Ideas and resources for Youth for Peace projects

Introduction

The Australian Psychological Society’s Psychologists for Peace Interest Group seeks to promote peace at all levels. Some people think of peace as simply the absence of war or violent conflict, and some think of it as tranquility (like “peace and quiet”), but it is more than these. It includes:

- being at peace with yourself (‘inner peace’)
- having peaceful families and relationships (where everyone’s rights are respected and problems are resolved effectively)
- building peaceful communities (where people with different backgrounds and characteristics are respected and people work together for the community), and
- creating a peaceful world (where all people can live healthy peaceful lives in a healthy sustainable world).

Some particular issues that need to be addressed to build a more peaceful world are:

- Culture – e.g. how people from different cultural and faith backgrounds understand each other; why discrimination and racism occur and how it affects those who experience them
- Gender – e.g. how women and girls can still be discriminated against in their families, schools, work and communities; prejudice towards those with different sexual orientations and how it affects them
- Environment – e.g. whether our future natural environment can meet our basic needs for clean water, food and air; how climate change is leading to more frequent and intense natural disasters like floods, droughts, bushfires and cyclones

There are many ways in which young people can contribute to building peace in all of these senses.

Projects can focus at a range of levels. Your project might be focused on local issues, perhaps in your school, sports club or community; at the national level, like refugee or environment policies; or at a global level, like international conflicts, climate change and sustainable development. Or it might involve more than one of these levels (e.g. learning about a global issue, and organising local activities to address it).

Projects can also use a wide range of formats. Some examples are: writing and performing songs, poems or plays; developing a website; writing letters to important people or the media; organising speakers; developing petitions; surveying students’ opinions and feelings about a topic; and raising funds for peace-promoting programs. Again, a project might involve a number of activities with different formats.

It is also important that projects that are seeking to promote peace are run in peaceful ways themselves. This means that all members of the group are respected and heard and problems are resolved peacefully. Research shows that one way to build peace is for people from different backgrounds to work together.

There are many useful resources available that young people can use to help develop their projects. Some of these are listed below. You are also welcome to find your own. All projects which fit the selection criteria will be considered. Be creative!
Some suggested resources

Psychologists for Peace resources

Psychologists for Peace Children’s Peace Literature Award
https://groups.psychology.org.au/awards/literature/?ID=2045

Psychologists for Peace ‘Wise Ways to Win’ picture book


Changing the world: why it fails and what works. | Winnifred Louis ...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AI4eSI-GbXM
TEDx Talks

Australian Psychological Society (APS) Resources

Tip sheets
Moving beyond racism
Climate change – what you can do
Psychological preparation for natural disasters
Talking with children about the environment

Position papers and handbooks
Racism and prejudice
Communicating about violence, peace and social justice

APS - The Climate Change Empowerment handbook

ACTIVATE Infographic Handout

United Nations resources
United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

United Nations Association of Australia http://www.unaa.org.au

UN Refugee Agency http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home

Other resources
The Challenging Racism Project – Western Sydney University
https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/challengingracism/challenging_racism_project

All Together Now http://alltogethernow.org.au

Racism No Way http://www.racismnoway.com.au

Bullying No Way https://bullyingnoway.gov.au


Refugee Council of Australia http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au

Centre for Multicultural Youth http://www.cmy.net.au

Gender violence and Peace by Hannah Wright
The free child project: Engaging young people in changing the world
https://freechild.org/strategies/

Gender Equality is one of the 17 sustainable development goals
http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/#751f89fa361630f60

What is the role of young people in the fight for gender equality? by Ravi Karkara
https://www.youthkiawaaz.com/2015/03/gender-equality/

Australian Youth Climate Coalition http://www.aycc.org.au

AYCC ‘Switched on Schools’ program

GreenPeace lazy person’s guide to saving the world
http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/takeaction/

Jane Goodall's Roots and Shoots https://www.rootsandshoots.org

Global poverty project https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/

Oaktree – Young people leading a movement to end poverty. http://www.oaktree.org

ICAN – International campaign to abolish nuclear weapons (Winners of Nobel Peace Prize 2017) http://www.icanw.org