

# Transition, peer education and the global dimension

Manchester [Development Education Project](#) (DEP) used peer education methodology and the global dimension to address issues of transition from primary to secondary school.

## What did DEP want to achieve?

Extensive research has identified social and academic problems for many pupils at the stage of transition from primary to secondary school. Research into peer education, a global teaching approach used particularly in health education, has demonstrated that young people more easily accept advice and information from their peers. DEP decided to run a pilot to see if peer education combined with global learning could ease primary-secondary school transition. They hoped to develop a replicable, sustainable model.

## How did they set about doing this?

Two school clusters in different settings in Manchester were recruited through the DEP schools network, extending to four clusters when funding permitted. The project coordinator, Shadi Osanloo, met with the schools to discuss how the programme could best fit within their existing transition work, and as a result different models were developed with each school. Flexibility was key to success. At one school, Year 8 volunteer peer educators (ages 12-13) were recruited through posters and an assembly announcement; at another, tutors nominated pupils they thought would benefit; and a third school held interviews for gifted and talented pupils. Although recruitment procedures were different, presenting different training needs, the outcomes were similar as each group rose to the challenge.

Training for the peer educators ranged from half a day once a month to two days full time, with some students putting in extra homework time to balance their commitment. Training in peer education skills was essential but additional training on global issues depended on the number and focus of planned sessions with Year 6 pupils (ages 10-11) at feeder primary schools. Some of the peer educators had only one session with each feeder school, while others had two or three. Some visited the primary schools, others hosted visits in their own schools and some did both.

One cluster chose [Rights Respecting Schools](#) as their topic and another addressed the [eight global dimension concepts](#). Two science specialist schools focused on malaria, looking at the science and the human implications. The peer educators were supplied with information around their topic and designed activities and practised running them before working with the primary schools. The primary school sessions worked on a carousel model, with three or four short activities on the global topic, each run by two or three peer educators with groups of between 10 and 20 primary pupils. The focus then moved to school transition. The groups talked informally with the peer educators about their hopes and fears, had a question and answer session, or participated in quizzes or role plays.



**“I have learnt more about being a global citizen and how I can encourage my family and friends to care more about the planet.”**

## How well did they achieve their aims?

All the project aims were achieved, with feedback from the schools allowing adjustments to the programme in the second year. At focus groups run by the external evaluator immediately after the project, peer educators said their confidence had increased, they were able to put their own opinions across better and understand different viewpoints, and they were thinking more about global issues and how these link to their own lives, with some reporting changes in family behaviour.

Quotes from Year 8 peer educators:

*"Going to Primary Schools really helped me in lots of ways. It gave me confidence to speak in front of people and improved my organization skills."*

*"I really liked the debating activity because everyone has different view points and we could all share them with each other. I have learned to listen more."*

Questionnaires from the primary schools revealed that pupils found the secondary pupils friendly and helpful and they felt more confident about moving to secondary school. Sixty percent said they had learnt something about the global dimension. Year 6 pupils spoken to informally said they felt comfortable asking questions of slightly older pupils and trusted them to answer truthfully. One secondary school was so pleased with the programme that they extended it from two feeder primary schools in the first year to eight in the second. Another used it as part of their marketing strategy as well as their transition strategy.

Quotes from Year 6 pupils:

*"I have learnt more about being a global citizen and how I can encourage my family and friends to care more about the planet."*

*"You are individuals and you might know something that someone else didn't know and you can teach anyone at different levels."*

*"I learnt that water is very precious."*

## What do they plan to do next?

Three of the four pilot schools have planned the work into their transition strategy and will run it themselves in future years. A practical teaching resource '[Going up, growing up](#)' has been produced to enable other schools to use the methodologies and activities developed through the project.

A conference to launch the book and disseminate learning from the project was received with enthusiasm and other schools have since adopted the programme. DEP is further promoting the work by making presentations at other conferences.

