project has definitely built up all of our confidence.

And our knowledge has really grown. We went to International Alert in London and Rabia gave a talk, which was amazing because normally I find it boring when someone is giving a talk. But everything she said was so interesting because it was about something we wanted to know more about. If you are interested in something, you want to learn more; for the full hour or two of the talk, we gained so much knowledge about Pakistan, it made us want to do more.

Visiting Pakistan

I think it was only through the commitment and support of Mash, Jeni and Stuart that we got to go to Pakistan. A lot of people in the community were surprised when we said we were going to Pakistan because going to Pakistan is not usual for a school trip. A councillor living on my street asked me about the project. More and more people in the community became aware of the project, especially after all our community events. We used to chase people up in the community when we first started the project, but now people from the wider community are coming to us, asking us.

When we went to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the officials gave us some facts and figures about how much Britain gives to Pakistan and other countries. It made us realise that people and other countries are helping – and that groups like Positive Voices can influence British foreign policy and change the way that politicians do things.



Zangeel being interviewed at the studios of Geo TV in Lahore, Pakistan



Zangeel meeting students at Jinnah School, Islamabad



Zangeel chairing a meeting at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Giving young people a voice

Politicians are always saying that they want to hear young people speak, but they always choose the people who they know will just listen to what they say. It is good for politicians to listen to others. A politician would not randomly come to a group like ours. If politicians want to know the truth and how to make Britain better, I would say that Positive Voices gives a good insight into life in Lancashire. We have done a lot of research about conflict and about conflicts in the local community – including gangs and caste.

We found that caste is a really big issue and so are gangs. People could view Positive Voices as

a type of gang because we're all together – it's just the way you look at it, whether it's positive or negative. It's the same with caste – it is still important, but we believe that for the next generation caste will matter less.

Society is changing. Positive Voices is a good example of how to bring about change in the community.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Zangeel Nusrat, the students of Lancaster University's Richardson Institute, Mash, Jen, Rabia and Barry.

Salimon

Salimon is a young asylum seeker from Nigeria. He came to the UK to escape persecution and to improve his life chances. Through his involvement in the Diversity group at West London YMCA, he has developed the confidence to raise his voice and received the opportunity to meet peers with similar experiences.

The project gave him a chance to stop thinking about his problems and to feel valued by others. He has overcome his fears, changing from being an introverted and shy person to someone who is outgoing and a leader to new arrivals to the UK.

Salimon is 20 years old. He was forced to leave Nigeria, his country of birth, when he was only 17 years of age due to political persecution.

For his young age, Salimon has had a traumatic and at times difficult life. He came to London to find a safe and peaceful environment to start a new life. Most recently, he has been supported by West London YMCA and moved into supported



accommodation. Here he receives one-to-one support from a key worker to help him develop and make the transition to independence.

Diversity is a project that gave him and other young people aged 16–25 the opportunity to explore and learn about issues of conflict, peace and development that are occurring in their country of heritage, as well as to learn about other people's countries. Salimon liked the sound of the project – it gave him the opportunity to meet new people and to learn about his new local community. He wanted to gain communication skills but was also interested in exploring the issue of conflict and learning new strategies to cope with the conflict he had experienced.

At first, Salimon struggled to be part of the group. At times shy by nature, he found it tough joining a large group. Over time, however, as the group built trust and barriers were broken down, he overcame

his fears. He began to feel more comfortable in the Diversity group and valued being with peers who faced similar experiences. Increasingly, he raised his voice during group discussions. By coming regularly, Salimon's self-confidence started to grow, and he is now able to express how he feels about conflict issues in a safe space with other young people. He has built up strong relationships with other young people who face similar same issues as him.

In addition, Salimon has increasingly become a key support person for new young people joining the project, especially those seeking asylum. He always tries to bring a smile to their faces. He says that, like many other refugees, trying to settle

and be a part of something is difficult. These people have been forced to abandon their roots and to start a new life far away from their families. Often, they can feel lonely, isolated and sad. However, the Diversity initiative has provided them with a space to gain a sense of belonging and greater contentment.

Salimon regularly attended the Diversity weekly sessions, and he now speaks up and expresses his concerns about the alleged corruption facing Nigeria. He expresses his views both to the group and in the local community through awareness-raising events. Salimon also shares his talent on the drums as well as his views about conflict and peacebuilding issues whenever he can.

Shazrina

Shazrina is a female participant and helper within the Promoting Positive Voices in Diaspora Communities project. She is of Pakistani/Malaysian heritage and is one of the oldest in the group, at 20 years of age.

Shazrina's mother is of Pakistani heritage and her father is Malaysian. Her parents are divorced and Shazrina currently lives with her father and three younger siblings in Derby. For the last few summers, she has travelled to Malaysia with her father for six to seven weeks to visit relatives.

Shazrina is a proactive member of the Positive Voices group and has been consistently involved in the project since it began in August 2012. Recently, she became an assistant/peer leader. She has a mature approach and is able to assist and communicate confidently, without judgement, with all the other young people involved. For example, when several new girls of Muslim faith started attending project sessions, this created some disruption with the existing young people. Some felt that the new members' behaviour and



attire were disrespectful towards their understanding of how young Muslim women should conduct themselves. Although this caused a divide within the group, Shazrina would start each session by greeting everyone in the room, shaking hands, hugging and welcoming them without hesitance or judgement.

Her ability to mediate – to not take sides and to actively involve new members – has led to greater cohesion between the young people and a less hostile atmosphere. She has set an excellent example to others.

Shazrina and her brother, Azwan, were given a chance to go on the trip to Pakistan with another young person from the Derby project. Since returning, Shazrina and her brother said they have become far more aware of their Pakistani heritage than previously (an interview about their experiences is available at: <https://m.soundcloud.com/ama01/bbcasiannetworkreportsalmeena>).

Before joining the youth group, Shazrina was enrolled on a childcare course at college; however, since then she has decided to pursue a Level 3 Diploma in Youth Work as well to advance her career options and add to her UCAS applications. In addition, Shazrina is now leading group sessions and is progressing really well.

Shazrina has shown a great amount of empathy and has the ability to see just how challenging workshops can be when there is a disruptive atmosphere.

With this in mind, she recently suggested that other young people within the project run some of the activities within a workshop to experience facilitation for themselves and to gain greater empathy for the peer leader or youth worker. She hoped that they would then participate more positively and actively when others were trying to facilitate. This is a core example of progression through the project. Not only has Shazrina developed alongside the group, she has also grown and advanced on a personal level.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office

In October 2012, the Positive Voices group in East Lancashire travelled to London to deepen their understanding of conflict and development processes in Pakistan. The group sought to build capacity in skills and practical strategies to effectively engage with policymakers and wider community stakeholders locally. They also wanted to engage more effectively with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and staff of the Department for International Development (DFID).

“I questioned FCO/DFID officials!”

“My thoughts have changed.”

“I know how to chair a meeting and how to talk in a professional manner.”

“I want to contact and meet young people who want to change Pakistan.”

– Feedback from the young participants

Background to the project

Since January 2012, Lancashire Global Education Centre’s Global Youth Work Coordinator, Stuart Wroe, has been working with a group of 20 young people from three family ‘*biraderi*’ clans in conflict. The young people live in the Brierfield and Nelson areas of East Lancashire. There have been high levels of engagement with the young people involved.

After a six-week project, the young people themselves led the process and had big plans for the group. They all wanted to do bigger things: they wanted to go to Parliament and they wanted to explore their country of origin. One thing led to another and a six-week project developed into two years.

As marginalised young people who are not traditionally involved in civil society dialogue on development issues, the young people have been active and enthusiastic participants as well as promoters of the Positive Voices’ project goals.

These young people had very little time within formal education structures to dedicate to such development issues and even fewer opportunities to actively respond to these debates. The project created opportunities for them to find and use their 'voices' to take action on these issues. After delivering two community-based awareness-raising actions, the group wanted to do more; one of the young people announced: "I want to go to Parliament. I want to tell them my ideas."

Meeting with officials

Three months later, in October 2012, the young people visited Parliament and stood outside No. 10 Downing Street. They chaired and led a meeting with FCO and DFID officials at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and with Lords, members of parliament (MPs) and UK policymakers at Westminster. They wanted to learn more about the UK's responses to conflict and development processes in Pakistan.

In preparation, they engaged with International Alert's Pakistan Senior Programme Officer and learnt about conflict and development issues – including processes in Pakistan and International Alert's work in tackling these issues. This was part of a three-day residential weekend aimed at deepening understanding and raising the group's awareness, knowledge and skills in addressing these issues. The young people also received training in skills development on conflict transformation, leadership and influencing policymakers.



Preparing for the FCO meeting at International Alert's London office



Meeting FCO and DFID officials at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

One October weekend was mainly taken up with preparing for the visit to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on the Monday. During this visit, the group engaged with FCO and DFID officials, with the aim of building their knowledge on conflict and development processes in Pakistan, and their skills in influencing change.

The meeting was chaired by two young people, Mohammed Tayeb Ahmad and Zangeel Nusrat, instead of by the officials. They did exceedingly well. In fact, all of the young people conducted themselves really well. They had prepared well and as a result were able to ask intelligent and relevant questions. This opened the way for real and informative dialogue, which lasted 90 minutes, exceeding the planned 60 minutes.

It came as a surprise to the FCO and DFID officials to be grilled by 14 and 15 year olds on the UK's policy on Pakistan – especially their criticisms of the UK's close ties with America's 'War on Terror'.

Learning outcomes

Without a doubt, the young people had a real and potentially life-changing experience. In addition, they enhanced their knowledge of conflict and development processes in Pakistan, as well as increasing a variety of practical skills. All of this was built on through the project aim, which sought to enable the young people to become agents of change and peacebuilding in their community and globally.

After the meeting, several young people said: “I want to contact and meet young people who want to change Pakistan.”

The insights and learning gained from that October weekend in 2012 informed their visit to Pakistan just 12 months later. In Pakistan, they were able to engage with FCO and DFID officials on the ground, meet with the Governor of Punjab and talk to other young people about the issues raised at Westminster.



The East Lancashire Positive Voices group outside No. 10 Downing Street

Pakistan fact-finding trip

From 25 October to 2 November 2013, a group of eight young people from the Positive Voices project travelled to Pakistan to gain first-hand knowledge and understanding of the multiple causes of poverty and conflict in Pakistan.

The visit was safe and successful. Learning and contacts from the trip have helped to inform ongoing links and actions between the East Lancashire/Derby and Pakistani young people, and it is expected that these links will continue long into the future.

Background to the trip

From 25 October to 2 November 2013, a group of young people from the Positive Voices project (five from East Lancashire and three from Derby) travelled to Pakistan to gain first-hand knowledge and understanding of the multiple causes of poverty and conflict in Pakistan. They were joined by Asif Dar from Pakistan's leading newspaper *Daily Jang* and satellite TV channel Geo TV, as well as by journalists from the BBC Asian network who were reporting on the visit. The visit sought to increase knowledge and understanding of the role of diaspora communities and young people in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and development processes.

The visit involved the active participation of the young people and was designed to allow them to discover and become aware of different social and cultural realities. It also aimed to contribute to the personal development of the young participants by developing their confidence, opening their horizons and promoting a climate of understanding between the young people.

The young people were joined by International Alert's Positive Voices Senior Programme Officer, Barry Navarro, and the Pakistan Senior Programme Officer, Rabia Nusrat. They were also accompanied by Mashuq (Mash) Hussain, OBE Senior Youth Worker at Marsden Heights Community College in Nelson Lancashire, and by Jenefa Begum, his youth work colleague.

Itinerary of the trip

On arrival in Lahore, after a short rest, the group met with young people at the Institute of Continuing Professional Development. After this, they visited the Geo TV studios in Lahore, where they were interviewed by senior journalists. They then met the Governor of Punjab at Governor House, where they discussed the multiple causes of poverty and conflict in the Punjab and the Governor's plans to tackle these issues.



Geo TV interview, Islamabad



Visit to Lahore, Pakistan



Meeting the Governor of Punjab

The next morning, the group set off from Lahore, catching some of the sights before heading up the Grand Trunk Road (GT Road following the old Silk Route) to Gujrat. On the way, they stopped off to meet one of the young people's grandparents as well as the local snake charmer. The group finally arrived at the University of Gujrat's spectacular campus, feeling hot and exhausted. Once they were rested and had a meal, they were ready to engage over several days with the students and Vice Chancellor, as well as local young people, on topics ranging from the conditionalities of aid to access to education. All of the group conducted themselves well in Gujrat (and throughout the trip), and Zangeel addressed a university meeting with confidence and eloquence.

On the fourth day, the group left the University of Gujrat to rejoin the GT Road and travel up to Jhelum, where many of the young people's families originated from. In Jhelum, the young people visited the Degree College and spoke with faculty members around the three focus areas of conflict, development and *biraderi*. It was extremely useful to get other people's perspectives on these areas of interest, which the group had been researching and discussing during sessions in the UK.

After a long, hot and dusty drive up the GT Road, through some stunning scenery, the group arrived in the bustling city of Islamabad. When the group arrived, they were whisked off to an event organised by a number of organisations, including its partner organisation, International Alert, and Oxfam. The event was a red carpet evening gala to mark World Food Day, and the Pakistan Minister of Agriculture and this group were the VIP guests. The Minister gave a speech on food security; this was followed by a speech by the group's own Shahoora Butt, who spoke confidently about the Positive Voices project. The speeches were followed by food, traditional music performances and regional dance performances, during which all the male members of the group, including Mash, Barry and Stuart, gave a credible version of a Pashtun dance crossed with a Punjabi dance.

While in Islamabad, the young people met with the Director and policy officials of the government's Overseas Pakistanis Foundation to talk about the role of diaspora communities and young people in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and development processes. The group then met and had lunch with the teachers and young people of the Springboard School in Rawalpindi, with whom the East Lancashire group had already been Skypeing.

The final day in Pakistan involved a Friday visit to the spectacular Faisal Mosque in Islamabad. It also included a visit to the Geo TV studios in Islamabad, where the young people were interviewed by senior journalists on the impact of the visit. This was followed by souvenir shopping in the markets of Islamabad and a celebration

dinner. However, the dinner was cut short when International Alert's security advisor was informed of a drone attack that had killed Pakistan's Taliban leader. Picking up their desserts in doggy bags, the group retreated behind the gates of their secure hotel.

Eight hours later, as the group arrived safely at Islamabad's bustling airport, news of the drone attack was broken by Reuters news agency.

Learning and contacts from the Pakistan trip have helped to inform ongoing links and actions between the East Lancashire/Derby and Pakistani young people, and it is expected that these links will continue long into the future.

Safety and security

Safety and security were paramount to this trip. Crucially, the group's project leader Stuart Wroe is an experienced Global Youth Work practitioner, with over 10 years of experience in designing, planning and leading global learning projects for young people from the UK and many other countries. Stuart has led youth groups to and across India, Thailand, South African townships and post-conflict Sierra Leone; he has also undertaken security training provided by the International Red Cross. The most important source of information and guidance was the FCO's guidelines and advice on staying safe, secure and healthy and avoiding problem situations. This advice helped the group to stay away from 'flashpoints' once in Pakistan. More specifically, the delegation leader Stuart had consulted the FCO's Pakistan Bilateral Team and colleagues at regular intervals in preparing risk assessments and in planning the project.

In addition, Stuart and three members of staff met with senior consulate staff for Pakistan based in Manchester to make them aware of the visit. The consulate staff agreed to provide assistance to the group by contacting counterparts or government departments in case of emergency while the group was in Pakistan.

The staff also had other experts in the region who could advise the group on how to stay safe and avoid problem situations – specifically, International Alert staff based in Pakistan who alerted the group to the aforementioned drone attack and academics at the University of Gujrat.

In addition, robust risk assessments approved by Lancashire County Council were undertaken in country and in the UK.

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Promoting Positive Diaspora Voices

Section 3: Session plans



This section provides a set of session plans that youth practitioners can adapt and use in their own work or for consideration when working with young people from diaspora communities. Our youth practitioners have selected some of their most interesting sessions to show how the topic of conflict and development can be explored with young people.

The session plans address the following themes:

1. Our personal identity, relationship with conflict and conflict local to us
2. Building an understanding of international conflict
3. Exploring the cross-cutting conflict issues of gender, inequality and taking social action

1. Our personal identity, relationship with conflict and conflict local to us

Name of exercise: Identity island

Time: 90 minutes

Context

This session looks at identity¹ and is designed to be used early in the group sessions process. While the session explores the positive elements of the group's identity as members of a diaspora community, there is also an opportunity to discuss possible negative aspects of that particular identity and the potential for conflict at these times.

Aim

To explore self-identity, how the young people perceive identity and what makes them feel proud of their identity; also to discuss approaches to welcoming people from different cultures or with different identities

Learning outcomes

At the end of this exercise, participants will have:

- Explored the different aspects of identity – race, religion, gender, age, ethnicity, language
- Examined what makes the young people feel proud of their personal identity
- Explored what elements make the young people feel negative about their identity and how to overcome these
- Discussed different approaches to welcoming people from different cultures or with different identities
- Discussed how to help each other become more confident about personal identity

Number of participants: 20

Instructions

1. **(10 minutes)** Introduce the session.
2. **(70 minutes)** Introduce the 'identity island' (rug).
Ask the young people to move onto the 'island' if they identify with any of the 'categories' called out (such as male, female, British, Pakistani – or identify some key identities to reflect your own group).

If the young people join the island, ask them what makes them feel proud of their identity (e.g. being female/male/British/Pakistani, etc.). The young people should discuss it from all different angles and open up as individuals as to why they are proud.

You should then ask the young people if they have ever felt pain or were negative about that particular identity, encouraging them to discuss this.

Ask the young people if they can think of ways in which to overcome these issues and get them to explore these in more detail.

3. **(10 minutes)** Ask the young people to discuss and evaluate the activity.

Key points

The aim is to emphasise positive aspects of identity and highlight identified solutions to any negative aspects.

Access and Inclusion

Ensure that a fair gender balance is achieved – not just in terms of parity in numbers, but also in terms of equality in participation and ensuring that the voices of young women as well as young men are heard and responded to.

Any specific health & safety/ child protection concerns

As the session involves young people gathering together on a rug, this needs to be managed.

Resources needed: Large rug

1. Devised by Megs Binns of the University of Cumbria

Name of exercise: Exploring conflict and peace

Time: About 30 minutes

Context

This session is ideal to use at an early stage of exploring conflict and peace. The session will enable young people to explore in a fun and creative way issues of conflict and peace both here in the UK and around the world. It will also enable the practitioner to assess the interest, level of knowledge and range of experiences within the group on these topics.

Aim

To gain an understanding of young people's views on conflict

Access and Inclusion

This activity is a visual activity that overcomes language barriers.

Learning outcomes

At the end of this exercise, participants will have:

- Developed their understanding of the concepts of 'conflict' and 'peace'
- Acknowledged their peers' views

Any specific health & safety/ child protection concerns

None

Number of participants: 16 people divided into four groups

Resources needed

Paper and pens
Recyclable materials such as newspapers, magazines, colour charts

Instructions

1. **(5 minutes)** Divide the big group into four small groups.
2. **(10 minutes)** Each group should produce a collage:
 - Group one and two should create a collage with pictures illustrating conflict.
 - Group three and four should create a collage with pictures illustrating peace.
 - Try to avoid giving a definition of either peace or conflict. It will be up to each group to discuss for themselves what they mean by these terms.
 - Circulate among the groups as they undertake the activity and encourage everyone to take part.
3. **(3 minutes)** After each group has finished their collage, ask them to present their collages to the rest of the group. Encourage other members to ask questions about what has been included.
4. **(4 minutes)** With each group try to establish:
 - How did the group work together? Was it easy or difficult?
 - What types of images did they choose? Why?
 - For the groups looking at conflict, ask them about the types of conflict they included (personal, ethnic or religious, civil or inter-country, conflict with military or between people).
5. **(5–10 minutes)** If there is enough energy, discuss as a whole group the ways in which the images on conflict and peace are similar and different.

Key points

Perceptions of conflict and peace will vary between people. This activity says more about what we think of as conflict or peace than providing any 'true' definition.

Other notes to support delivery

Try to get a wide variety of newspapers (both broadsheet and tabloid). If possible, source newspapers from other counties or from the British ethnic minority press (e.g. *The Voice*, *Asian Eye*).

Name of exercise: Personal and local aspects of conflict

Time: 90 minutes

Context

This session should be used early in the group sessions process to consider local aspects of conflict and the participants' personal responses to, and experiences of, this. As the conflicts and issues under discussion are real-life local and personal issues for the young people and their community, this session needs to be facilitated sensitively.

Access and Inclusion

Ensure that a fair gender balance is achieved – not just in terms of parity in numbers, but also in terms of equality in participation and ensuring that the voices of young women as well as young men are heard and responded to.

Aim

To consider local aspects of conflict and the young people's personal responses to, and experiences of, this

Learning outcomes

At the end of this exercise, participants will have:

- Considered local aspects of conflict
- Explored their personal responses to, and experiences of, conflict

Any specific health & safety/ child protection concerns

As the session involves discussion of conflict processes, there is an inherent danger that the exercise may add to these tensions and/or create conflict.

Number of participants: 20

Resources needed

Sets of photographs illustrating conflict issues locally
(Note: in a session undertaken in Lancashire in 2012, the following were used: CCTV coverage of the Manchester riots, of a young Asian man throwing bottles at the police in the Burnley riots, of a member of the English Defence League burning a piece of paper with Arabic script on it; and a photo of a local street)

Instructions

- (5 minutes)** Break the group into small(er) groups and introduce the session.
- (40 minutes)** Give each group a set of photographs with no explanation of the context of the photograph:
 - Allow each group 10 minutes to describe what is going on in each photograph.
 - Ask them to discuss how the photograph illustrates aspects of conflict locally.
- (35 minutes)** Discussion:
 - Taking each scenario in turn, ask the young people to give their response to the conflict featured.
 - Ask them if they have any personal experience of the issue(s) under discussion.
- (10 minutes)** Future actions:
 - Ask the young people what can be done to address some of the issues under discussion.

Key points

The conflicts and issues under discussion are real-life local and personal issues for the young people and their community. Therefore, they are best placed to identify what can be done to address some of the issues under discussion.

Name of exercise: Conflict mapping**Time:** 90 minutes**Context**

This session should be used once the group has formed and levels of trust are established. In mapping conflict patterns – and as the conflicts and issues under discussion are real-life local and personal issues for the young people and their community – this needs to be facilitated sensitively.

Aim

To map conflict patterns within the community

Access and Inclusion

This activity includes elements made anonymous by replacing family names with numbers and letters on sheets of paper – this should help to facilitate a more open discussion and to avoid more open confrontation.

Learning outcomes

At the end of this exercise, participants will have:

- Identified and discussed positive and negative links between groups within the community and identified sources of conflict
- Started to identify causes and effects of conflict within the community

Any specific health & safety/child protection concerns

As the session involves discussion of conflict processes, there is an inherent danger that the exercise may add to these tensions and/or create conflict.

Number of participants: 20

Resources needed

Rugs, red wool, green wool, plain card (A5), post-it notes, pens, camera

Instructions

1. **(10 minutes)** Discuss maps, their purposes and the various types.
2. **(10 minutes)** Introduce the idea of a conflict map:
Even the simplest interpersonal conflict has many elements. Conflicts involving many groups, numbers of people and complex relationships can be difficult to understand. The conflict map helps us to visualise the conflict.
3. Map the area:
(15 minutes) – Use rugs to denote bounded geographical areas so the young people can create a 3D map of the area and place themselves on this area.
(10 minutes) – Using the A5 cards, get the groups (be they families, gangs or other groupings involved) to write letters or numbers to identify themselves and place them on the appropriate rug.
(10 minutes) – Within each rug area, identify and discuss positive links between the groups of young people using the green wool.
(5 minutes) – Within each rug area, identify and discuss negative links between the groups of young people using the red wool.
– Discuss the causes of the conflict and use post-it notes to attach the cause to the wool.
(5 minutes) – Ask the rug groups to then identify and discuss across rug areas positive and negative links between groups using green or red wool.
(10 minutes) – Again, discuss the causes of the conflict and use post-it notes to attach the cause to the wool.
4. **(10 minutes)** Discussion:
Stepping back from the exercise and the map, discuss the process and the resultant map. Are there any key themes emerging? Are there any possible solutions beginning to emerge? How can we use the information identified to plan future sessions and actions?
5. Discuss future actions.
6. **(5 minutes)** Record the conflict map (photographically).

Key points

Even the simplest interpersonal conflict has many elements. Conflicts involving many groups, numbers of people and complex relationships can be difficult to understand.

2. Building an understanding of international conflict

Name of exercise: Challenging perspectives on armed international conflicts

Time: 115 minutes

Context

This session should be used once the group has been introduced to and discussed how conflict occurs, for example, on an individual or personal level. It seeks to build on previous discussions and to start looking at how conflict happens on an international level.

Aim

To increase knowledge about the processes and interconnected nature of issues relating to international armed conflicts

Access and Inclusion

These activities may need to be approached much more cautiously or avoided if the participants have direct personal experience of armed conflicts.

Learning outcomes

At the end of this exercise, participants will have:

- Increased their understanding of the different ways in which people can view the same issues and of the need to respect these differences
- Improved their awareness of International Humanitarian Law (IHL)
- Learned to understand the complex interplay between the actors involved in armed conflicts

Any specific health & safety/ child protection concerns

None

Number of participants: 6–30 persons

Resources needed

- Flipchart paper and pens
- Masking tape and a large clear space for the mapping activity
- Printouts of War Games scenarios
- IHL scenarios printed and cut up individually
- Carousel statements
- Printouts of 'bin the negative thoughts' template

Instructions

- (10 minutes)** Establish ground rules for the activity.
- (5 minutes)** War Games:
Use the extract linked to this plan to prompt participants into a discussion and ask them to vote after each of the three statements. After all three statements, reflect on the activity and key things that participants have taken from it.
- (10 minutes)** IHL activity – what breaks IHL?
Again using the document attached to this session, hand out the full list of scenarios to small groups or pairs and ask the groups to state which scenarios are breaking IHL and which are not. Then reveal to the groups which cases are actual breaches and which are not. Follow this with a whole group discussion.
- (30 minutes)** Carousel discussion activity:
Arrange the group into two groups of equal numbers. Get one group to form a circle and face outwards. Get the second group to place themselves on the outside of this circle facing someone from the inner circle. The group on the inner circle are for and the other against the issue in question. Then read out topical statements such as 'conflict will always exist' and 'greed is at the root of all conflict'. Allow one group one minute to make their argument with no interruptions, and then allow the next group to do the same. Then ask the circles to rotate so that they are facing someone different and repeat this after each statement. After the activity, allow participants an opportunity to reflect and to give feedback.

Continued on following page

Instructions continued

5. (50 minutes) Conflict mapping:

Depending on the space you have for this activity, divide the participants into a number of groups. Using the masking tape, place four to six pieces of flipchart paper (again related to space available) onto the floor and secure them together in place. Give each group time to decide on a conflict they want to explore. Then hand them pens and the 'key' to various symbols. Explain how they need to dissect the selected conflict and to map the people involved as well as their relationships with each other. Allow some time for this. You may need to go to each group to make sure they understand the task. Once all groups are finished, ask everyone to gather around each conflict map as the group explains it and to encourage questions.

6. (10 minutes) Bin those negative thoughts final activity:

Using the template provided, pass a copy to each participant. Explain that conflict can be a difficult topic to explore and that it might be helpful to write down all our negative thoughts and then to ceremoniously rip them up and throw them away.

Key points

This session involves many activities, most of which deal with quite heavy topics. It is helpful therefore to ensure that the activities are fast-paced and to have some back-up fun activities prepared in case people start to disengage.

Other notes to support delivery

- IHL activity related to British Red Cross activities such as the ones found on this link: <http://www.redcross.org.uk/What-we-do/Protecting-people-in-conflict>
- The War Games extract is from the book *War Games*, written by Linda Polman

Name of exercise: Exploring conflict with a drama-focused session

Time: 140 minutes

Context

This session aims to encourage the group to look at the conflict from different viewpoints, possibly taking them out of their comfort zones and requiring them to work closely together as a team. This session plan might be too much at the beginning of the work – that is, at the connecting stage, when people are still quite shy and more relationship building needs to be done first.

Aim

- To increase empathy with what it might be like to live in a conflict zone
- To increase confidence and team building

Access and Inclusion

It is important for learners to have discussions about what they know or to recap the information already explored about the conflict before they begin. This will ensure that everybody is starting the session from a similar place.

Learning outcomes

At the end of this exercise, participants will:

- Have a greater sense of empathy with people experiencing conflicts and an increased understanding of conflict
- Feel more confident in expressing themselves, especially in expressing their thoughts on the particular conflict

Any specific health & safety/child protection/code of practice concerns

Make sure the space is clear of any possible hazards during the activities, especially the drama-based games.

Number of participants: 10–20 persons

Resources needed

- Equipment to play music
- Any information from previous discussions to help inform, refresh and stimulate renewed interest
- Flipchart paper, A4 paper, biros and marker pens
- Items for performance props (optional)
- Prompt cards and/or questions that could stimulate discussions around different roles and experiences of conflict

Instructions

- (10 minutes)** Musical statues:
Start the session by playing musical statues. Play some music or if the young people have music on their phones (and you have speakers), let them play their music. Encourage the group to dance along and when the music stops to stay frozen in that position; if they move, they're out.
- (20 minutes)** Recap on the previous conflict-related information/discussions. Or if starting to explore a new conflict, get the young people to work in groups of 3–4 to map out what they know. Then bring all the groups back together to give feedback.
- (10 minutes)** Acting warm-up game:
Have the group stand in a circle but facing away from each other. Explain that when you shout out an emotion, you want them all to turn around and act out that emotion as they see it. Do this a number of times – for example, using sad, happy, disappointed, hurt, excited emotions. If it seems applicable at the time, get the group to reflect on differences, similarities, etc.

Continued on following page

Instructions continued

- 4. (30 minutes) Write a rap/poem/advert:**
Get the group to break into smaller groups of about 3–4 young people. Once they are in their groups, ask them to agree on something they all love and something they all dislike. Then tell the groups they need to work together to create either a rap, poem or advert. Once the groups are ready, get them to perform their pieces to each other. Ensure that all the groups show plenty of positive support to each other.
- 5. (45 minutes) Create a performance:**
Following on from the previous activities, break the group into two. Ask the groups to come up with a performance piece related to the conflict they have been exploring. This performance can involve some poetry, music, acting and props – wherever their creativity takes them. Once they are in their groups, they might need considerable support to develop their ideas. You may need some prompt questions related to the conflict they have been exploring – such as ‘how do you think the different people in the conflict feel?’ or ‘what do you think is a daily occurrence in the conflict area you have been learning about?’ This kind of activity is really effective at getting young people to think about how lots of different people involved might be feeling, their different experiences, etc. Therefore, having some prompt cards or questions to hand can really support this process. Once the groups are ready, encourage them to perform and to give feedback to each other.
- 6. (25 minutes) Agree/Disagree evaluation:**
Provide the group with a list of evaluation statements – such as ‘this session has helped me to understand the conflict better’ and ‘drama is a good way to learn more about how people might experience things’. Divide the room in two – one side for those who agree, the other side for those who disagree and the middle for those who are unsure. Read out the statement and ask the participants to place themselves in the part of the room that relates to how they feel. Encourage people to explain why they have stood where they have. It is a good idea to record this either by taking a note of the numbers in each place and some of the reasons given or by photographing it.

Key points

Some people might need more encouragement than others, as drama-based activities can be challenging even for the most confident people. If necessary therefore, allow more time for the warm-up activities to help people build up their confidence.

3. Exploring cross-cutting conflict issues

Name of exercise: Exploring gender equality

Time: 100 minutes

Context

This session aims to enable the group to think about and be challenged on their views on gender and gender equality. The activity should be used when a level of trust is built up between the group, as there is likely to be views that stem from a person's own identity and beliefs that may make some people defensive or angry.

Aim

- To introduce the main issues considered within the gender equality challenge
- To encourage discussion and sharing regarding participants' understanding of gender equality
- To introduce some national (UK) and global statistics related to gender equality

Access and Inclusion

It is important to emphasise that everyone should feel safe and free to express their thoughts and that this is crucial for learning to take place. Topics such as gender equality are closely linked to people's sense of self/identity and consequently can lead to emotive, impassioned discussions and risk of conflict. Establishing ground rules at the start of the session, re-emphasising everyone's right to express themselves and, if possible, having a facilitator in each small group to monitor how people are participating will all help to manage this.

Some of the images that help to illustrate the sexualisation of women in media/advertising can be deemed inappropriate/shocking to some young people – therefore they should be chosen wisely. It is important to encourage discussion but to do this within safe parameters for the young people.

Learning outcomes

At the end of this exercise, participants will have:

- Improved their understanding of the broad issues related to the gender equality discussion
- Increased their awareness of the ways in which women are affected by gender inequality both nationally (UK) and globally

**Any specific health & safety/
child protection concerns**

None

Number of participants:

No less than 6 persons, but no more than 30

Resources needed

- Opinion finder forms
- Images (cut into an appropriate number of pieces for the size of the group)
- List of statistics (divided into an appropriate number for the size of the group)
- Flipchart paper and marker pens
- Cards showing the names of inspiring women and men, and the reasons why this is so, to hand to participants at the end

Instructions

1. **(10 minutes)** Give introductions and ask the group to name the most inspiring person they know.
2. **(30 minutes)** Opinion finders:
Use the attached documents or adjust the statements to fit the group. Hand these out at random and explain that each person needs to survey everyone else in the group on the statement they have. Once this is complete, ask them to re-group with others that have the same statement and to discuss their findings. Give the groups a flipchart and pens so they can jot down their key findings and thoughts to report to the rest of the group. Ask each group to give feedback on their statement to the whole group and encourage questions.

Continued on following page

Instructions continued

3. (30 minutes) Jigsaw pictures:

Provide a selection of images that will stimulate discussions about gender equality (a couple of examples are attached). Cut the pictures into pieces for the same number of participants and distribute them at random. Inform the group that they need to find the other people who have the missing pieces to the picture. Once they are in their groups, ask them to discuss the images. What do they think of the image? Is it a positive or negative image? Give introductions and ask the group to name the most inspiring person they know.

4. (20 minutes) Gender equality statistics:

Using the same groups from the previous activity, hand out a selection of statistics to each group. Ideally, if their previous discussions are related to one of the statistics, give the group that statistic. Encourage the groups to discuss the statistics and then ask everyone to give feedback as a whole group.

5. (10 minutes) Inspiring people:

Provide a selection of cards, one for each participant, showing the name of someone who has been active in striving for gender equality. If participants want to, they can read out their card to the whole group.

Key points

- We can all play a positive role in trying to bring about gender equality – both women and men, and personally, locally, nationally and even globally.
- The campaign for greater gender equality is not about ‘man bashing’ or detracting from the challenges that men face in their lives.

Other notes to support delivery

- Facts and statistics on gender equality: <http://ukfeminista.org.uk/take-action/facts-and-statistics-on-gender-inequality>
- Inequality statistics: <http://www.womankind.org.uk/about/why-women/statistics/>

Name of exercise: Exploring positive social action

Time: 140–150 minutes

Context

This session aims to introduce the idea of social change to the group and gives examples of change that could happen at the personal, local, national and global levels. While it is best if this session builds on a topic which the group has already been exploring, it can also be used as a standalone session where you stimulate discussion and thought among the young people about creating positive social change. Therefore, there will be activities within this session plan that you may or may not want to use, depending on whether you are building on previous sessions or not.

Aim

- To engage young people in the diverse range of activities that can help to bring about social change
- To empower them to want to take action

Access and Inclusion

The change that we each choose to engage in is very personal and sometimes it might prove to be a sensitive issue. Therefore, emphasise the point that engaging in change activities at any level is great. Encourage the participants to reflect on what they are capable of right now. This could be at a personal, local, national or even global level. Also, point out that things change with each cause and at different points throughout our lives. For instance, participants may be currently studying for exams, so they can take some personal actions now, doing more later in the holidays, such as starting a local campaign. It is important that the group knows that there is no right or wrong action – it is about what works best for them at the moment.

Learning outcomes

At the end of this exercise, participants will:

- Be aware of the variety of ways in which individuals and groups can engage in positive social change activities
- Have examples of change activities that they could get involved in

Any specific health & safety/ child protection concerns

None

Number of participants:
8–20 persons

Resources needed

- Flipchart paper and at least four different-coloured markers
- YouTube videos:
 - Where is the Love (arms fair) (10.33 minutes): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KsBOYZk-VrY>
 - Invisible Children rough-cut trailer (2.38 minutes): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cp3kgDVVEZo>
- Laptop, projector, white screen and internet access
- Video stimulus questions
- Coloured cards for postcards or actual postcards if you have the budget
- Post-it notes and pens

Instructions

1. (10 minutes) Icebreaker – famous changemakers:

You can run this activity in three ways, depending on which way you think will suit your group best. Start by asking the young people to think of someone whom they regard as an inspiring 'changemaker' – someone who they believe has contributed to making the world a better place. Inform them that this can be anyone, but should ideally be a person that the others in the group can guess. Here are the three different ways you can run this activity:

(a, b, and c – 10 minutes) a. Ask each young person to draw the person they are thinking of in a Pictionary style game. Encourage the others to try to guess who it is. Then ask some questions about the changemaker, why they picked them, etc.

b. Ask the young people not to tell anyone which person they have chosen as their changemaker. Then go around the group one by one while the rest of the group ask questions that will hopefully help them to work out who the changemaker is.

c. Break the group into pairs and give each person in the pair one minute to tell the other about their chosen changemaker. Then ask the whole group to give feedback, with the people in pairs describing what the other has said rather than describing their own choice.

Instructions continued

2. **(40 minutes)** Personal, Local, National, Global (PLNG) carousel:
Have four separate pieces of flipchart paper. On one piece write 'Personal' in the centre, on another write 'Local', on the third write 'National' and on the final piece write 'Global'. Divide the group into four smaller groups and give each group a sheet of flipchart paper in the order of personal, local, national and global. Then give each group marker pens. If possible, designate each group a particular colour, such as green, blue, red and black. Inform the group that they have one minute to write as many different ways of creating positive change as they can for the particular theme in front of them. Keep the pace quick and as soon as one minute is up, move the paper around to the next group. Repeat this three times until the original paper arrives back to the group it started with. Give the group a couple of minutes to look at what the other groups have added to the sheet. Then discuss if there is anything they had not thought of or anything they disagree with. After this, each group should present their findings back to the whole group.

3. **(40 minutes)** Is change possible?
Bring the whole group together to watch the YouTube video clips and then ask them 'is change possible?' If they agree, they should stand up, but if they disagree they should remain seated. If you can, make a note of the numbers. Distribute the video clip prompt sheets and ask the young people to consider the questions as they watch the video clips. The first video clip – 'Where is the Love?' – shows an example of local and national change in which a group of young people got involved. After the clip, ask the group what they thought of it, especially using the prompt questions they were given. Then show the second clip – the 'Invisible Children' trailer. Follow the same process as before. Leave some time at the end for people to reflect on both situations.

Does the group plan to organise a change activity together? If not, skip to the promise postcards activity.

4. **(10 minutes)** Action planning and troubleshooting:
Is there consensus in the group on what they want to do to tackle the issue they are concerned about? If not, then this is a good place to start. Ask them what do they want to tackle: change, raising awareness, campaigning or fundraising? Once they know what they are working towards, or if they already have a topic, divide the group into smaller working groups to discuss actions they could take. Then, as a whole group, decide on an action. The group can use sticky dots to vote and see which activity gets the most votes. Then divide the group into action groups with agreed roles and responsibilities.

5. **(10 minutes)** Promise postcards:
Produce your postcards – either ones you have designed, ones the young people can make themselves or actual postcards if you have them. Ask the group to think about what they have explored during the session. Ask them to think about what they would like to achieve in terms of an action in three months' time. Then ask them to write this on the postcard and to address it to themselves. You will need to post these out to them in three months' time, or if you are still in contact with the group, you can return the postcards to them in person.

6. **(10 minutes)** Change handout and evaluation:
Pass around the attached handout developed by Global Education Derby to give different examples of personal, local, national and global change (part of a three-year youth project). Give the group one orange post-it note and one green post-it note. Ask them to write what they think worked really well in the session on the green post-it note. Finally, ask them to think about what could be changed or done differently to improve the session, writing this on the orange post-it note.

Key points

Try to keep the activities upbeat and positive. Talking about social change can feel overwhelming. Many people feel disempowered and disenfranchised when they think about trying to change the issues they see in the world around them. Ideally, you should use this session to illustrate all the positive change that is going on around the world at lots of different levels, with the aim of inspiring and empowering the young people to begin their own social change journeys.

Other notes to support delivery

See attached documents for video clip prompt questions and the change handout.