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Using arts-based methods to engage with youth and other vulnerable populations

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**WORLD
CHANGING
GLASGOW**

THE SUNDAY TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

**GOOD
UNIVERSITY
GUIDE
2022**

**SCOTTISH
UNIVERSITY
OF THE YEAR**



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Session Outline

- Introduction: our research, why this study, objective
- Why arts-based/creative methods?
- Context of example study
- Design of example study
- Analysis
- Learnings
- Q&A



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Introduction: Our own research

- **Sarah:**

- High-quality teaching practices, social subjects as a secondary school discipline, advocacy for the teaching profession, comparative international education, inclusion, dynamic and adaptive systems thinking, quality assurance measures

- **Yulia:**

- youth engagement in peacebuilding / global citizenship; minority and Indigenous education in transitional and historical justice settings; communities in post-conflict contexts
- *vulnerable/marginalised groups and children/youth respond better to creative methods*



Introduction: This study

- **Title:** Visions of Peace: How youth in Scotland define peace and their role in sustaining peace through
- **Objectives:**
 - how young people define peace
 - what contributions to peace they desire to make
- **Reasons:**
 - there is a “less-developed understanding of peace than war across ages” (Covell et al., 1994, p. 720);
 - peace as absence of war (‘negative peace’), as passive process
 - youth lack motivation and self-efficacy to effect peace (conflict, violence, and war as inevitable)
 - war in Ukraine



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Introduction: Objective

Methodological potential of a structured arts-based workshop to engage youth in a **reflective and creative learning** about socially important issues (e.g., peace) and **action**



Why arts-based/creative methods?

1. Create a safe space for self-expression and meaning making meaning of their experiences → more impactful knowledge production (Akesson et al., 2014; Bliesemann de Guevara et al., 2022; Clacherty, 2021; Huss et al., 2015; Liebenberg, 2022)
2. Provide insights into feelings and thoughts (Barraza, 1999): e.g., drawing helps to “surface unspoken thoughts and feelings” (Kearney & Hyle, 2004, p. 362), allows to share in a more “expressive, empowering, and personally relevant manner” (Literat, 2013, p. 84)
3. Allow to capture interpretations and meanings that can be overlooked in traditional methods (Rose, 2014)
4. Many young people enjoy drawing “without showing any sign of tension” (Barraza, 1999, p. 49)
5. Help to strengthen participants’ sense of agency for taking action (Liebenberg, 2022; Moletsane et al., 2007) and increase their awareness of their belonging to the broader humanity (Harris, 2007)



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Increasing focus on arts-based/creative methods

- Environmental education and children's relationship with and perception of the natural environment (Barraza, 1999; Bowker, 2007; Kalvaitis & Monhardt, 2012),
- Assessment of children's comprehension of studied material (Shepardson et al., 2009),
- Children's experiences and expectations of schooling (Dockett & Perry, 2005; Einarsdottir, et al., 2009),
- Children's conceptualisations of happiness and fear (Maagerø & Sunde, 2016)
- Art to support children and youth who experienced war / refugee and immigrant children (Kollontai, 2010; Rousseau et al., 2005; Rowe et al., 2017)
- How children and youth view peace and war (McLernon & Cairns, 2001; Walker et al., 2003)



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Context of example study



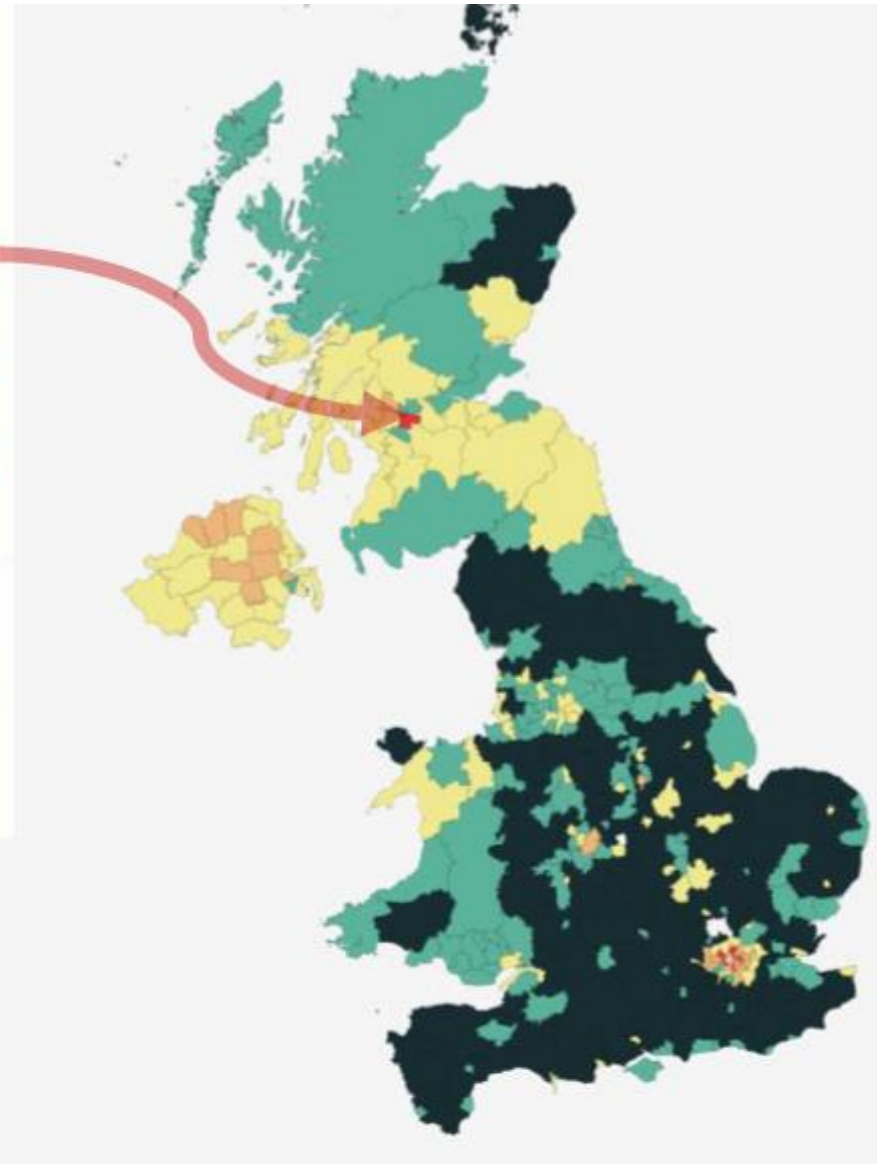
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Context: Peace in Glasgow

A composite measure made up of 5 indicators: homicide, violent crime, weapons, public disorder and police. The lower the score the more peaceful the area.



DATA MORE PEACEFUL LESS PEACEFUL





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Aims and Research questions

Aims:

- to support young people's learning about peace and conflict,
- to understand how they conceptualise peace, and
- to explore what kind of commitment to peacebuilding they can make based on this knowledge.

Research questions:

1. How do young people express their understanding of 'peace'?
2. What kind of contributions to peace young people would like to make?
3. Are there any differences and similarities in conceptualisations and contributions of youth of different socio-economic and geographic backgrounds?



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Design of example study



Critical Peace Education

- Attention to **local realities** and **local conceptions** of peace: focusing on **local youth** voices and perspectives (drawing on Bajaj & Hantzopoulos, 2016)
- Space and tools to reflect on:
 - how just and peaceful their communities are
 - how they can contribute positively to peace
- Constructivist approach (Dewey, 1938; Vygotsky, 1978):
 - youth as active participants;
 - no correct answer - different and unique circumstances, prior knowledge, experiences, and interests (Bowker, 2007);
 - construct and express their understanding of peace.



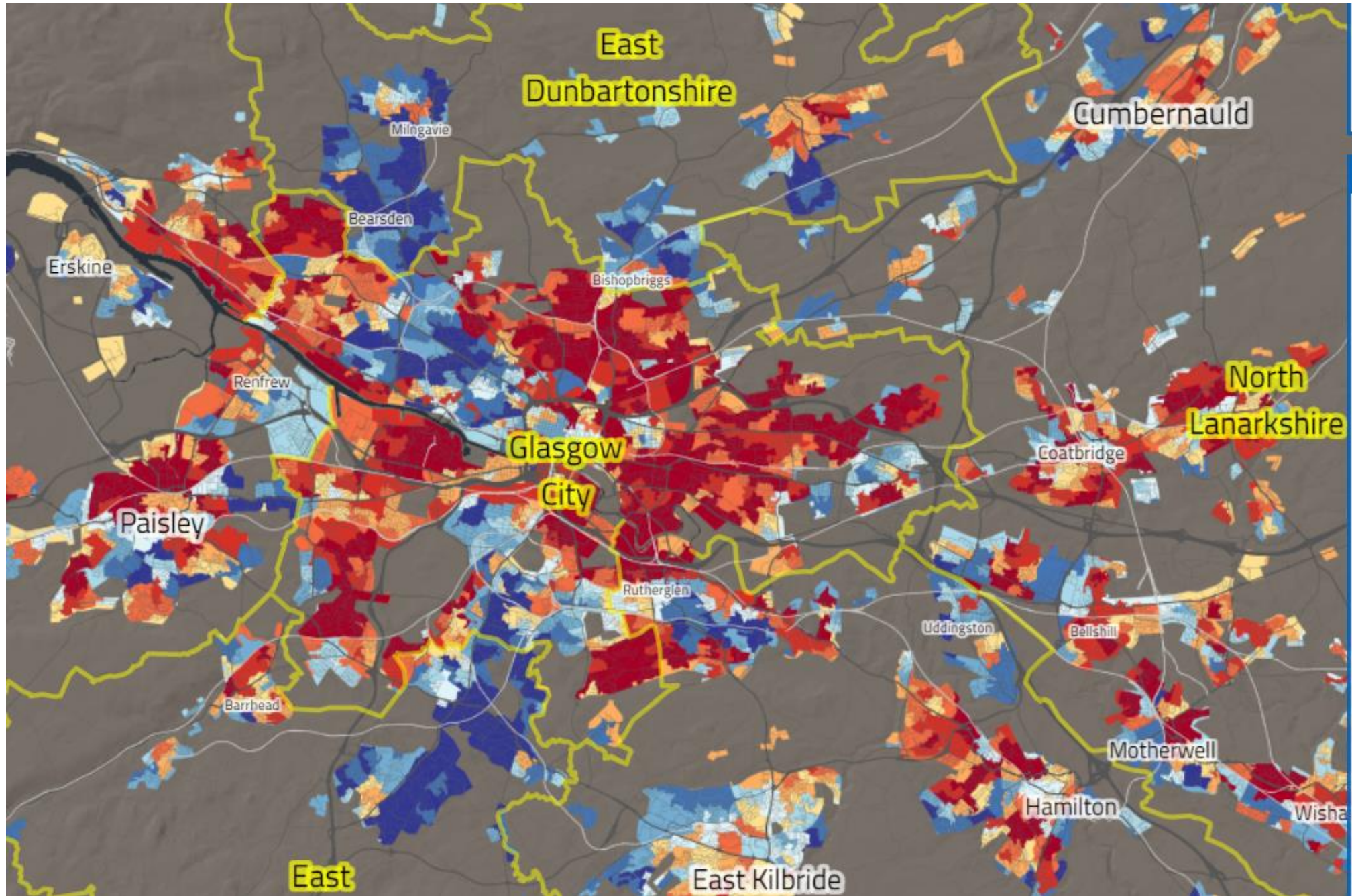
Participants (n = 59)

	Workshop 1 and 2		Workshop 3 and 4
School	St. Jean-Baptiste	Cooper High School	Minch Academy
Number of participants	N = 24 12-15 = 19 16-18 = 5		N = 35 12-15 = 16 16-18 = 19
Type of School	State school - Roman Catholic	State school - non-denominational	Independent*
2022 League Table Standings	334 out of 340	275 out of 340	4 out of 71
Approximate Enrolment	1040	1202	1600

Note. *Identified as a UNICEF Rights Respecting School



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<https://simd.scot/#/simulation/2020/BTTTTFTT/11/-4.2703/55.8428/>



Methods

- **Participants:** 59 secondary school pupils, ages 12-18
- **Location:** schools from two areas of Glasgow: a wealthy area and a disadvantaged area
- **Length:** two hours
 - **Step 1:** Peace Data Walk
 - **Step 2:** Arts-based Workshops
 - **Step 3:** Peace Wall



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Step 1: Peace Data Walk

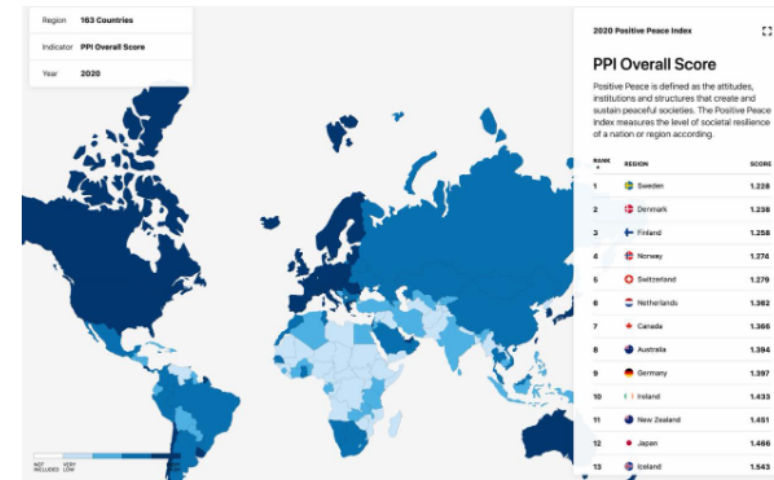
Posters on global, national, and local issues of peace and justice;
short reflection form in groups



“Global Peace Index” – Positive Peace

Positive peace includes the attitudes, institutions, and structures that create peaceful societies where humans can flourish.

Vision of Humanity (<https://www.visionofhumanity.org/maps/#/>) publishes Global Peace Index every year that includes negative and positive peace measurements.



What does it measure?



Positive peace improved globally in the past decade

There is a lot of political polarisation, more intolerance of different views, and less trust in governments

There is more corruption in the world

There is now less positive peace in Syria, Libya, Yemen, Venezuela, and South Sudan (and North America)



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Step 2: Drawing





Step 2: Drawing

- Question: “*What does peace mean to you in your environment?*”
- Art materials: paints, pastels, felt-tip pens, coloured pencils, markers, and papers
- Their reflection notes and a graphic organizer (see the table)
- Independent drawing
- Chatted with peers (we didn’t make notes of their conversations)

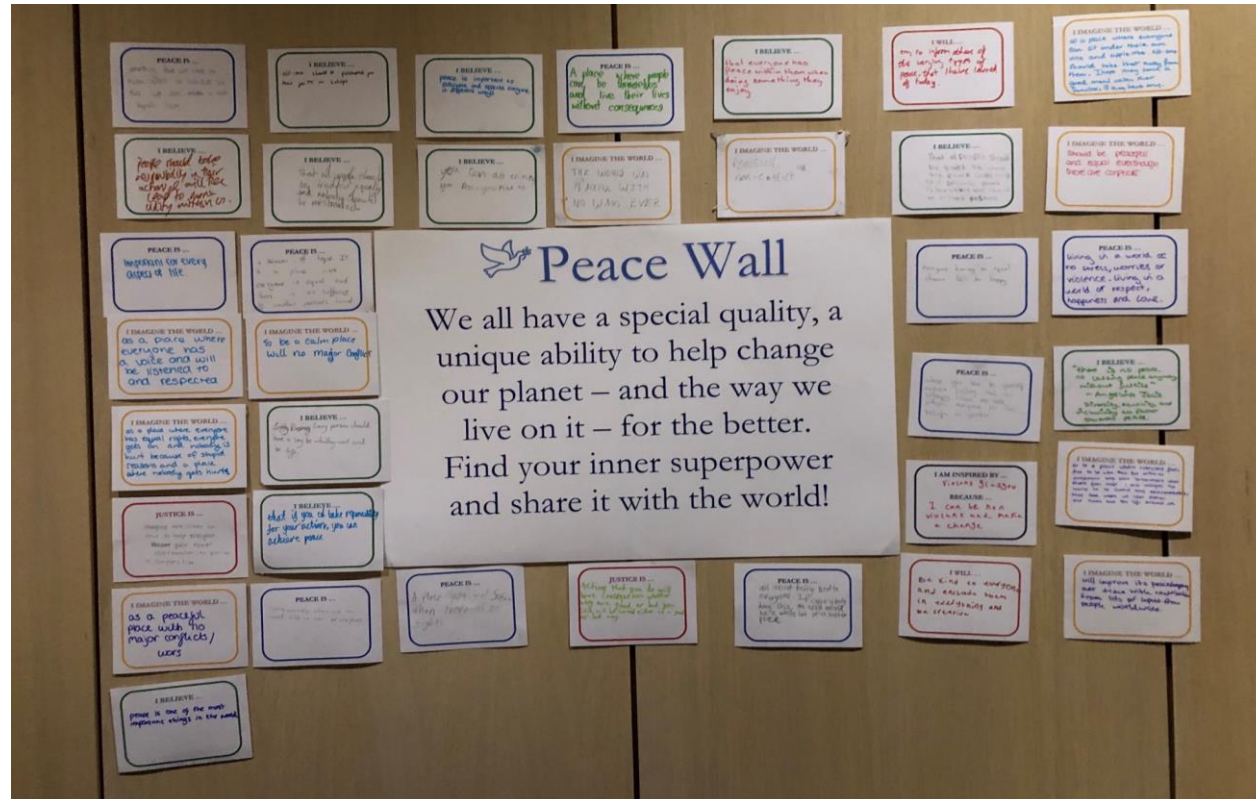
Graphic Organiser to Brainstorm Ideas for Drawing

People	Place	Process	Things/Icons	Adjectives Doing words	Sounds
<i>Women</i>	<i>Safe space</i>	<i>Eat together</i>	<i>Food</i>	<i>Talking</i>	<i>Calm voices</i>
<i>Youth</i>	<i>Top of the mountain</i>	<i>Listen to each other</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Listening</i>	
		<i>Meet every week</i>	<i>Water</i>	<i>Walking together</i>	



Step 3: Peace Reflection Wall

Reflection wall with prompts: “Peace is...”, “I take a stand for...”, “I imagine the world...”, etc.





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Analysis



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What do you see in the picture? How would you interpret this?



Minch Academy 16-18



Data analysis tools

- **Peace Wall reflections:** thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006)
- **Drawings/paintings:**
 - Child-centred Personal Meaning Mapping (PMM) methodology (Bowker, 2007)
 - Visual content analytic procedures (VCAP) (Kalvaitis & Monhardt, 2012)
 - Visual art coding scheme (VACS) (DiBartolomeo et al., 2015)



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Data analysis method

Theme

(Main) subject matter

Breadth of themes

Visual elements

Extent of themes

Colour

Composition

Perspective

Lines

Background

Repetition

Dominant figure

Physical relationships of figures

Style

Tone

Symbolism

Mastery

Element of analysis	Explanation
Theme	Primary message: e.g., identity/self, isolation/solitude, reflection, relationships, nature, animals, spirituality, school, home, play, sports, cultural perspectives, race, political
(Main) subject matter	Brief description of the subject of the piece (its theme)
Breadth of themes	Quantity of appropriate themes used in drawings/paintings
Visual elements	Figures/objects depicted in drawings/paintings: setting (where), people (who), non-human living and living elements (what), activity (what), time (when)
Tone	The mood or disposition: violent/aggressive, romantic, mystical, benign, sinister, despondent, solemn, humorous, happy, negative, sad, playful, narcissistic, competitive, serene, melancholy, traditional
Mastery	Overall young people's understanding of the issues of peace and justice
Elements of Positive Peace	1 -Peace Zone, 2- Peace Bond, 3- Social Justice, 4-Eco Mind, 5-Link Mind, 6-Gender Mind, 7-Resilience, 8-Wellbeing, 9-Prevention



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Looking for Peace in the National Curriculum - The PECA Project

The screenshot displays the PECA Project website interface. At the top, there is a horizontal menu with six country icons: Australia, England, Israel, Mexico, New Zealand, and Northern Ireland. Below this menu is a scroll bar and the instruction "Click on a Country to view the Report Card". The main content area is titled "Scotland - Report Card" and includes a "Published Research" button. The report card features three visual elements: the Scottish flag, a map of the United Kingdom with Scotland highlighted in red, and a map of Europe with Scotland highlighted in red. To the right of these elements, the "Avg. Points" are shown as 30/100 and the "Overall Grade" is C+. At the bottom, there are buttons for "Graphs", "Points", and "Docs/Data", along with the handwritten-style text "30/100 = C+".

Australia England Israel Mexico New Zealand Northern Ireland

Click on a Country to view the Report Card

Scotland - Report Card Published Research

Avg. Points
30
100

Overall Grade
C+

All Scotland

Graphs Points 30/100 = C+ Docs/Data



Elements of Positive Peace

Conceptual Framework

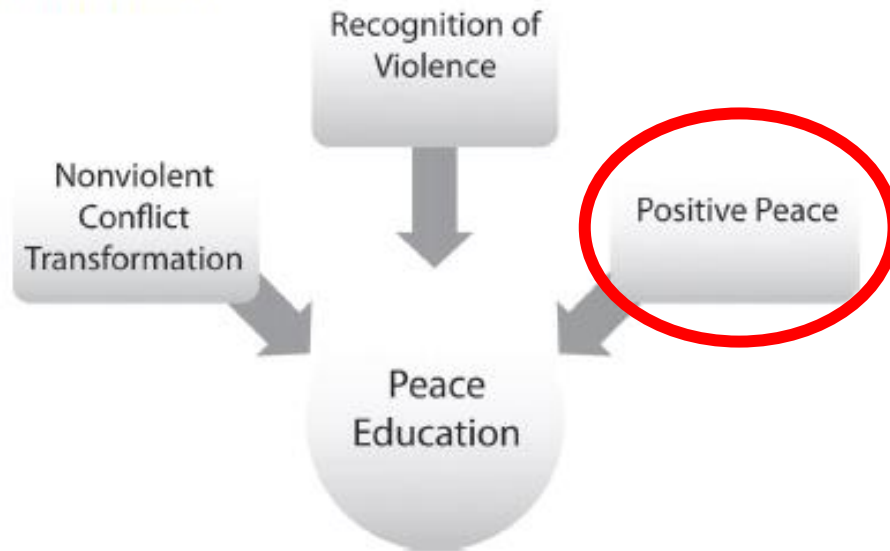


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for the PECA Project

Element 3:
Positive Peace

1. Peace Zone (safe spaces where violence is absent)
2. Peace Bond (positive relationships characterized by kindness and empathy)
3. Social Justice (presence of fairness and/or equality)
4. Eco Mind (harmonious living between the humanity and nature)
5. Link Mind (perception of interconnectivity and/or interdependency)
6. Gender Mind (awareness of gender as an important facet of understanding)
7. Resilience (ability to absorb personal, social, or environmental calamity)
8. Wellbeing (health, wellness, and taking responsibility for self and/or others)
9. Prevention (knowing ways to stop violence before it starts)



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Example of analysis





Example of analysis - 1

School

Minch Academy 16-18

Theme

Relationships, identity, race

Main subject matter

Two hands of people of different colour holding each other

Breadth of themes

Three

Visual elements

Setting - outdoors/nature, **people** - two people of different races, **living elements** - no, **activity** - holding hands, **time** - daytime

Tone

Serene

Symbolism (later deleted)

People of different races embracing each other, living together in peace

Mastery

Meets the criteria - at least one element of positive peace

Elements of
Positive Peace

1- Peace Zone, 2- Peace Bond, 3- Social Justice, 4-Eco Mind



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- 1 – Peace Zone
- 2 – Peace Bond
- 3 – Social Justice
- 4 – Eco Mind
- 5 – Link Mind
- 6 – Gender
- 8 – Well Being
- 9 – Prevention



Example of analysis - 2

School	Minch Academy 16-18
Theme	Communication/discussion, safety, school, equality
Main subject matter	Varied images: tree as communication, earth as global discussion, school for education, equality between people, safety
Breadth of themes	Four
Visual elements	Setting – not specified, people - yes, living elements - no, activity - no, time – not specified
Tone	Hopeful
Symbolism (later deleted)	Key pillars of peace: equality, discussion, education, safety
Mastery	Meets the criteria - at least one element of positive peace
Elements of Positive Peace	1 -Peace Zone, 2- Peace Bond, 3- Social Justice, 4-Eco Mind, 5-Link Mind, 6-Gender Mind, 8-Wellbeing, 9-Prevention



Themes

Social Justice	n = 29	Concepts	n = 42	Places	n = 53	Things	n = 8	Activities	n = 10
Race	9	Relationships	18	Nature	35	Animals	4	Play	6
Identity	8	Harmony	5	School	7	Music	1	Relaxation	2
Political	3	Reflection	4	City	4	Clothes	1	Discussion	1
Health	2	Safety	3	Home	4	Art	1	Rebuilding	1
Negative Peace	2	Heritage	2	Road	2	Family	1		
Acceptance	1	Happiness	2	Factory	1				
Justice System	1	Solitude	2						
Government	1	Bright future	1						
Religious diversity	1	Spirituality	1						
Equal rights	1	Help	1						
		Positivity	1						
		Scottish identity	1						
		Self	1						

1. Young people express their understanding of peace through the natural environment, positive relationships, specific aspects of social justice, and things and activities that reflect elements of peace.
2. Young people expressed many abstract ideas and concepts through visual images that are not easily put into words



Positive peace elements

Positive peace elements
Peace Zone: 45
Eco Mind: 41
Wellbeing: 26
Peace Bond: 24
Social Justice: 21
Link Mind: 15
Prevention: 8
Resilience: 7
Gender Mind: 5

	St. Jean-Baptiste and Cooper High School		Minch Academy	
	12-15 year olds (n = 19)	16-18 year olds (n = 5)	12-15 year olds (n = 16)	16-18 year olds (n = 19)
Peace Zone	17	4	8	16
Peace Bond	7	4	5	7
Social Justice	6	2	4	9
Eco Mind	19	4	5	13
Link Mind	4	1	3	7
Gender Mind	1	1	2	1
Resilience	1	2	3	1
Wellbeing	12	3	4	7
Prevention	3	1	1	3



Contributions to peace: Peace wall reflections

(Workshops 1-4)

Peace Zone	N = 29	Rights-Based	N = 20	Diversity	N = 13	Interpersonal	N = 11	Prevention	N = 6
Culture of non-violence	10	Equality	10	Respect for all	9	Inner peace	5	Importance of peace	4
Happiness and tranquillity	8	Freedom of expression	4	Of contributions	2	Responsibility	3	Peace is not enough	2
Freedom from harm	5	Freedom of speech	3	Of views and experiences	1	Inspirations	2		
A good life	3	Justice	2	Potential in everyone	1	Art/music	1	Consequences	1
Calm and quiet environment	3	Environmental sustainability	1						

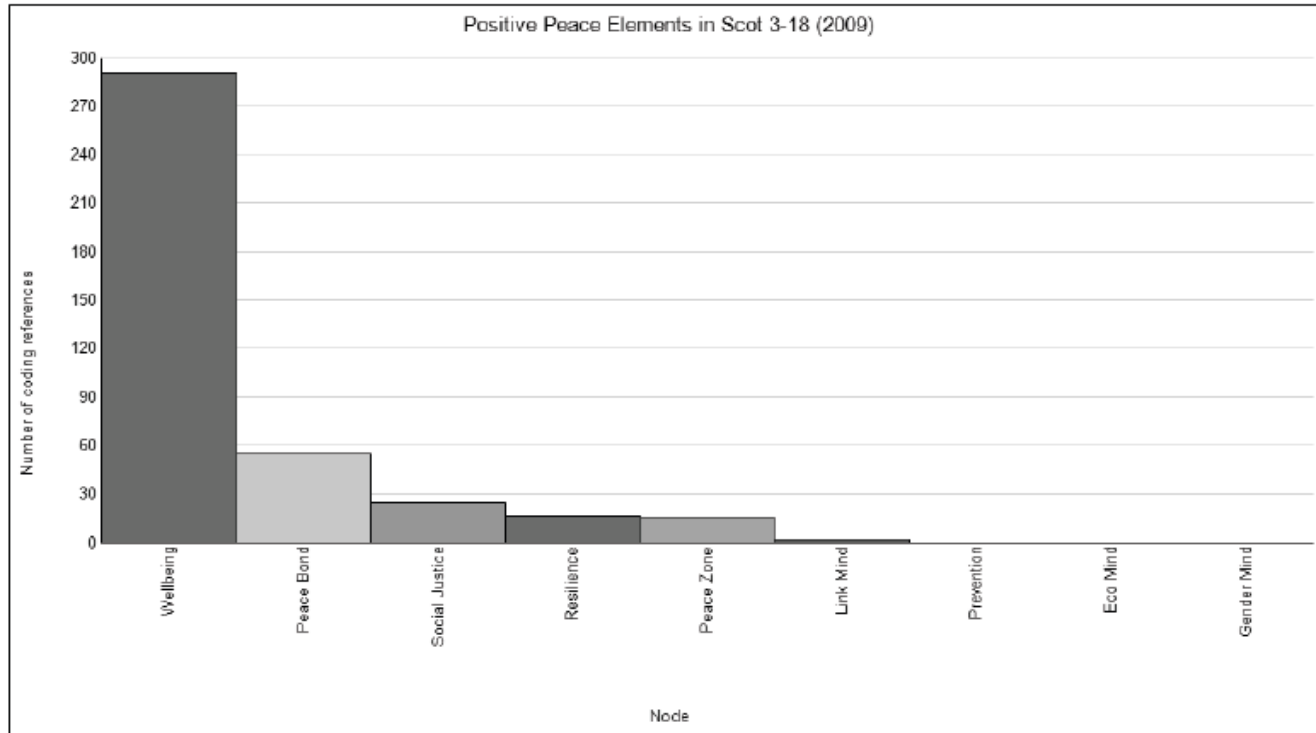
Assertions:

1. Young people can contribute to peace in their environment by establishing safe spaces where violence is absent through equitable and harmonious relationships characterized by kindness and empathy.
2. Young people can commit to personal responsibility for their own attitudes, behaviours, and wellbeing, as well as the wellbeing of others, that encourages peaceful coexistence.



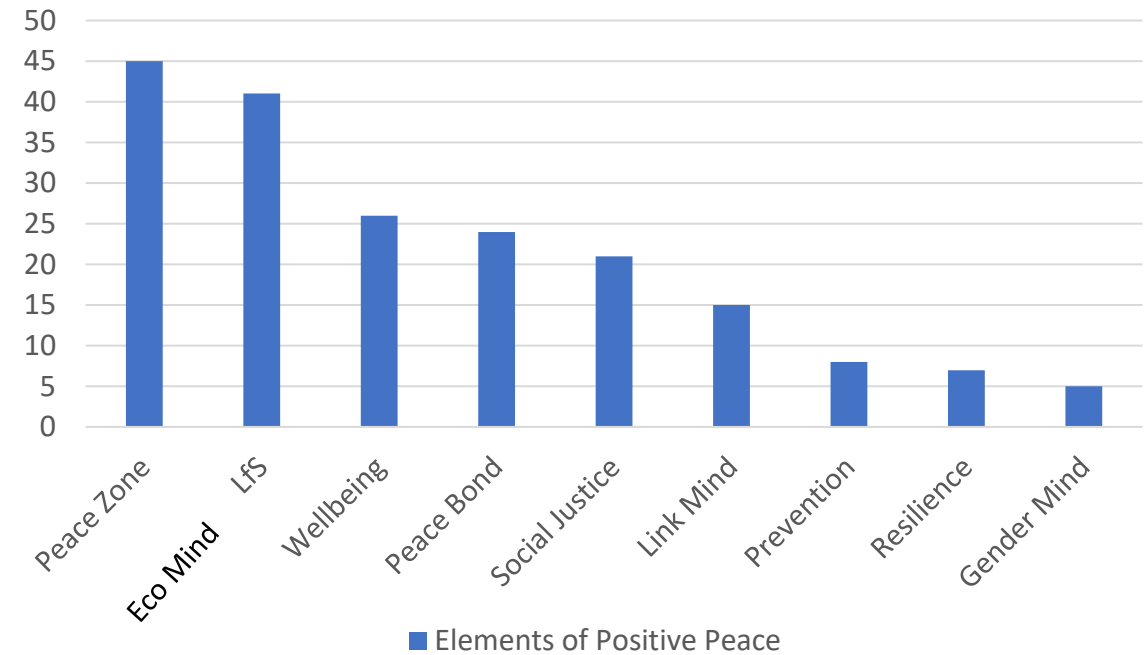
PECA Project Comparison

Positive Peace Elements in Scot 3-18 (2009)



(Standish & Joyce, 2016, p. 77)

Elements of Positive Peace



■ Elements of Positive Peace

(Nesterova & Anderson, 2023)



Learning - 1

Addresses a crises of praxis in peace education research:

- ensures congruence with peace values,
- demonstrates reflexivity,
- impacts the lives of participants

E.g.:

- rethinking data collection and analysis – i.e., sensitivity to process and outcomes
- meaning making through creative expression, not adult ways of understanding
- honesty and emotional reliability — see Ellis & Bochner, 2000



Learning - 2

Aligns research methods with democratic values

E.g.:

- A structured approach allowed students to understand and express what positive peace means and to see themselves as agents of change
- ‘Transformative inquiry’ – towards social change (Toews & Zehr, 2003)
 - Opportunity through peace reflection wall to aim towards commitments to social action in the space of positive peace – methods that have an impact on the lives of participants
- Students as ‘knowers’ (UNESCO, 2021); researchers as learners
 - Invites participants to engage and tell their stories; creates space for the voice of young people (in line with UNCRC)



Learning - 3

Normative validity through the voices of youth

- Whether what is being studied represents what is valued, against ‘pseudo-security of numbers’ (Biesta, 2013, p. 102)

E.g.:

- Representation of what young people value related to peace/peace education, what is desirable and what ought to be



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Limitations

- Small group of participants, three schools, two areas
- Activities need to be followed by focus groups or interviews
- Notes of discussions whilst students draw/paint
- Students' handwriting is difficult to understand



Key References

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Thank you!

