
**The Peace Factory: A Mobile Interactive Exhibition on Peace, Conflict, Freedom,
Prejudices and the Scapegoat Phenomenon**

Name of organisation:
Peace Education Projects

Learning for change

IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

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Peace Education Projects/Remembrance Centre Fortress The Bilt

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1.

Peace Education Projects, Utrecht, The Netherlands

The Foundation Peace Education Projects employs some ten people who are working at interactive methods in the fields of the multicultural society, the commemoration of the Second World War in relation to the present and the topic of violence. They are specialised in the development of didactic concepts that result in educational software, movies and videos, interactive exhibitions and innovative educational projects. These projects are realised by order of third parties or result from own initiatives. A characteristic feature of the co-operation with the Foundation Peace Education Projects is the close involvement of target groups and clients. This enables us to guarantee the high quality of the projects. Some speech-making assignments were carried out in the past few years by order of museums, municipalities, educational programmes and other institutes with an educational mission.

Fortress The Bilt

The office of the Foundation Peace Education Projects is located at Fortress The Bilt in Utrecht. Some 140 men, mainly members of the resistance, were shot here during the Second World War. The grounds, property of the city of Utrecht, have an educational destination. The Foundation Peace Education Projects runs a 'Remembrance Centre for the Future' at the Fortress. This centre focuses mainly on children and on young people. They get to know about the resistance during the Second World War. They can also discover how they can dedicate themselves to helping other people: to a world in which there is no room for discrimination and scapegoats: to a liveable world in which all men have their home. Groups of adults can also follow an educational programme departing from several perspectives at Fortress The Bilt. The centre accommodates an interactive exhibition on the resistance movement during the Second World War, built into the present. Some tens of thousands of children and young people and their teachers have already paid a visit to this Foundation Peace Education Projects. The Foundation Peace Education Projects was granted the Tolerantieprijs (Tolerance Prize) by the City of Utrecht in 2001 for its educational activities at Fortress The Bilt. Abroad, the Foundation Peace Education Projects is active under the name of Peace Education Projects. They have organised interactive exhibitions on prejudices and on the scapegoat phenomenon in six European countries, such as Russia, Spain, Italy and Northern Ireland.

Interactive Methodology

The interest in the history of the Second World War is still growing. New initiatives are developed in the field of youth counselling. An increasing number of people ask questions on the connections between the past and the present. These questions are very divergent since the Netherlands constitutes a multicultural society. Can we learn from the past? And if so, what does it mean for our present society? The project 'Interactive Methodology', carried out by the Foundation Peace Education Projects, wishes to take these questions seriously and to investigate them. By doing so, the history of the Second World War will become instructive for all Dutchmen, whatever their ethnic backgrounds may be.

2.

The Challenge of Interactive Learning

Interactive learning covers all aspects of the learning process. The concept 'interactive' concerns all learners aimed at by the objectives, the subject matter and the didactic tools. The teacher occupies a central position within this process, thereby sharing his or her experience of life and expert abilities with the learners. Learning is a social process. People continuously learn from each other and teach other new things. However, society also confronts young children with problems that they will have to deal with in their own lives. In this chapter we will systematically go through a number of points of departure. These points of departure will then be illustrated on the basis of the interactive exhibition organised by the Remembrance Centre for the Future Fortress The Bilt.

Intentional learning

The subject matter, the way in which this subject matter is processed and the learning results are to a large extent determined by the interaction between the person involved and his environment. This environment does not only consist of the direct learning environment such as the school or the museum, but also of the influences of society as a whole and of the several groups to which the learner belongs. The latter case mainly concerns ways of non-intentional learning. We can for example stroll through a museum or have a conversation with somebody who is an expert in the field of the hole in the ozone layer. Attitudes of teachers and parents towards values and standards are also often transmitted to children in a non-intentional way as well. Within the framework of intercultural education we will confine ourselves to intentional learning. Nevertheless, a lot of attention is paid to the so-called hidden curriculum transmitting implicit values and standards by means of attitude, language and other kinds of behaviour. Education describes the learning process as accurately as possible in terms of objectives, target groups, didactic tools and evaluation tools. Visiting an amusement park with a group of children can be an instructive experience, but we do not call these kinds of activities education until we can link verifiable objectives to the visit.

Interactive learning

Interactive learning has its theoretical basis in several concepts. This is what we call an eclectic approach. The developers of learning processes do not adhere to one school or one theoretical concept but draw on all kinds of sources. By doing so, seemingly incompatible points of departure and methods are combined into one single programme. Interactive learning contains elements taken from programmed instruction, experience learning, self-tuition, and from open and closed end learning methods. These elements are combined with group instruction, individual coaching and group meetings during which values are explained by means of games, conversations and several ways of expression.

Dealing with diversity

This eclectic approach fits within the framework of the present post-modern era that is characterised by quite a number of seemingly incongruous combinations, summarised as 'and – and' instead of as 'if – if'. Nevertheless, this approach is also based on some didactic elements and on some elements regarding contents. The eclectic approach is an answer to the problem experienced by all developers of learning processes, i.e. how to deal with the considerable differences between the pupils. These differences concern ethnic backgrounds, socio-economic factors and gender aspects. Moreover, pupils also distinguish themselves on the basis of their talents and their learning styles. The result of this complex of factors is that each specific method selects its own pupils. A method that puts a strong

emphasis on linguistic skills will stimulate pupils who already have a satisfying command of the language, whereas it will be out of reach for the pupils who are less fluent.

Another effect is that programmes that are meant to eliminate certain deficiencies often do not reach the pupils who would benefit from them and improve the skills of the proficient pupils. Another method that is aimed at 'self-reliant research' or 'open-end learning' selects pupils who are good at working on their own and at structuring themselves in order to tackle their learning assignment and to motivate the other members of their group. Children who are not or not sufficiently able to do so, will experience this kind of learning climate as being chaotic and will hence not be incited to learn.

Learning in variations

Interactive learning explicitly wishes to be eclectic and offers all opportunities to vary strongly as to the didactic tools and the knowledge transfer. Indeed, the word 'interaction' implies that the aspects of learner, objective, subject matter and didactic tools make up a dynamic whole. Pupils with diverse backgrounds, learning capacities, learning styles and talents can process the learning objectives in their own way.

Explanation of values

Another aspect of interactive learning concerns the way in which the learning contents are dealt with. Indeed, an eclectic approach combines group instruction and knowledge transfer with its own research, open questions and values communication. Our approach to interactive learning clearly contains moments of knowledge transfer. However, this is always in function of the own learning process that has a researching and dialogic nature. This is why we have summarised this way of working in the following motto: 'Do not teach children what they should think, teach them that they should think'. Mottos are always over-simplified but still it remains an accurate summary of interactive learning.

Prejudices

The learning contents regarding the topic of prejudices are fixed at levels of definition and social-psychological backgrounds. However, the pupils should discover their own prejudices and link them to facts and opinions. The pupils are not being told that prejudices are wrong or morally reprehensible. Instead, they receive the tools to detect prejudices themselves. They discover that they are acquired and that people can cure themselves of these prejudices. They learn that prejudices are all in the mind and that they are linked to fear and uncertainty; that prejudices as opinions can lead to discrimination in our acting. These are only some of the possible results of interactive learning.

Illustrations

From 1991 onwards, the Foundation Peace Education Projects has been organising a number of exhibitions that were called 'interactive'. These exhibitions were among others held in Belgium, Russia, France, Italy and Spain. By the middle of 2001 the method for interactive learning was integrated in an educational software package called 'Seeing Sense' that was distributed by some institutions in Northern Ireland. The development of the interactive method was based on the history of the Second World War. This is why the next chapter will focus on the interactive exhibition at the Remembrance Centre for the Future Fortress The Bilt.

3.

Remembrance Centre Fortress The Bilt

Interactive Learning Illustrated

The developers of the Remembrance Centre for the Future Fortress The Bilt are convinced that there is no better way of commemorating than to teach children and young people how to live up to the democratic ideals of freedom and respect for their fellow men in their daily lives. Indeed, these were also the ideals of the 140 members of the resistance who were executed in Fortress The Bilt during the Second World War. The entire programme of the Centre aims at involving the pupils in this commemoration objective in a well-varied way.

Main objective

The main objective pursued during a visit to Fortress The Bilt is: *To involve children and young people in the history of the Second World War, specifically into the history of the resistance and of the role of Fortress The Bilt, and to link this history to their own experiences of life in a multicultural society that is characterised by diversity in a challenging and accurate way.*

Attainment targets

After their visit to the Remembrance Centre for the Future Fortress The Bilt and the processing of the teacher's manual at school, the pupils can:

- use the twin concepts 'true-not true' and apply them to their reality.
- define the difference between a fact and an opinion and give an example of both.
- define prejudices and explain that negative prejudices can lead to discrimination.
- explain the concept of the scapegoat and analyse the scapegoat phenomenon within the context of the Second World War and on the basis of their own everyday experiences.
- name forms of resistance in the past and in the present and relate them.
- name motives of resistance to injustice within the context of Second World War-Present.
- express their own opinion on the phenomena *resist to...* and *dedicate oneself to...*
- appreciate their own culture and ethnic background and put them in perspective.
- learn how to deal with 'common and strange' within the context of culture. Observe from the perspective of themselves and of others.
- expose stereotypes and racist prejudices in order to create a respectful attitude towards people who are 'different'.
- name a personal action perspective in situations illustrating oppression and the scapegoat phenomenon.

Target group

The interactive exhibition at Fortress The Bilt is meant for children of ten years and older. In practice, the exhibition is best suited for groups of seven or eight primary school children and for children of the first class of secondary schools. The experiences with children of Secondary Special Education were satisfying as well. Pupils with learning problems or with a physical handicap feel very comfortable at Fortress The Bilt too. The interactive exhibition is a challenge for these children and mainly concerns the development and the expression of their own opinion. This is how a wide group of children is taken seriously. The content of the exhibition is neither complex nor childish. It is a surprising, exciting and fun thing to do. Moreover, adult groups (team training, excursion, refresher

courses, post school education etc.) also like to visit the exhibition. Their discoveries are just as fascinating as the children's.

Working methods

The working methods applied in the exhibition are structured in a challenging and interactive way. This entails that the children are involved in the topic concerned in an interactive way. They are challenged to think of answers to express their opinions, to look for solutions and to work together. The exhibition at Fortress The Bilt is not intended to give the children opinions. It aims at having them discover how they can develop their own opinions on social topics such as war, peace, pestering and the scapegoat phenomenon. The keywords of the method to be followed are: discover, experience and act. The appeal of the exhibition is increased by means of colourful and attractive materials such as mirrors, peepholes, puzzles and moveable panels.

The pupils are challenged to:

- observe in an analytical way
- cooperate and debate
- ask questions
- live the situation of other people
- search for solutions
- develop their own opinion
- make choices as regards the action perspectives

Organisation

The teacher divides the children into groups of two beforehand. The children arrive and watch a video of about fifteen minutes. Each child then receives a route map and a starting number (pupils of one group have the same number). All assignments of the exhibition are numbered. Each twosome starts at another number in order to spread the group. At the end, all pupils will have carried out all assignments.

Task of the supervisor

The exhibition is structured in an interactive way. This entails that the children 'guide' themselves and follow the numbered panels on the basis of the route map. The role of the supervisor is mainly to motivate the children. Adults should not take the initiative. They should only discuss the assignment with the children if they are rushing or if they have reading problems and do not understand certain assignments. Stimulation and support is important. Children must look for answers themselves and develop their own opinions.

Concentration

Most pupils work for about one hour in the indoor exhibition. Pupils sometimes experience concentration problems and cannot fight down their impulse to be a pest. This is mainly seen with children who are not used to working on their own. Their visit to the exhibition will gain meaning by offering them more structure at that moment. Moreover, the other children will be better able to concentrate. The exhibition is organised in several rooms. It is important for the teacher and the parents present to cover over these rooms and to supervise the children.

The introductory movie

The special movie that was recorded within the framework of the introduction of the exhibition serves two purposes. First it aims at stimulating the concentration of the visitors after their bicycle, car or bus trip. It also introduces some topics and concepts. The pupils are challenged to look for a remedy for pestering, which is a problem that all children are familiar with. The socio-psychological

phenomenon of the scapegoat is carefully applied to the history of the Second World War and to today's life in the world of children. The scapegoat phenomenon is an example of same which everybody experiences in everyday life. The scapegoat phenomenon took a very extreme form during the Second World War. We can discern four groups in the phenomenon: the perpetrators, the victims, the hangers-on or the spectators and the resistance. In the world of the child, these groups would be the pests, the scapegoat, the hangers-on and the resistance. The compere of the movie comes to the conclusion that resistance, however difficult and risky it might be, is always possible. Resistance is no longer a thing of the past, of the Second World War. Resistance can also be seen when children ask a question or refuse to follow suit and scold, pester or turn to other forms of violence. In other words there is a remedy for pestering: 'You can be this remedy if you offer resistance.' Offering resistance can for example entail calling in help or showing the victim that you are aware of the pestering. Resistance to injustice and helping other people is no longer a thing of the past. It is possible anywhere and anytime and present-day children can make their contribution.

The interactive exhibition

THE INDOOR EXHIBITION

Topic 1. True or not true, sometimes true

'Dutchmen can be recognised on the basis of their white skin'. Is this true or not true? The children discover that it is not. Indeed, Ruud Gullit is a Dutchman too !

Topic 2. Fact or opinion

A fact is always true and an opinion can be true but is linked to the ideas of the child. By adding the correct answers, the pupils find the number of the key of the door of the guardhouse in which they will find 'the nicest child of the whole world'. When they open the house, they will see themselves reflected in a mirror.

Topic 3. Prejudices

'Handicapped people are pitiful', 'Refugees are profiteers'. These are two statements on groups that are not correct. They are prejudices and we all have our own prejudices. They are not innate but acquired. The pupils learn how to recognise prejudices by means of a game. They weight up facts and opinions against each other.

Topic 4. Common or strange

The children discover that what is common in one culture can be strange in another: blow your nose in a handkerchief, eat raw fish, gramps and granny living in a home for the elderly, telling children that there is a horse on the roof, unwrap a present in the presence of the giver, pray five times a day, boys falling in love with boys and girls falling in love with girls.

Topic 5. The scapegoat

The children discover the characteristics of the scapegoat phenomenon in their own environment. There are pests and a group of hangers-on. The children read three poems. The first is written by a pest, the second by a hanger-on and the third by a scapegoat. Many children recognise the situation. They are challenged to look for a solution for the scapegoat. They conclude this exercise by writing down an experience of their own.

Topic 6. Refugees

This exercise shows five filled and opened suitcases of children who were once refugees. Another suitcase is empty and the children are asked what they would take with them if they had to flee.

Topic 7. Resistance

This is an extensive component of the exhibition covering all kinds of things.

Three members of the resistance serve as an example for other people. They are Herman Benschop and Jo Kievits who performed acts of resistance and were shot at Fortress The Bilt. The third portrait is that of Manfred Lewinsohn, a Jewish member of the resistance who was active in the Children's Committee of Utrecht that procured safe houses for Jewish children.

The children meet Aike who tells them that his grandpa died at the age of thirty. He was murdered at Fortress The Bilt. Two Surinam brothers have lost their father and their uncle. They were killed at Fort Zeelandia in Paramaribo.

The children are then invited to present a medal to a person or an organisation. Who will they choose ? Rosa Parks, Arkin Birdal, The Salvation Army or Green Peace?

The pupils who wish to do so can, as an act of resistance, sign a fax to a prisoner. The fax can be sent from the Centre, but it is usually sent at school. A prisoner is 'adopted' in co-operation with Amnesty International. This prisoner has been Min Ko Naing since the opening of the exhibition at Fortress The Bilt in April 1991. Min Ko Naing used to be a student leader in Myanmar/Burma who asserted democratic rights in a non-violent way. He has been in prison for more than ten years now.

The children also get to know three people who were affected by the war in a dramatic way. Carry was a woman courier during the Second World War. Four of her resistance friends were killed at Fortress The Bilt. Jan gave the order to shoot an Indonesian resistance fighter in the Dutch East Indies. He has offered his apologies to the family. Nette is the daughter of a member of the NSB and was pestered for years on end after the war.

Topic 8. Peace and unrest

The children complete a special questionnaire at the end of the indoor exhibition. Their opinion is important. The children indicate what they fear, what they hate, what they like and who is their biggest enemy.

OUTDOOR EXHIBITION

Part 1. Commemoration at the monument

The pupils take the paved path and walk towards the monument. This monument is erected on the execution ground. It is a simple monument showing a mournful mother with her son and a skinny dog. The children are always impressed. The symbolism of the flowers, the laurel wreath, the dog, the vulnerable woman and the naked child clearly shows that they mourn the death of a husband and a father.

Part 2. Visit to the death bunker

The casemate was built in the thirties. This bunker served as a prison during the Second World War. Members of the resistance were sometimes imprisoned here before they were executed. The bunker was sealed hermetically and the prisoners had to pump oxygen into the building themselves. A handwritten ode to queen Wilhelmina is still partly legible on one of the walls.

Part 3. Visit to the name-stones

The children got to know Herman Benschop, Jo Kievits and André Doosjen in the indoor exhibition. They are three members of the resistance who were shot at Fortress The Bilt. The pupils look for their names and their ages on the name stones.

Part 4. What does resistance start with ?

A continuation of the famous poem by Remco Campert is visible through the loophole of another former machine-gun casemate. Resistance begins very humbly. Somebody wonders about injustice. A question that entails risks. Resistance grows if this question is asked to other people as well.

Part 5. I offer resistance to / I dedicate myself to

The opinions of the children are gathered in two former depots at the end of the visit to the Remembrance Centre for the Future Fortress The Bilt. They write down what they would like to offer resistance to. They also indicate what they would like to dedicate themselves to. These are two concepts that play an important role in our society. Resistance to injustice and dedication to people, to our planet.