|  |
| --- |
| **Potatoes for Peace: A peace education initiative for school- age children** |
| **Maximum 2500 characters (including spaces but excluding title)****Setting/problem**In certain regions there exists a gulf of understanding between different cultures and religions. Mixed with conflict, prejudices and negative stereotypes can start from a young age in children. If we wish to create a culture of peace we need to think of preventing any possible future conflict now and this involves peace building and peace education.**Intervention**Potatoes for Peace is an educational programme for use amongst school-age children. Individual potatoes are transformed to potato people of different nationalities, cultures and religions to help them develop a better appreciation of the “other”. Each potato person is given a name, personality and each child assumes responsibility of caring for the potato person for 2-3 weeks after which time the potato would have aged, like a real person and will be planted to produce new potatoes. This is a fun, sustainable, innovative, inexpensive way to create an environment of acceptance, tolerance and understanding in school children for people of different faiths, cultures and nationalities.**Outcomes**The first pilot was undertaken with over 100 primary school aged children in London, UK in July 2018. Positive feedback was given by 98% of the children that attended the 3 lesson programme. Teachers also responded favourably with invitations to return and offers of introductions to other schools. In addition, there was ample constructive feedback from both the teachers and children which will be incorporated in subsequent pilots and enabled the intervention to be truly participatory and respond to local needs such as, discussions around bullying, ill health and disability. **Implications**This has far reaching implications for both peace education and health. Initial first pilot success suggests that there is high acceptability and potential to scale up internationally. In addition, Potatoes for Peace can be developed as an entry point for health promotion activities amongst children. **Preferred presentation format**Oral |