



PEST Project End of Year Project Report 2007/2008

Introduction

This report gives an overview of year 2 of the PEST (Peer Education Skills Training Project) in terms of reviewing the proposed workplan against the actual outcomes of the project.

Year 2 has been an interesting year for PEST, which I hope will be reflected in this document. There have been many key learning points for the staff and organisations involved as some of the work has not always run as smoothly as we may have liked as I will highlight later.

Following the feedback received on the format of the report from year 1, this report follows a similar pattern.

Year 2 Key Tasks

1. Facilitate and evaluate six training courses with 90 young people who will return to their organisations/communities and with the support of PEST staff, volunteers and other peer educators (both face to face and remotely) to share their learning experiences with up to 300 of their peers.

Following the 1st Annual Showcase event in June 2007, a number of contacts were made with new organisations from outwith the Article 12 in Scotland network. This was a very encouraging outcome from this event. In the months following the showcase, a number of project proposals were discussed with the following organisations:

The Rock Trust / Underground
Aberlour Childcare Trust
LGBT Youth Scotland
SKILL Scotland
West Lothian Council 'Having Your Say' Group
One Million Voices

In December 2007, a six month review document was produced that gave an update on how these project proposals were progressing. The following outlines what became of the projects in the six months between January and June 08. Extracts from the 6 month review are shown in italics.

The Rock Trust / Underground:

The Underground is a healthy living project of the Rock Trust, a charity based in Edinburgh that works with young people who are homeless or have experienced homelessness. The Underground Peer Volunteers group was set up in the summer of 2007 as an opportunity for those that had been coming to the project for a significant amount of time to take some control of the day-to-day running of the drop-in and some of the programmed activities.

In order to ensure that the group were organising activities that reflected the wishes of the wider group of young people that attend the Underground, they decided to undertake a service-user consultation. The Peer Volunteers have little or no experience of taking part in participatory project work or of consulting with their peers; hence planning the consultation has taken place over several months (since September until current time) to ensure that everyone is involved as fully as possible.

Initially, the group wanted to use a traditional questionnaire method to consult with their peers. However, after some discussion around more creative ways of carrying out a consultation it was decided to set up a Vox Pops Box or a Big Brother diary room-style room where people could come and be filmed giving their views on their likes / dislikes and their suggestions for change at the Underground.

The consultation is due to take place in January 2008. As well as being used by the Peer Volunteers to influence their programme planning, the information gathered will also be used at the next Rock Trust Staff Away Day and, if successful, will be rolled on a regular basis to consult with the young people using the service.

This piece of work ended in June 2008 with the production of a DVD – a copy is available on request - that featured filmed interviews with young people that attend the Underground project.

Overall, there were 11 core multipliers working with 12 multiplied during this project. A big challenge in this piece of work also had a positive outcome; both members of staff that were supporting the group became absent at the same time, one due to maternity leave and the other due to a broken ankle. This had the potential to have disastrous consequences for the consultation but, as it happened, it became a completely youth-led consultation as the group carried on with the work themselves despite the absence of the support staff. All of the filming and editing of the DVD was also completed by the young people themselves.

The work is still in the process of being evaluated. However, the Rock Trust has indicated that they will use the methods learned by the core group to consult with others in the future, probably on an annual basis, therefore increasing the numbers of multiplied over time.

Aberlour Childcare Trust:

Aberlour have been members of the Article 12 in Scotland network for approximately 2 years. The National Participation Worker at Aberlour is very interested in working with PEST in a number of the local groups that work with young people in their organisation.

A proposal has been submitted to various layers of Aberlour's senior management who are interested in finding out more about what the project would entail. At the last meeting with the Participation Worker, Tara offered to give a presentation to the senior management board of Aberlour to explain PEST work in greater detail; a date is yet to be set.

Despite the efforts of the staff involved, this project proposal did not get any further than the 'proposal' stage. The PEST Coordinator took the decision to move on to other areas of work with other organisations in light that little progress had been made with Aberlour's proposal.

LGBT Youth Scotland:

PEST trainers delivered training to a group of 5 people from LGBT Youth Scotland's National Council Executive Committee at the end of October. The young people had previous experience of taking part in peer education initiatives and in many different consultation events. However, they wanted to develop their skills to be able to facilitate a session of their own and decided to choose the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as their topic due to a lack of knowledge on youth rights within their peer group.

The group of multipliers delivered a session at their National Residential in early November which the PEST team are awaiting the evaluation of. However, initial feedback from the group was that the session was a success for all involved. The group are considering an idea to deliver their session to the various local groups that LGBT Youth Scotland have across the country.

The following comments are taken from the evaluation that the peer educators carried out during their session:

I want...

- To learn how to use the articles to help with our campaigns
- To have fun
- Information
- To know what the UNCRC is and why it's there
- The relevance of the UNCRC
- Learn more about our rights
- Learn about what articles are most relevant to LGBT young people

I got...

- Found out other people's experiences
- An informative activity that made you think
- Good debates and discussion
- Things I can do to ensure my opinion is heard
- Many voices create change
- I will be able to better consider the rights of young people who the NYC represents

Overall, 5 peer educators worked with 15 multiplied. As of July 2008, 32 Local Authority representatives will be joining the National Youth Council of LGBT Youth Scotland. It is intended that the core trainers will deliver the training to this group at a later date, again, increasing the multiplied over time.

SKILL Scotland:

Have had an initial meeting with SKILL Scotland following the first PEST showcase in June 2007. They have indicated that they would like to work with PEST to promote community activism with young people with disabilities. They are currently putting together a proposal for a funding bid which is due to be submitted next spring with the project potentially kicking off in late summer / autumn of 2008.

Following contact with SKILL Scotland in January 2008, it became clear that funding for this project proposal was proving to be a huge barrier to the project coming to fruition, despite the willingness of the staff and young people at SKILL Scotland. At the current time, funding still has not been sought; therefore, the project is still at the proposal stage.

West Lothian Council 'Having Your Say' Group:

The 'Having Your Say' group was set up by West Lothian Council to give young people in care an opportunity to have their say about the services that are provided for them.

The group and PEST are in the early stages of a project together that will look at supporting the group to produce a resource - this is still to be decided but could be a workshop, an information pack or a short film - for younger peers that are entering the care system for the first time. The group have indicated through our initial discussions that they would like to focus on mental well being when in care. This would take in many of the positive as well as the negative aspects of coming into care for the first time by promoting a young persons resilience and independence to highlighting some of the more stressful situations that they may encounter such as stigma and bullying.

A training residential is planned with the group for mid-January 2008.

This piece of work, involving 10 core peer educators, has been put on hold until further notice. Despite the best efforts of the PEST project, the young people from Having Your Say and other members of staff from West Lothian Council, work had to be halted to allow for a staff restructure to take place. It is hoped that following the staff restructure at West Lothian Council that the new employee that will be responsible for future work with PEST and other external agencies will have a clear understanding of and willingness to further the participation of young people through peer education in order for the proposed piece of work be kick-started once more. Although, it should be noted that at the current time there are no timescales in place to facilitate this.

One Million Voices:

This project is working with young people across Scotland to raise their awareness of global conflict and campaign for peace as part of a global campaign by One Voice. One Voice is a grassroots civic society organisation that is led by young people in Palestine and Israel. They set up the One Million Voices campaign to get other young people to sign up to peace in the Middle East in order to put international pressure on the decision makers in both territories to come up with solutions to the conflict.

A group of young people that were involved with the work of Article 12 in Scotland decided that they wanted to do some awareness-raising work of their own to support the global campaign. To do this, they have been working with PEST to plan and host a number of signing events and gigs across Scotland. To date, a rally and gig has been held in Aberdeen in October 2007 which was attended by 350 young people. A signing has also taken place at the Montrose Music Festival in May 2008 where over 200 signatures were received in support of the campaign. The group of peer educators – of which there are 6 – are planning on hosting at least 3 more gigs between now and November 2008 which will feature information sessions on global conflict and peace and local bands that support the ideas behind the campaign. This piece of work is ongoing.

In relation to the workplan, the numbers of project participants are as follows:

Predicted number of participants:

Core peer educators:	90
Multiplied:	300

Actual number of participants:

*Core peer educators:	31
Multiplied:	377

Additional project participants (All have taken part in training sessions):

Professionals	48
Students	95 (65 aged 16 – 25, 30 mature students)

* Due to the complex and transient lifestyles of some of this year's participants a decision was taken to focus on smaller groups of core peer educators.

2. Organise national event that will:

1. Enable participants to “showcase” and peer evaluate each others work and skills development

2. Enable participants and project staff to evaluate the impact that the training has had at individual/peer group/organisational/community level.

The 2nd Annual PEST Showcase took place at Cabaret Voltaire nightclub on Friday the 27th of June 2008. This event was attended by 43 individuals representing a cross-section of practitioners from 21 different voluntary and statutory agencies. Of the 21 organisations, 13 were new contacts i.e. organisations that PEST has not worked with previously, which is very encouraging for years 3 and 4 of the PEST project.

The programme for the event included PEST project presentations by young people from LGBT Youth Scotland, The Rock Trust / Underground and One Million Voices. Additionally, Eye of the Child, a Malawian partner organisation of Article 12 in Scotland also presented.

Representatives from Eye of the Child were in Edinburgh for an Article 12 in Scotland core-funded study visit the same week as the showcase. Although they have not been part of PEST, they work to further young people’s participation in Malawi and so it was felt that it would be appropriate for delegates at the showcase to get an international perspective of young people’s participation and associated methods. To close the event, musical entertainment was provided by Gavin McGinty, a young acoustic musician from Dundee who is part of the One Million Voices campaign.

The feedback on the event was excellent, everyone really enjoyed themselves and took a lot away from the day. Several people from the new contact organisations stated that they want to discuss further opportunities to work with PEST over year 3. The best aspect of the day though was that it was far more youth-led than last years’ event, an important factor for future PEST showcase events.

Tara Fisher, PEST Coordinator.
July 2008