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THE EMPOWERMENT OF PUPILS:
A FRAMEWORK FOR EDUCATORS

CEJI

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The A CLASSROOM OF DIFFERENCE™-Diversity Education Network
Working Group on
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Presents

THE EMPOWERMENT OF PUPILS:

A FRAMEWORK FOR EDUCATORS

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Introduction

Diversity, peace and citizenship education programmes have been recognized as a valuable resource in the construction of effective multicultural schools and societies. With a wide variety of methods and resources, these programmes share similar values:

- Human rights
- Active participation
- Equality
- Diversity
- Intercultural learning
- Social responsibility
- Democracy
- Non-violence

Some schools may want to implement a diversity, peace or citizenship education programme to teach pupils how to behave better and thus succeed. Others may see it as a last resort for dealing with social conflicts, or "problem" pupils. In these situations, teachers are the holders of knowledge and good judgment.

In essence, commitment to the practice of diversity, peace and citizenship education shifts the locus of knowledge from teachers to pupils. Teachers become facilitators of young people's learning and their participation in the learning of the class.

It is critical to create an environment where all pupils can succeed, and this raises a whole range of questions dealing with cultural identities, social structures, and educational methods. Part of the purpose of diversity, peace and citizenship education is to provide a forum for exploring such key questions in society today, pupils with pupils, pupils with teachers, teachers with administrators, and all with parents.

Empowerment is a key concept in diversity, peace and citizenship education programmes. It is also a complex concept that does not easily translate, literally speaking, into many languages. Nevertheless, it is a concept that has been explored at length in a variety of disciplines and countries, particularly in psychology, sociology and politics. Empowerment is something done with others, not for others, and permits them to set goals, build strategies, develop competencies, and have control over their own destinies.

To empower means:
1. **to enable (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)**
2. **to promote the self-actualization or influence of (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)**
3. **to give someone official authority or the freedom to do something (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary)**

Why Work with Youth?

Youth have generally been interpreted as a 'social problem.' Research and discourse have focused on unemployment, violence, and crime, especially in relation to 'black' or 'immigrant' youth, or in relation to white adolescent racism. However, as many negative social images there are in relation to youth, there is also increasing evidence that youth are living diversity in a way that their parents are only just learning how to do.

Children raised in the 70s, 80s and 90s have been provided with a broad range of cultural images. While negative stereotypes and racism persist, 'black culture' is revered in the media and the arts. Young people have more opportunities at an earlier age to see and interact with others who are visibly 'different'. They are on one hand vulnerable to racist ideologies and discourse, but they are also shown anti-racist alternatives from which to choose from.

We assert that youth are co-creators in society and culture, shaping the environments in which we live, responding to modernity, stimulating contemporary cultural changes, and ultimately inheriting and adapting the social systems that are currently in place. As one expert in the field puts it, "young people are at the crossroads of the process of social reproduction."[1]

Recognised or not by adults and institutions, youth have an influence on the environments in which they live. In addition, children and youth are at a pivotal stage in their moral and cognitive development, making them a key focus of educational initiatives. Thus, it is a social responsibility of adults and institutions to educate and support pupils to meet their current and future challenges as citizens.

The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2447 (13 November 1981) acknowledged that "the problems that young people face, after all, are merely reflections of the larger problems of society," and it affirmed the critical roles of institutions and youth in addressing these problems.

"It is important that those who are responsible for making decisions or policies that affect youth begin a dialogue with young people, either through direct meetings or through the structures offered by youth organisations and educational institutions, so that they may become better sensitised to youth perspectives. It should be a primary aim of such dialogue to encourage young people to contribute to decision-making and to take an active part in efforts for the development of their societies. Such a process would also aim at encouraging a view of youth as positive, active and creative participants in society, able to contribute to its multilateral development."[2]

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[1] Andy Furlong and Fred Cartmel, *Young People and Social Change* (Buckingham, U.K.: Open University Press, 1997), 2.

[2] "Resolution 20 of the Resolutions on Youth Rights", in William D. Angel (ed) *The International Law of Youth Rights* (The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, ©1995)

A Key Developmental Period

Youth are also at a key period of human development. The span of age that is encompassed in the broad use of the term "youth" is critical for an individual's growth into a healthy, active adult. Besides experiencing incredible biological changes, adolescents and young adults reach near or full maturity of their cognitive, moral and psychosocial development during this time period. This age range is especially important for the development of one's identity and relationship to the self, others, and the surrounding culture. While many of these processes continue throughout an individual's life span, as she or he continually reaches a deeper and more refined understanding of self, it is an accelerated process during adolescence and young adulthood.

Understanding processes of psychosocial, moral and cognitive development can highlight skill-building opportunities across curricular disciplines that contribute towards an empowering diversity education.

Psychosocial Development
School challenges children to develop new social and cognitive skills. It is a central forum within which children develop their self-image and sense of self-esteem, through 1) testing out personal competencies by actively meeting the objective challenges set by school, home, and the self; 2) developing a sense of belonging to a society larger than the family of origin; and 3) practicing social skills, self-discipline and moral conscience. As children meet these new challenges, a sense of competence and self-confidence emerges, and a sense of belonging to and acceptance by the community. A healthy, positive self-esteem is critical to an individual's success in life. An environment that inadequately supports a child's development can set the stage for feelings of inferiority, seriously affecting entry into adolescence. [3]

"The school-age child actively constructs a personal view of the world and selects a response to it, based on a sense of self and of the rules and conventions that govern the world" [4]

> Childhood – by age 6, the healthy child has developed a strong sense of the self as separate from significant people in the family. The challenge of the school-age period is to elaborate the dimensions of that self through association with people like oneself, emphasizing the process of belonging and fostering self-acceptance by determining that "I am like others."

> Young Adolescent—pubescent, concerned about the normalcy and acceptability of the emerging adult body, emotions, and skills.

> Middle Adolescent – begins around 14 or 15, cutting the psychological umbilical cord with parents, experimenting with alternative roles, initiates the search for self-knowledge. New moral dilemmas, differing value systems, and peer pressures for conformity challenge one's ability to "fit in" academically and socially.

> Older Adolescent – around 17 or 18, begins to assume increased responsibility for personal behavior and its consequences, and consciously works on acquiring the academic, occupational, personal, and social skills deemed essential to adult living.

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[3] Ibid.
[4] W. Damon and D. Hart, 'The Development of Self-Understanding from Infancy Through Adolescence', *Child Development*, 53 (1982), 841-864.

During this period one begins to identify those factors most crucial to one's identity, such as an intrinsic value system, sexual orientation, occupational identity, and the meaning of life.

Youth – Adolescence is extended into a fourth stage because of continued financial or social dependence on the family and a delay in assuming responsibilities of career and social relationships while pursuing one's education. However, this does not negate the assumption of internalised responsibility for one's value position, interpersonal relationships, and direction in life.

Psychosocially, adolescence ends when the person finds a comfortable fit between the "I" and a belief system that clarifies the individual's place in an infinite and timeless universe." The person then is able to articulate what he or she believes in or has stood for, and to rise above self-consciousness to a commitment to persons, ideologies, or concerns beyond one's self.[5]

The time period spanning the range of youth is critical for the defining of an individual's identity. The central crisis of one's life, the fifth rung of Erikson's ladder of social-emotional development is the issue of identity. According to Erikson, it is during adolescence that the individual develops the "prerequisites in psychological growth, mental maturation, and social responsibility to experience and pass through the crisis of identity."[6]

Each problem we confront asks us for our identity. The values we use to face the conflicts of life gradually reveal our priorities and shape our behavior. Eventually, all the intangible aspects of self – values, priorities, and ideologies – are identified and integrated into a working philosophy and identity. These three questions are: (1) Who am I? (2) What do I have to offer? (3) What am I going to do with it?

These questions begin to get addressed in healthy individuals during adolescence and young adulthood, providing the foundation of a person's identity. This process continues throughout life as chosen values are re-evaluated or prioritised in light of current problems and situations.

Moral Development
Theories of moral reasoning share some similarities that are worthwhile to note. The first similarity is the assumption that moral development occurs through a fixed number and order of potential stages and that the process is irreversible. It is important to recognise that "movement from one stage to the next can be encouraged (1) through creating cognitive disequilibrium by challenging a child with moral problems for which his/her stage of thinking provides no easy answer, or (2) by presenting the child with moral responses that are one stage higher than his/her own."[7] Theorists also agree, that "social interaction and social experience are major determinants of progression from one stage to another."

Childhood, adolescence and young adulthood are critical for the moral development process of an individual. The fact that this can be aided by family members, educators, youth workers, and others in a young person's environment needs to be valued as an opportunity and strategy to develop social responsibility in youth.

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[5] Schuster and Ashburn, *The Process of Human Development: A Holistic Life-Span Approach* (Philadelphia: Ashburn. B. Lippincott Company, 1992) page 533.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Schuster and Ashburn, *The Process of Human Development: A Holistic Life-Span Approach* (Philadelphia: Ashburn. B. Lippincott Company, 1992), page 456.

In childhood, parents, teachers and other significant adults profoundly affect moral development. They are influenced not only by what they are told, but also by what they see. Modeling of moral decisions and empathy by parents is especially important in the childhood years. As children become adolescents, they begin to develop their independence and assume more responsibility for their own choices and behaviors. This is a critical time in the life of an individual when she or he begins to decide what value system to believe.

Another important element in moral development that can be developed through interaction and education with youth is empathy. Some experts have viewed empathy as the primary motivator for moral judgment. Empathy is the ability to understand the other's emotional response to circumstances, to feel their pain, or anticipate their feelings. Empathy and role-taking enable one to deal with the questions, "What should I do?" and "What is fair, just, and equitable for all concerned?" There are numerous educational and training resources available to develop empathy, an important skill for individuals hoping to make a difference in the world.

Cognitive Development
In the primary and middle school years, there are fundamental developments in children's cognitive capacities that will impact their abilities to understand and interact with differences in society. Faced with differing interpretations of reality by peers and adults, the school-ager begins to recognise differing points of view and to distinguish his own from that of others. Children look for the functional links between objects and events, make inferences, and develop a consistency of reasoning. Many new capacities are developed, including classification, equivalency, creativity, beliefs, and metacognition – "thinking about one's thinking."[8]

According to Piaget, the individual's cognitive structures reach maturity during adolescence, providing youth with the ability to use the same problem-solving approaches as an adult (although still lacking experience). This new cognitive ability, known as *formal operational thought*, make youth ripe for learning about social issues and for understanding their own unique role to play within society.

Formal operational thought is a 'higher-order' process that involves 1) easily moving from the reality of the present to the heights of possibility, 2) abstract reasoning, 3) systematic problem solving, 4) multi-dimensional reasoning, 5) hypothetical-deductive thinking, and 6) thinking about one's own thoughts.[9]

According to Inhelder and Piaget, the most distinctive qualitative dimension of formal operational thought is the new-found ability to deal with the possible as well as the real. Instead of thinking about things as they are, the adolescent can now think about how things might be, could be, or should be.

Adolescents become eager to apply this new cognitive ability of envisioning possibilities to many areas of life, including politics, religion, education, career, sports, social relationships,

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[8] Ibid.
[9] Schuster and Ashburn, *The Process of Human Development: A Holistic Life-Span Approach* (Philadelphia: Ashburn. B. Lippincott Company, 1992).

and development of their own identity. Liberated from reality, the adolescent begins to think about ideas, ideals, ideologies, and ideal states.

This adolescent idealism often leads adults to criticise the adolescent for "living in a dream world or utopia," being "unrealisitc," "impractical," or "out-of-touch with reality." Yet those very ideals are what spur inventions and social change. The most frustrating response to the creative, perhaps idealistic thinker is, "This is the way we have always done it." Rigidity of "the system" can stifle ideas or lead to rebellious behaviors.

Another aspect of formal operational thought that is relevant here is the ability of *social cognition*. Social cognition is the study of how we interpret, analyse, remember, and use information about individuals, groups, and social events. The adolescent's cognitions about social phenomena go beyond the concrete, immediately observable attributes of themselves, others, and social interactions. The adolescent begins to use overt behavior as well as other evidence to make inferences about covert socio-psychological processes and causes that underlie observed behaviors. Also, the adolescent gains the ability to attend to and consider the importance of numerous pieces of social information, whereas the child's cognitions dealt with only the most obvious and highly salient features of the person or event. For example, a child can perceive obvious signs of happiness in someone else. However, the adolescent can detect the subtle, nonverbal clues that indicate that this person's happiness is a forced façade.

There are several tendencies in social cognition that have served very useful purposes, but have also had very negative effects on society, such as prejudice and discrimination. These abilities develop during adolescence and continue throughout adulthood. It is very important to actively develop these abilities in youth so that the negative effects can be avoided. There are four main tendencies in social cognition that are developed during adolescence and have a great impact on an individual's interpretation of reality.[10]

1) Short-cuts in thinking – human coping mechanism to filter the overload of information experienced at every moment. Developed during adolescence, strategies or decision-making principles are used to quickly make inferences or easily draw conclusions.

- The Representative Heuristic: One makes a judgment or inference about a social object based on that object's resemblance to typical cases. It allows you to make a quick "best guess" based on the resemblance between the object and the characteristics of a pre-constructed category. However, errors can occur. Then it functions much like a "stereotype."

- The Availability Heuristic: The individual economizes by making judgments based on how easily an instance comes to mind. Other factors, such as vividness, importance, or distinctiveness of memory information can make the information more cognitively "available."

- Priming: Exposing people to ideas or categories that affect memory information. The individual economizes by using the most accessible category to process the information, rather than searching for a more appropriate category. The ramifications of the priming effect are of notable social consequence if we recognise that behavior often appears quite ambiguous.

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[10] Ibid.

- Theory perseverance: People will cling to their idea or belief even after evidence that once supported their idea is discredited or no longer exists. Here the short cut is achieved by refusing to engage in further cognitive activity.

2) Attribution: Explaining Behavior

When explaining the behaviors of oneself and others, one may attribute the cause of the behavior to the person, to the environment, or to a combination of the two. Attributing the cause of the behavior to the person is an internal or dispositional attribution, and attributing the cause to something in the environment is an external or situational attribution. For example, a student may attribute a failing grade on an exam to poor management of study time or lack of interest in the material – internal attributions. Conversely, the student may believe the exam questions were ambiguously written and the professor did not adequately discuss the material - external attributions. Alternatively, the student may attribute the failure to some combination of the two kinds of attributions.

3) Cognitive Biases and Errors

The tendency for observers to underestimate situational influences and overestimate dispositional influences is called the *Fundamental Attribution Error*. This is fundamental because it affects one's attitudes and behaviors. It suggests that even if we are aware of the situational variables that adversely affect disadvantaged groups (e.g. minorities, the homeless, the physically ill and handicapped, the victims of abuse and violence, and economically and educationally deprived people, to name a few), we may still perceive these individuals to be responsible for their plight.

The tendency to attribute one's own behavior to situational factors and the behavior of others to internal causes is called the *Actor-Observer Effect*. The effect seems in part to result from the actor's perceptual awareness of situational factors. The actor is most aware of the environmental forces acting on him or her. The observers' attention, however, is focused upon the individual. Enhancing awareness that others do behave in an environment that "pushes and pulls" reduces this biased effect. [11]

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[11] Schuster and Ashburn, *The Process of Human Development: A Holistic Life-Span Approach* (Philadelphia: Ashburn. B. Lippincott Company, 1992).

Social Influence

Young people have influence in a variety of sectors of society as social actors. Furthermore, they have great potential to make positive contributions to society and social change processes. They are influenced by, and have influence upon, their schools, families, friends, associations, social services, etc.
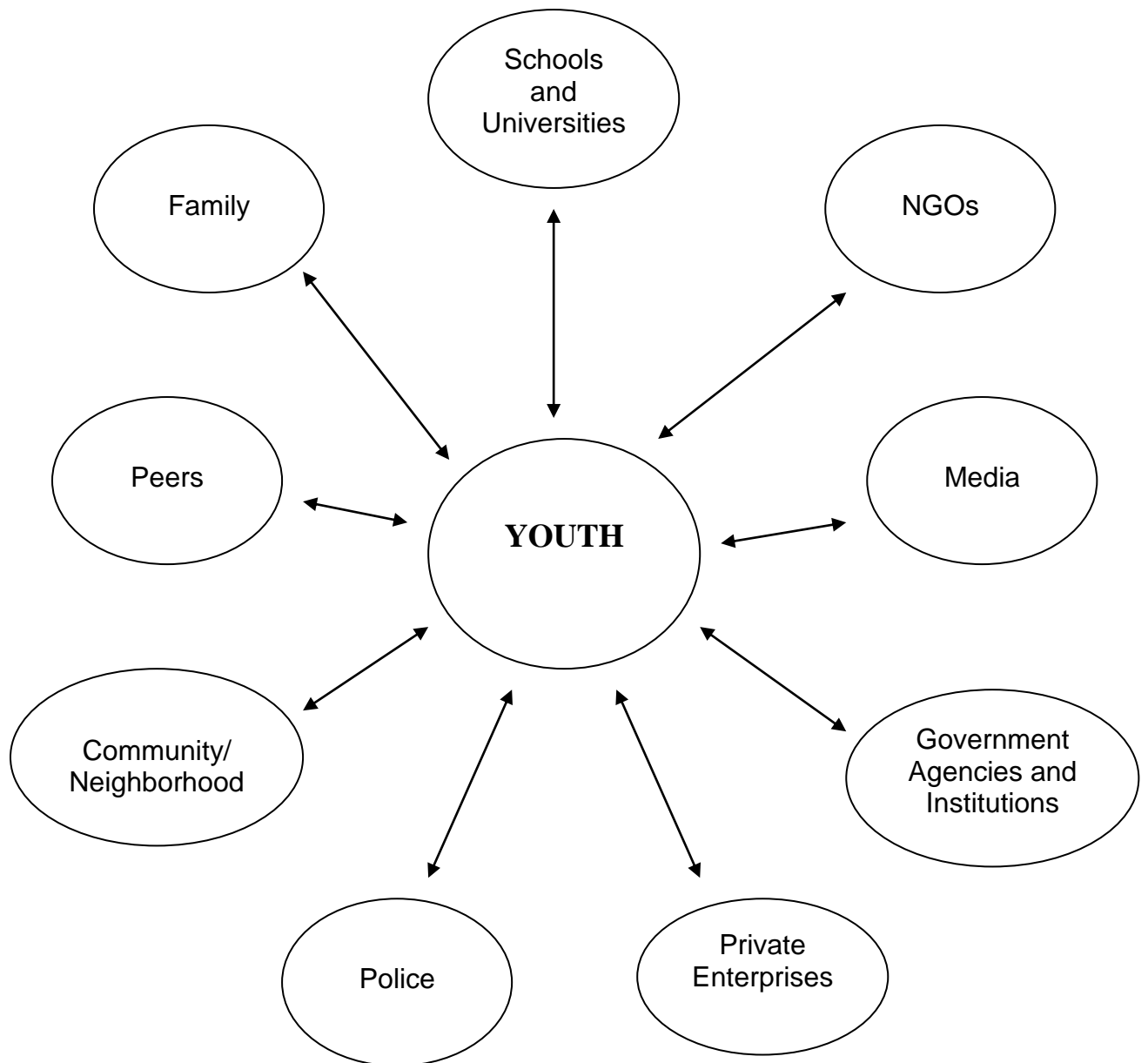
All of the sectors of society identified in the following diagram are interdependent with youth culture, locally and globally. They interact with each other, for good or for bad, intentionally or indirectly, with support or resistance. Many of these interactions are based upon stereotypes of youth, or social systems in which they do not have an empowered voice or influence. Throughout the centuries, youth have heard statements like: *"You are too young to know what's best." "Things have worked this way for ages, what makes you think you can change that?"* Instead, "the opposition of youth to traditional ways of thinking should not be rejected outright. Properly discussed and channeled, the dissent prevalent among youth could help society to renovate itself."[12]

The Encyclopedia of Student and Youth Movements documents hundreds of youth-led social change initiatives dating back to the Middle Ages. Often, these youth initiatives have been an important counterforce to systematic oppression and have energised adults with a spirit of reform. The 1981 General Assembly of the United Nations was "convinced that the enthusiasm, energy and creative ability of the young could be a major factor in the spiritual and material advancement of all peoples, the universal promotion of human rights and world-wide economic and social development."[13]

Educating and supporting youth as change agents of any kind can ultimately inspire a general evolution in the culture at large. Adults, organisations, and institutions can consider youth perspectives and needs when making decisions. If the general youth culture has an intercultural consciousness and demonstrates new competencies to succeed in a diverse world, many other sectors in society will follow. With globalisation at hand, the ability to work in different settings with different people is a necessary skill and an immediate need. By utilising the structures that are interdependent with youth to reach youth, the benefits will bounce right back into the system.

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[12] Resolution 20 of the Resolutions on Youth Rights adopted by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (Source: a seminar organized by the United Nations Division of Human Rights in cooperation with the Government of Yugoslavia at Belgrade, Yugoslavia, 2-12 June 1970)

[13] General Assembly Resolution 2447 (XXII) 13 November 1981 in William D. Angel (ed) *The International Law of Youth Rights* (The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, ©1995)

Youth in Society [14]

A diagram with YOUTH in the center, connected by double-headed arrows to ovals labeled: Schools and Universities, Family, NGOs, Peers, Media, Community/Neighborhood, Government Agencies and Institutions, Police, Private Enterprises.

Schools and Universities
Youth are students and pupils. Schools and universities are perhaps the most influential social institutions on youth beyond the family. The entire school community revolves around young people, including teachers, administrators, non-teaching staff and parents. Schools serve to socialise as well as educate. This is best achieved with the involvement and cooperation of the parents, teachers, and local community.

There are numerous examples of how youth-focused initiatives, such as peer training programmes, have positively influenced the school culture at large. One particular high school in New York City went from front-page headlines for its racial violence to being a nationwide model of violence-prevention. With the support of the Anti-Defamation League A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute, the school implemented a combination of peer mediation and peer education, dealing with stereotyping, prejudice, communication, and self-esteem. As a result, a dynamic group of youth transformed the school environment within a couple of years. Teachers who were previously resistant to youth-led initiatives were inspired by their pupils' enthusiasm and conviction, while violence in the school decreased markedly and some failing students began to pass. Susan Wagner High School has since been featured in conferences, roundtables and the media as a nationwide model of violence prevention and youth participation.

Private Enterprise
In many communities, private enterprise is assuming more responsibility for encouraging students to stay in school by offering mentoring, part-time jobs, and promising employment opportunities on graduation. Because the adolescent is able to get a clearer picture of what he or she could be, the student is more likely to strive for better grades and to complete a basic education, leaving a firmer foundation for adult life. The companies, in return, enjoy a better employee pool.

Also considered private enterprise are charitable foundations, although they are generally non-profit and humanitarian. Youth and education are important priorities for many charitable foundations. The International Youth Foundation (IYF) is a network of 39 partner foundations and organisations in 47 countries and territories, working together for positive youth development on a global scale but each deeply rooted in helping to solve the youth problems in their own country. The IYF and the Ford Foundation joined forces to set up the Forum for Youth Investment, "Helping organisations that invest in youth, invest in change." They launched an initiative to converge the two fields of youth development and community development. "This convergence was being sparked by a common realisation; that young people grow up in communities, not in programmes, and that engaging young people – as programme participants, planners and advocates – is an important component of community building."[15]

Private enterprise includes small businesses, stores, cinemas and cafes, which youth frequent. Like the media, private enterprises view youth as consumers. Youth are buying clothes, music, movies, books, computer and telecommunications equipment, beauty products, etc. etc. Successful businesses are often responding to the demands of youth culture, since youth are the future workers and are already a consumer force.
Few people would deny that corporate marketing is influenced by youth culture.

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[15] Forum for Youth Investment < http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/>

In her recent book <u>No Logo</u>, Naomi Klein dissects the marketing of cool that emerged in the 90s in the United States. After over a decade of recession, Wall Street took a closer look at the brands that flourished: beer, soft drinks, fast food, sneakers, chewing gum and Barbie dolls. This was also the first time in twenty years that the number of teenagers in America increased. Companies that had targeted the baby boomers realised that they had "their eyes on the wrong demographic prize." Marketing studies have quoted the "aspirational age" to be seventeen.[16]

In order to reach the younger demographic, they needed to fashion identities that resonated with youth culture, to make themselves "cool." Companies were relieved to discover a large pool of twenty-somethings hungry to succeed. A new industry of "cool hunters" emerged to scope out trends and styles, to understand what would speak to youth fantasies and projections. "The future CEOs of tomorrow aren't employees, they are, to use a term favored at IBM, 'change agents.'"[17]

Peer pressure emerged as a powerful market force. Many companies hype brands using "street promoters", distributing beer to their friends at parties, or becoming "walking infomercials" for Nike, Reebok and Levi's. The high financial return of this strategy has been called "the magic of peer-to-peer distribution."[18]

Youth have not been completely passive in corporate veneration and exploitation of their culture. Many in the 90s experienced themselves as "victims of a predatory marketing machine that co-opted their identities, styles and ideas and turned them into brand food." This provoked "the rise of brand-based activism: through adbusting, computer hacking and spontaneous illegal street parties, young people all over the world are aggressively reclaiming space from the corporate world, 'unbranding' it, guerilla-style."[19]

It is indisputable that corporate marketing has influenced youth culture. It is also clear that corporate images and practices have been shaped by youth culture. Also, the glorification of youth is used frequently as a marketing tool. Denim jeans are a classic example of how "the media, specifically the world of advertising, constantly scan the youth scene for new identity-forming elements which can be turned into industrial products and disseminated worldwide. In the sixties, denims were often bought in the face of fierce parental opposition. Today, you would not be shocked to find them in old people's homes."[20] Generally, youth have been the passive recipients of this now mutual interdependency between corporate marketing and youth, and companies have profited from an impressionable age group. The fact remains, however, that advertising and the media have re-created themselves in response to the purchasing power of youth.

Media
Including advertising, music, television, radio, film, books, magazines, and the Internet, the media and youth culture are interdependent in many ways. "In the last three decades young people have achieved significantly increased autonomy in their dealings with the media. In that time, they have learned to be selective and self-reliant consumers of the range of

[16] Naomi Klein, *No Logo* (London: Flamingo Publishers, 2000).
[17] Ibid. 71
[18] Ibid. 80
[19] Ibid.
[20] Jürg Müller, 'Being Young in the Multimedia World', in Andy Furlong and Irena Guidikova (eds.),
Transitions of Youth Citizenship in Europe: Culture, Subculture and Identity (Council of Europe Publishing © 2001)

multifunctional media products in meeting the needs specific to their age-group, but also to use the media actively and inventively."[21] An example is the techno-scene that emerged in the 1990s as a result of the resourcefulness of its leaders to use every channel available for the multimedia presentation of their subculture. Hundreds of thousands of people now attend the annual Love Parade in Berlin and similar techno events around the world.

Very much linked to private enterprise, the media has targeted youth as a consumer, aware not only of the potential consumer force of youth, but also aware of how vulnerable youth can be to media images. Teenagers in the early 90s have been referred to as the "TV generation," and teenagers today have been referred to as the "computer generation."[22] Given its central position in our culture, the media has the potential to significantly impact the development of the adolescent's identity. On the positive side, the media has the capacity for enlarging youth's understanding of the world, stimulating creative ideas and new interests, and providing information as well as entertainment. On the negative side, violence and aggression in the media are consistently linked with violence and antisocial behavior among youth.

Non-Governmental Organisations
Many non-governmental organisations also serve the needs of youth, including youth movements, community-based services, and informal education programmes in social skills, health and the arts. Non-governmental organisations are likely to have more contact with youth in crisis, and are in a strategic position to advocate for youth rights, policies and services. They are also affected by the contemporary youth culture, a product of the larger social context in which young people live.

The Centre Europèen Juif d'Information is an NGO set up in Brussels in 1990 to "make a Jewish contribution to an integrated Europe" through education and policy development. Still a small organisation in its early years, it launched a pilot peer training project in 1996 with youth leaders from seven European countries, through a grant provided by the European Commission YOUTH Programme. The inspiration and impact of this programme has reached thousands of other youth; educators; schools, and NGOs through programming directly or indirectly related to this first youth initiative. Approximately 200 young people have been trained as peer educators in 12 countries, and they have developed themselves into a youth organisation called the European Peer Training Organisation (EPTO) that delivers diversity and anti-discrimination workshops to hundreds of young people each year: The peer trainers also collaborate with the CEJI coordinated teacher training programme A CLASSROOM OF DIFFERENCE[TM], providing a more comprehensive approach to promoting the ideals and skills of diversity throughout the school culture.[23] By investing in youth, CEJI has invested in itself and its mission, as an organisation facilitating anti-discrimination programmes and networks of more than 30 partner NGOs and 300 youth and adult trainers.

Government Agencies
Government agencies can have a direct or indirect relationship with youth. There are numerous social services that involve young people, in relation to family, education, financial

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[21] Jürg Müller, 'Being Young in the Multimedia World', in Andy Furlong and Irena Guidikova (eds.), *Transitions of Youth Citizenship in Europe: Culture, Subculture and Identity* (Council of Europe Publishing © 2001)

[22] Jürgen Barthelmes and Ekkehard Sander, 'Young People's Media Experience in the Family and Peer Groups: Youth Research in Munich', in Andy Furlong and Irena Guidikova (eds.), *Transitions of Youth Citizenship in Europe: Culture, Subculture and Identity* (Council of Europe Publishing © 2001)

[23] The pedagogical materials and training model used for EPTO and A CLASSROOM OF DIFFERENCE[TM] (Source: U.S.-based Anti-Defamation League A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute).

security and housing issues. There are also local and national ministries, as well as international institutions dedicated to children and youth.

Since 1969, UN resolutions in the International Law of Youth Rights have systematically addressed the role of youth as fully active participants in society, contributing to political, economic, social and cultural development. Civic, political and educational institutions have been called upon to encourage youth leadership in the promotion of human rights.

The link between youth policy and racism was explored at length in the book Racism in Europe: A challenge for youth policy and youth work. The authors argue that "ultimately, European governments need to devise and introduce policies covering labour, income and housing in order to protect ethnic minorities. In turn, youth policy, and especially youth work, can make an important contribution to promote intercultural learning and understanding. At the same time, we believe youth policy and youth work need to adopt anti-racist policies and practice to assist in transforming the present worrying trends emerging in our midst."[24]

The European Commission White Paper on Youth Policy was a critical governmental recognition of the need to mainstream youth policy throughout sectors and develop youth capacity to participate in society as active citizens. It is also important to note that youth and their organisations were directly involved in an extensive consultation process to define the White Paper. Youth were also identified in the White Paper as a critical force in the fight against racism, xenophobia and social exclusion, and the promotion of intercultural respect.[25] The European Peer Training Organisation was highlighted as a best practice in the field of youth work and anti-discrimination in the White Paper on Youth Policy.

Neighborhood

Most often, the impact of youth in the local neighborhood is defined negatively, for the disturbance that they are seen to cause on the street corners and parks. Young people do not generally have a private and autonomous space, living with others, and are relegated to the public sphere for socialising. They are more easily seen "hanging out," talking, laughing, and arguing, and perhaps even kissing. They are more often accused of disruptive behavior or criminal behavior. Especially young males, and males of particular ethnic origins, may be suspected of such behavior, experiencing multiple discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, age, and economic class.

There are also numerous examples of youth initiatives that contribute positively to their local neighborhoods, conducting a "clean-up," building a playground, painting a mural, performing in a town festival, providing mentoring or helping the elderly or the homeless.

The Skateboard Team in Reggio Emilia, Italy is an example of a youth initiative that developed into an impressive community center. A multicultural group of kids with the passion of skateboarding were looking for a suitable space to practice and socialise. They found an open basketball playground that had not been used in years, and eventually with the support of their parents and friends, they were able to renovate the park using scrap materials. Since it's opening in 1995, thousands of people from all over the north of Italy have frequented the skate-park, with numerous events each year including competitions, concerts,

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[24] Jan Hazekamp and Keith Popple (eds), *Racism in Europe: A Challenge forYouth Policy and Youth Work* (UCL Press, 1997).

[25] European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture (ed) *Europe and Youth: A New Impetus* (© Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2002).

theatre and circus, and art expositions. With the support of parents and the neighbourhood council, the youth have initiated and managed the park, creating a safe space for youth and generating life in the community.

Police

Ask youth if they have felt unjustifiably suspected or accused of criminal behaviour, and many will say yes. Ask young men, and the percentage would surely increase, especially if these young men come from visibly different ethnic minority groups. They have been followed by security guards in stores, stopped by police or border control without obvious reason, and assumed to be the "trouble-makers" in a variety of situations. Similarly, many youth would probably not report a positive relationship with, or positive perception of, law enforcement authorities.

Some would argue that "young people are being denied the chance to become 'stakeholders' in their society and in turn they look for alternative sources of satisfaction, some of which carry health risks or make them more vulnerable to police surveillance and arrest."[26] Others would argue that the stereotypical images of youth portrayed by the media and the culture at large are responsible for the idea that youth are more prone to crime.[27]

As a result of a disintegration in police-community relations in many urban centers, as well as the rising concerns of "youth crime," many police departments have implemented measures to try to tear down the stereotypes and misperceptions, and eliminate mistrust between police and young people. For example, local police officers have developed a relationship with the pupils at a vocational school in Antwerp, Belgium through weekly visits in which they answer questions and discuss important issues with the pupils, teachers and parents.

Family

In childhood, the family is the whole world. (The definition of family is relative, and it may or may not refer to biological relatives (mother, father, etc.)). As we grow older into adolescence, we venture into the outside world, and our experiences out there are very often shaped by the families to which we belong. Likewise, our independent experiences in society help to define a sense of "self," with a set of values and competencies that influence individuals and the family in general. Throughout the generations, youth have struggled with their parents to accept another approach to living life. Most people find that their parents eventually come to understand and respect many things that were unthinkable just a generation before. Whether they admit it or not, parents learn from children as much as children learn from parents. Brothers and sisters, grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles, whatever the familial relationship, those with whom we grow up and share the unique history of the family, influence and learn from each other.

Peers

Social research in the past decades has shown that the social influence of peer groups is able to change the behaviours and attitudes of their members. Peers can be defined by age, socio-economic class, ethnic or cultural background, or professional status. Most commonly, the

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[26] Andy Furlong and Fred Cartmel, *Young People and Social Change* (Buckingham, U.K.: Open University Press, 1997).

[27] http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/lessons/secondary/crime/youth_and_crime.cfm

term refers to age, specifically adolescents who belong to the same micro-environment/system (school, local organisation, etc.). [28]

The peer group for youth is instrumental for identity and social development. Peers facilitate the individuation process. They also provide an arena for learning, testing, practicing and refining emerging adult social skills in an accepting, yet reflecting environment. Peer groups serve a major socialisation function in the life of the adolescent.

Identity development for youth is a difficult and lonely task. Consequently, many adolescents continue to use their affiliations with peers as a source of social and emotional protection. Group identity can have the positive effect of serving as a bridge between the family and the larger society.

Throughout life people are assaulted by peer pressures to conform. Conforming behavior may be exhibited to obtain the social praise and recognition of peers. The primary motive directing many an adolescent's behavior is to avoid the rejection and disapproval of their peers. Conformity can also be an adaptive response intended to gain information about a new situation. There are different types of conformity, and it is an inevitable social phenomena. The main issue for an adolescent becomes "whose norms" or "what norms?"[29]

One expert in the field demonstrates how young people have played a critical and positive role in constructing the "the truly multiracial face of urban Britain" today. Primarily through interracial friendships, as well as through language and music, many youth have negotiated and transcended cultural differences, developing their own anti-racist tools. What has emerged, he argues, is "a de facto, multiracial adolescent culture founded on processes of friendship and close interaction in which racism is not ignored but dealt with in part through cultural practices." [30]

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[28] *Educazione tra pari: Manuale teorico-pratico di empowered peer education* (Italy: Edizioni Erickson, ©2002).

[29] Schuster and Ashburn, *The Process of Human Development: A Holistic Life-Span Approach* (Philadelphia: Ashburn. B. Lippincott Company, 1992).

[30] Roger Hewitt, 'Youth, Race and Language in Contemporary Britain: Deconstructing Ethnicity?', in Lynne Chisholm et al. (eds.), *Childhood, Youth and Social Change: A Comparative Perspective* (London: Falmer Press, 1990) page 192.

Types of Programmes: Peer Training

Theoretical Considerations
"A child's sense of self takes shape in the context of relationships with others. Relationships with peers provide distinctive experiences, unlike those with parents or siblings. Friends provide opportunities for experimenting with new styles of relating, experiencing new qualities of trust in others, and learning new sensitivities within oneself. Peers serve as a mirror for testing one's acceptability and as competitors that help sharpen one's skills…. If children are taught how to greet peers, how to negotiate conflict, or give positive feedback, they are more likely to get and keep friends. This in turn raises self-esteem, and a positive social cycle can be initiated." [31]

Peer-led educational methods have been around for many centuries in many different forms, documented as far back as the writing of Aristotle in Ancient Greece. Even in the eighteenth century, school programmes were implemented in which disadvantaged young people taught reading, writing and arithmetic to their peers. In the late 1950's peer education began to be used in the field of health and social issues. Recently it has most often been applied to issues around AIDS, sexual education, drug abuse and smoking.[32]

Peer education has also been identified as an important tool for promoting the value of diversity and intercultural competencies. The "multiplier effect" is encouraged in programmes supported by the European Commission DG for Education and Culture, and peer education is often part of anti-racism programmes. Peer education was also highly encouraged by the Council of Europe in its 1997 All Different/All Equal Campaign. In the recent EU White Paper on Youth Policy, the European Peer Training Organisation (EPTO) was recognised as a best practice in the fight against racism and xenophobia.

Evaluations of peer education programmes, especially in the areas of health, violence and bullying, have proven the method as an effective approach, if not more effective than those taken by adults. From a psychological perspective, peer education is effective because of:
- "Proximity areas of development," which refers to the important role of the group as a facilitator and catalyst of the learning of the individuals belonging to the group. Peer educators value and promote the proximity areas of development in their own peer group.[33]
- "Multiple Intelligences," which refers to different kinds of intelligences working together in the promotion of a 'successful life.' Besides technical intelligences (verbal, mathematical, musical), there are emotional intelligences, including:

  - Interpersonal intelligence promotes solidarity and cooperation (leadership, conflict management, social analysis and relationship oriented skills).
  - Intrapersonal intelligence promotes the development of self-awareness/consciousness, both physical and emotional through a realistic understanding of self, of states of mind and of personal limits and possibilities.

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[31] Schuster and Ashburn, *The Process of Human Development: A Holistic Life-Span Approach* (Philadelphia: Ashburn. B. Lippincott Company, 1992), 480-481.
[32] Domino Manual (1995), 8-9.
[33] Vygotskij in Educazione tra pari: Manuale teorico-pratico di empowered peer education. (Italy: Edizioni Erickson, ©2002).

Peer education harnesses the importance of interpersonal intelligence for the delivery of its message(s). It also supports peer educators in developing their intrapersonal intelligence, by providing new challenges and opportunities to grow.

- "Self-Effectiveness," refers to the "trust in our own capacities to organise and realise the actions needed to manage effectively the situations we come across in order to reach the goals we have set."[34] Peer education aims at the development of self-effectiveness, both on the individual and collective levels, and peer educators become role models to others in daily life. Besides the meta skills of "knowing" or "knowing-how-to-do", peer educators also demonstrate "knowing-how-to-be."

- "Learning Hope," related to the concept of self-effectiveness, develops "knowing-how-to-hope," through cooperation and exchange. By being able to experiment their relevant impact on the surrounding environment, youth can develop hope, not as a passive participant waiting for solutions from "outside," but as an active actor in discovering possibilities of affecting and changing a situation, individually and collectively.[35]

Three models of peer education have been identified:[36]

1) *The Pure Model (or Training Model)* recognises the importance of youth in the realisation of projects, but it is mainly focused on the content of the project. Selection of peer educators, training and methodological approaches are chosen by adults. Youth's role is mainly as a tool of transmission of the contents. Quite common in informational campaigns, such as on drug-abuse and sexual transmitted diseases, this approach is "economic" in terms of materials and human resources, and will have more apparent results in the short-term. It does, however, contradict the principles of peer education, and therefore reduces the potential effectiveness in the long-term

2) *The Mixed Model* promotes the active role of youth in specific projects and environments. The intervention of adults is limited to setting topics and goals and giving a short and intense initial training of peer educators, whose role is the development of the project. Examples of this approach are welcoming/integrating new students, peer tutoring and peer mentoring.

3) *The Empowered Peer Education Model* is based on the youth's role, who are actively involved in all phases of the project, including situation analysis, selection of topics and goals, planning, implementation and evaluation of interventions. Adults participate by supporting and promoting the project with youth, perhaps providing training or technical support on social competencies, group dynamics, research methodologies or project development. This model requires a greater investment of time and resources, but has proven effective in the middle to long-term.

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[34] Bandura in Educazione tra pari: Manuale teorico-pratico di empowered peer education. Edizioni Erickson, Italy ©2002
[35] ibid
[36] ibid

European Peer Training Organisation (EPTO)

Objectives:
"To promote personal responsibility against prejudice and discrimination by increasing consciousness and understanding using educational interactive methods that create a respectful environment for everybody." (EPTO Mission Statement)

The European Peer Training Organisation (EPTO) is an anti-discrimination youth network that uses the method of peer training as a way to take social action against racism and discrimination. They are youth facilitators of anti-prejudice diversity awareness workshops for their peers, based upon the methods and materials of the Anti-Defamation League A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute.

Using interactive activities, discussion groups, simulations, visualisations, role plays, and other forms of intercultural learning techniques, EPTO workshops help participants to:
1. Create an inclusive environment;
2. Be aware of their personal and cultural identity;
3. Recognise their own prejudices, stereotypes, and discriminatory behavior;
4. Recognise and confront prejudice and discrimination in all forms;
5. Develop empathy, critical thinking and communication skills; and
6. Develop an action plan.

Key Concepts:
The primary principles of EPTO's programme are that 1) diversity is a valued resource; and 2) in order to achieve respectful and equitable diversity, it is necessary to acknowledge and counteract all forms of prejudice and discrimination.

Target Groups:
Within the school environment, peer trainers can range in age between 14 – 20, and lead workshops for their peers or younger pupils. Outside of the school environment, peer trainers can be up to 26 years old, and lead workshops in youth organisations, universities and schools.

School-based peer training teams have a high impact on the school culture, and require an adult advisor or school-based coordinator and institutional support from the school administration. Train-the-Peer Trainer programmes can be offered to one school (15 peer trainers), or to a partnership of 3 schools (5 peer trainers from each school).

Schools can also request to have external peer trainers visit the school to conduct workshops with pupils.

Peer training workshops ideally have 15 – 20 participants (no more than 25), and can last from 2 hours to 2 days. Peer trainers can also deliver a series of workshops over the course of a pre-determined amount of time (3 months, 6 months, etc.)

Methods:
EPTO agendas include the following kinds of activities, coming from the curriculum of the Anti-Defamation League A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute.
1. Peer trainers use icebreakers and a ground rules activity to begin to create an inclusive environment, establishing trust and a desire to participate fully in the programme. Ice

breaking activities can also begin to raise issues related to racism in a fun way, alleviating uneasiness with the subject. One example would be the *Greetings Activity* in which each participant receives a slip of paper with a description of a particular greeting from a different part of the world. Over the course of 5-10 minutes, participants move around the room greeting each other, with much laughter and head collisions. The discussion in the large group can identify codes of behavior and challenge cultural interpretations of differences.

2. The *Identity Molecule*, or other self-identity activity, is an important part of an agenda. in which participants have the opportunity to describe themselves culturally and share what is positive and what can be difficult about their cultural affiliations.

3. Recognising one's own prejudices and discriminatory behavior takes time within an agenda, and it is actually a work that is never finished. Through simulations such as the *Lemons Activity* and *Here I Stand*, participants are provoked to reflect on issues of racism in new ways. In the *Lemons Activity*, participants move from generalisations to individualisation, using lemons (or potatoes or peppers) as metaphors for people. After developing an attachment to their lemons, participants decide if they will allow a new fruit into Lemonland. In the end, participants identify behaviors that include or exclude newcomers. *Here I Stand* is an opportunity for participants to share their opinion on current issues, such as if positive discrimination is still important and necessary, or if interracial dating is a good idea.

4. Recognising prejudice and discrimination is achieved through a variety of activities, such as *Developing a Common Language*, or using videos and vignettes showing discriminatory situations, like the brown eyes/blue eyes experiment that was conducted by Jane Elliot 30 years ago.

5. Action planning activities can reflect either personal and/or small group actions for change. At the personal level, participants can identify things that they will stop doing, start doing or do differently. However, small group actions are useful because they incorporate follow-up to the youth exchange and give the benefits of the training back to the community. Having positive experiences of contributing to others is important to motivate further social action by the participants.

Scope of the Programme:
A diverse network of youth representing 12 European countries make-up the membership of EPTO. Peer trainers range from 14 – 26 years of age, and may attend school or university, may be involved in youth associations, or may be employed or unemployed. There are EPTO activities in the formal school environment, but also many activities happening in the context of non-formal education through youth associations.

Available Documents:
1. EPTO Manual for Peer Trainers in English and German (available with training)
2. Manual for School-Based Coordinators in English and German (available with training)
3. EPTO Brochures
4. *"Peer Training"* by Sabine Finzi in *Coyote Magazine*, Issue 7 July 2003
5. *"Anti-Racism Training EPTO Style"* by Robin Sclafani in *Coyote Magazine*, Issue 5 January 2002
6. Study "Anti-Racism Work with Youth" by Robin Sclafani

Internet Site: www.epto.org

How do EPTO programmes empower youth?

The method of peer training is based upon the belief that young people deliver a message to their peers that is often more credible and efficient than when it is delivered by authority figures. Peer training provides a forum for young people to speak honestly about issues that concern them, to explore solutions and new ways of doing things, and to be able to better articulate their points of view to authority figures.

Participants in peer training workshops are empowered by the support and credibility given to youth leaders in the school environment. The school demonstrates respect for pupils' points of views by supporting peer training, and the pupils realise that their participation in society matters.

Pupils who become peer trainers are further empowered with the self-awareness, skills, tools and institutional support to transform the school culture into an inclusive, equitable intercultural environment. Schools that support peer training programmes are investing in youth and their potential to give important benefits back into the school community.

Through the programme, peer trainers can:
- Be aware of their own personal and cultural identity and respect for others' identities and experiences.
- Develop a common vocabulary for discussing issues of diversity, bigotry and discrimination;
- Recognise and acknowledge prejudice and discriminatory behaviour in themselves and others;
- Develop and put into practice the skills to confront prejudice and discriminatory behaviour in themselves and others;
- Develop and put into practice intercultural skills that create positive and inclusive environments;
- Understand democratic principles and their personal roles in creating just societies;
- Disseminate knowledge and skills throughout the school and community that increase awareness of diversity issues;
- Develop social responsibility through opportunities to provide community service and model pro-social behaviour;
- Increase self-esteem, critical thinking and problem-solving abilities; and
- Provide a forum where young people feel safe to define and speak out on important issues.

Examples from the school environment:

1)   A high school in Berlin serving a large population of young people from Arab and Turkish origins experienced increasing difficulties with school participation and had several incidents where anti-Semitism was expressed in relation to Jewish authors or Holocaust history included in the curriculum. One particular class (18 years old) was identified as "problematic" and was about to be prohibited from attending school trips and festivals due to the high amount of hateful and prejudicial language used by the students.

A two-day workshop was organised for the class with two EPTO peer trainers, one native German and one German-Turkish-Arab. The pupils were led through a series of activities designed to create an inclusive environment in which pupils could listen to each other, have more understanding of different cultural experiences, and recognise the dangers in stereotyping and discrimination in all its forms. The pupils were encouraged to participate and their points of view were respected.

Pupils who normally were not interested in school, anxious for the moment when it is time for the school day to end, were fully engaged during the two 8-hour days and wanted to continue the discussions into the afternoons. The teachers, social worker and administration were impressed with the level of participation of the youth, and remarked on the overall improved behaviour of the pupils in class in the weeks following the peer training workshop. Furthermore, they requested assistance for the teachers in using the same interactive methods to encourage pupils' participation in class. The A CLASSROOM OF DIFFERENCE™ Programme was requested as follow-up to the peer training workshop.

2)   A group of 5 schools in Austria are cooperating in an EPTO peer training programme, each school with its own demographics and its own specific needs in the area of diversity and inclusion. Each school selected 5 pupils to be trained as peer trainers in a joint train-the-peer trainer programme, and each school selected 3 teachers to coordinate and support the work of the peer trainers in the school. The teachers received the 12 hour A CLASSROOM OF DIFFERENCE™ Programme plus 1 day of training on the peer training programme. The peer trainers and teachers meet regularly in each school to prepare agendas and activities, and they meet a few times a year with the peer trainers and teachers from other schools to exchange experiences, resources and develop activities together. The peer trainers give workshops during the "integration" or "orientation" days at the beginning of the school year, and they are available to conduct workshops in classes at the request of teachers. The pupils have been recognised as leaders in the school who have an important formal and non-formal role in making an inclusive school culture.

How do EPTO programmes educate for diversity?

Educationally speaking, it is critical for youth to learn how to succeed in multicultural and diverse environments. They should ideally experience positive intercultural environments, and develop the knowledge and skills necessary for respectful interactions. At the same time, in order for the intercultural ideal to exist, it is also important to confront the obstacles to this ideal, which include: stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. Confronting discrimination and creating respectful environments go hand-in-hand. Denying the former while promoting the latter may be interpreted as superficial.

"For a society to become really intercultural, every social group must be able to live in conditions of equality regardless of their culture, lifestyle or origin."[37]

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[37] Domino Manual. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1996.

"Intercultural" means

- Interaction

- Exchange

- Breaking down barriers

- Reciprocity

- Objective solidarity

The methods used in EPTO programmes are based upon research that has shown that there are highly effective educational strategies to counteract prejudicial thinking.[38]

- **Developing empathy** is one of the most important strategies for improving intercultural understanding and preventing discriminatory behavior. By sharing experiences and considering other points of view, through discussions and simulations, participants can develop empathy and understanding for others.
- **Promoting self-esteem** has also proven to be an effective approach to prevent and combat prejudice. People who feel good about themselves do not need to put down others. Through self-identity activities and affirming the value of diversity, participants feel valued for who they are.
- **Encouraging critical thinking** of the logic of common prejudices and misinformation is another key strategy for confronting discrimination. When participants have the opportunity to analyse information, problem-solve, and consider real-life scenarios, they are developing their critical thinking skills.
- **Learning through cooperation** develops intercultural competencies such as communication and teamwork, in addition to developing positive human relations while trying to reach a common goal. Cooperative learning also leads to greater participation by all members of the group, increasing learning potential and commitment.
- **Having high expectations** of learners and each other is an indication of non-prejudicial thinking and acting. We have all heard of the self-fulfilling prophecy: if we believe that someone's perspective is important, then we will be open to hearing the value of his or her contributions.
- **Demonstrating diversity and inclusion** within the environments in which we live (school, community, association, etc.) is the best proof of the richness of an intercultural society. It provides a variety of role models for young people, and demonstrates the value of interaction with others, showing what it means to "walk the talk."
- **Social action** is another strategy for counteracting prejudice because it addresses the conditions that re-create the cycle of prejudice, discrimination and oppression. Changes in social conditions can only occur if triggered by events or pressures that create new levels of recognition of the need for change.

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[38] © 1998 Anti-Defamation League A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute Manual for Trainers

The Buddy Project

The Theoretical Framework
The Buddy Project is a participative programme that is based on a systemic approach. It adopts and combines ideas and structures of the mediation programmes designed by William Ury ("Getting to Yes" and "Getting to Peace") and others in the Harvard Concept with aspects and influences from the Humanistic Pedagogy and Psychology.

The main focus is based on the process of empowerment and participation – of pupils and teachers. The Buddy Project is a Peer Education Programme: pupils take charge of their peers in need. More experienced Buddies train new Buddies – the process of establishing a Buddy Group turns out to be a self-dynamising one. Although the Project allows schools to "take what they need", it is a clear structured programme that offers a system of tools to change and dynamise the social life in schools in a profound way.

Peer Group Education
The positive effects of Peer group Education (PGE) is well proven and stated: children are often more effective and sustainable mediators in a conflict between their peers than adults, as they understand the position and feelings of the persons involved better by far than adults do. The "combattants" regard them more easy and neutral than they do with grown-ups. Surveys in Australia and the USA state, that especially "hard to reach" adolescents can be attracted by a peer mediation model.

Empowerment
Empowerment, based on the ideas of Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, has been brought into the pedagogic discussion by the Humanistic Psychology in the 60ies. "A child learns best, when s/he able to choose their activities by themselves, when learning is organised experience oriented and in the course of an active approach towards their environment. Learning should not only engage the intellectual person, but the child as a whole. School is a community, which may enable a child to learn socially and to build up social relations with other persons. The child is an individual with their own rights, deserving the support of its environment according to its level of development." (Gerhard Fatzer) The Buddy Project is also a tool to establish participative and empowerment concepts into schools with the focus on problem solving.

Peer Models
According to different aims and target groups there may be different buddy models
  ➢ **The Peer to Peer Model:** Buddies work with children of their own peer group. Although the Buddy may be in a helping position, they meet on the same level. Especially in cultural or ethnic conflicts it may be appropriate to choose a Buddy of the same ethnicity.
  ➢ **The Cross Age Model:** Older pupils support younger ones in their learning process or help in case of conflicts or problems. The younger pupils feel respected by elder Buddies, the elder pupils learn by teaching and often gain a lot in their personal development.
  ➢ **The Reverse Role Model:** Everybody's intelligent in a way … but school only requires the brain: visual and logical intelligence. The Reverse Role Model serves to foster the different talents of all the pupils in the class: I train you in English literature, you repair my bike. One exercise perfectly fits to this model: The Marketplace Activity.

Different ways of using the Buddy Project

How deep schools ever wish to get into a process of social learning in groups or schools, the Buddy Project allows all forms of self-determined interaction between children or adolescents. Roughly five levels of application may be identified:

> - **The Buddy Principle in Classes:** Pupils help their comrades with learning difficulties doing their homework. A pupil comes to school every morning late. A classmate Buddy calls for him every morning and takes him to school. In learning teams, good and bad learners sit together, to support each other.
> - **The Buddy Team at School:** A group of pupils is trained to help children in need. This covers interventions in cases of conflict as well as programmes to: avoid failure in school, facilitate conversations with teachers, develop activities to build up a network of experts …
> - **The Buddy Idea as Completion of Existing Projects:** The Buddy Project serves well as completion of existing activities and preventive projects: mediators may be trained to become problem solvers as well, an Anti-Drug or Anti-Violence Activity may be "upgraded" to a lasting Buddy Project.
> - **The Buddy Principle as a Help for Transition:** The transition from elementary to primary education as well as the one from primary to secondary school is often filled with insecurity and fear for the children changing … and in many cases not well prepared by the pedagogics involved. Buddies can take the role to help the "newcomers" get acquainted with the new system and its rules and regulations. They may also accompany children, who have to leave a school to be able to part.
> - **Buddy Groups in the Social Area:** The Buddy Principle is not reduced to school alone. Children or adolescents may act as Buddies in their own social field – the "Service Learning" can relate to other children, who are looked after, or to services in old peoples homes, to sport clubs or to church services …

Buddy - an example

In 1999 the pupils committee of the Montessori Secondary School was trained in an anti-violence project. The aim was to create a more peaceful, less violent atmosphere in the school life, especially in the break. In cooperation with a theatre company the pupils learned to interact in case of violent attacks, and how to disturb the "script" of an aggressor. As a follow-up, the group wanted to bring their learning process into action. They began to intervene in cases of conflict and violent attacks on the schoolyard.

When they heard of the Buddy Project, they discovered, that this was exactly what they had already been doing for a while. They began to elaborate their "Buddy system" little by little. Now the Buddy group is known throughout the school as problem solvers, for private problems as well as for school trouble. More than once the Buddies helped children in need make their exams, go to school again, solve problems with teachers, parents, friends.

The Buddies do not only intervene in cases of severe problems, they also serve as conflict solvers and mediators. In many of the classes teachers established tutorial systems, organised and held by the pupils themselves. Tutors also help children to start their school career after the transition from a primary school – pupils from the classes 9 and 10 serve as guides for the "newbies". The Buddy group regularly meets on Thursday afternoons to supervise, talk and organise. The meetings are coached by the Buddy teacher. In their Buddy training the pupils

are taught communication skills and anti-aggression tactics with the ambition to make them "junior social workers".

The most important thing for the Buddies is their common joy and friendship, which arose from their hard work and challenging experiences that they mastered together. Since the beginning, the Buddy group has been growing – more than once the pupils who were "saved" by a Buddy became Buddies themselves. To be a Buddy for the pupils from the Montessori School means to feel responsible and independent. To be a Buddy means to be more than a good friend.

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Winfried Kneip. **Das Monster in mir**. A brochure about a creative approach towards violence and aggression. 80 pages, Düsseldorf 2003.

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