

Peace & Justice

Building a culture of peace in Scotland



Peacebuilders Programme

Peace & Justice's *PeaceBuilders* team envisions a world where adults and children work together to co-create ways of living that care for the Earth and all life. We work to accompany schools towards this vision, to develop a culture of peace: **nurturing environments that support intrinsic motivation, embodying values of welcome, dealing with conflict constructively, and working together cooperatively.**

Our *Cooperative Games and Conflict Resolution* course was started in 2014 by Elena Ramos. Elena ran workshops with youth groups on the Nonviolencia en la Educacion programme in Columbia, building peace in the midst of civil war. Since then we have run the programme in 25 schools and worked with 52 class groups in Edinburgh, recently expanding to include Glasgow schools. Our robust Facilitator training and mentoring programme ensures professional delivery of the programme.

COVID guidelines restrict outside visitors and it is currently difficult for our facilitators to work in schools we have made a series of short videos, together with a manual for teachers to use in the classroom, based on our Cooperative Games and Conflict Resolution course. Teachers across Scotland can use these films to help children talk about their experience of the pandemic and lockdown, as well as providing a full PeaceBuilders programme that can be accessed at any time. See a 6 minute sample [clip of the videos here](#).

Our *Cooperative Games* and *Collaborative Classrooms* courses both deliver workshops in Primary schools. Through dynamic play and quiet reflection, we facilitate the development of skills for cooperation and conflict resolution. Responding to learning outcomes identified in the curriculum for excellence, the programmes help children age 5 to 12 gain the skills required to establish positive relationships, improve communication, enhance their ability to work cooperatively, and address conflict constructively. The [Facilitators' Manual is here](#).

The new *Collaborative Classrooms* course builds on *Cooperative Games*. We work with teachers, staff and pupils with whom we have worked previously and provide bespoke trainings in Nonviolent Communication, a Restorative Approach to Conflict Resolution, Circle Keeping and Peer Mediation to meet the needs of the particular class group while building toward a whole school approach.

Scotland's historic lead in establishing gun control laws has ensured there have been no more Dunblanes while Scotland has led the way with its groundbreaking law prohibiting corporal punishment of children. Peace & Justice is now playing a leading role in Nonviolence and Peace Education in Scotland. This is where building a culture of peace in our world starts.

Peacebuilders and the Curriculum for Excellence

Aims of the Curriculum

The Scottish Government's education strategy recognises that learning is lifelong and aims to help learners develop the skills they need for learning, life, and work. The purpose of the Curriculum for Excellence¹ is to help each child and young person build the relevant attributes and capabilities to achieve their full potential. This is referred to as development of the four capacities; successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors.

Aims of PeaceBuilders

The PeaceBuilders programme works from a holistic approach to the person, developing skills for healthy emotional intelligence. While academic knowledge can be important for preparing us for work and understanding the world, it is our emotional intelligence - how we communicate, understand feelings and needs, work together, and respond to conflict - that supports us to live harmoniously, and contribute to the creation of peaceful communities.

In this ethos, PeaceBuilders' Aims are:

- To enhance harmony and coexistence in the school through the improvement of interpersonal relationships between all members of the school community.
- To reduce the levels of violence in the school community.
- To increase the sense of belonging and welcoming of self-expression for all members of the school community.

PeaceBuilders courses facilitate learning through activities and practices which support development in the four capacities in the following set out in Appendix 1 below. These activities and practices are dispersed throughout the programme's four areas of focus which enable us to translate the desired attributes within the capacities into tangible learning objectives for developing understanding and skills. These four areas are: **Understanding me and others**; **Managing my emotions**, **Improving Communication**, and **Understanding my skills to manage conflict**.

PeaceBuilders is an in-development collaborative team. We work to embody our co-created purpose & values throughout the work that we offer; to practice what we preach as much as we are able. The foundational elements of how we organise our work, and carry it out are available at: [Organisational Foundations document](#).

Fiona Oliver-Larkin. 3 April, 2021

¹ <http://www.gov.scot/resource/doc/226155/0061245.pdf>

Appendix 1. The Four Capacities in the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence

To enable all people to become:

successful learners – with

- enthusiasm and motivation for learning
- determination to reach high standards of achievement
- openness to new thinking and ideas

and able to

- use literacy, communication and numeracy skills
- use technology for learning
- think creatively and independently
- learn independently and as part of a group
- make reasoned evaluations
- link and apply different kinds of learning in new situations

confident individuals – with

- self respect
- a sense of physical, mental and emotional wellbeing
- secure values and beliefs

and able to

- relate to others and manage themselves
- pursue a healthy and active lifestyle
- be self aware
- develop and communicate their own beliefs and view of the world
- live as independently as they can

- assess risk and take informed decisions
- achieve success in different areas of activity

responsible citizens – with

- respect for others
- commitment to participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life

and able to

- develop knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it
- understand different beliefs and cultures
- make informed choices and decisions
- evaluate environmental, scientific and technological issues
- develop informed, ethical views of complex issues

effective contributors – with

- an enterprising attitude
- resilience
- self-reliance

and able to

- communicate in different ways and in different settings
- work in partnership and in teams
- take the initiative and lead
- apply critical thinking in new contexts
- create and develop
- solve problem