



Peace Child International

Harnessing the Arts in the Service of Peace

PEACE CHILD / STUDENT EMERGENCY BRIEFING FOR SCHOOLS

I N T R O D U C T I O N

by

David R Woollcombe, Founder and President,
Peace Child International

Background – *Peace Child*. For 45 years, [Peace Child International](#) (PCI) has worked with young people (10-25) to develop stories, books, videos and musicals that empower young people first to inform themselves about the local and global challenges they will face in their lifetimes, - then to support them to take action to rise to those challenges. The major vehicle for that work is *Peace Child* – a musical co-created anew by every young cast with theatre professionals /drama teachers to the songs of David Gordon (brother of Yusuf / Cat Stevens.) The Peace Child format starts in a safe, sustainable future world, 50-years hence, and tells the story in a flashback to the present of what the young people of today do with their working lives to bring about that safe, peaceful, sustainable future. Every performance, thus, is unique to the children that create it.

Background – The National Emergency Briefing: The [National Emergency Briefing](#) (NEB) in Central Hall Westminster on November 27th 2025 brought together 1200 delegates including 100 MPs, Peers, environmental experts and academics + activists and journalists for a 3-hour, fact-based briefing on the state of our planet by 10 top UK scientists and economists. They outlined the existential risks our own, and future, generations face, and the policies we need to pursue to resolve them. A 50-minute [People's Emergency Briefing](#) film, designed for people 18+ (= voters), is now on release for Community showings with Discussions afterwards with local elected officials and business leaders. The NEB goal is to secure a Prime-time, government-sponsored Briefing on the Climate and Nature Emergency so that the entire population have a sense of the existential crisis we all face.

Needed: a Students' Emergency Briefing: The government's 2025 [Curriculum & Assessment Review](#) recommends that school curricula - "*Embeds climate change and sustainability more explicitly across different key stages, ensuring early, coherent and more detailed engagement with climate education.*" Though targeted at Geography teachers, we feel that schools would get more traction with these issues by working through Drama and Music teachers to get their students engaged in promoting SOLUTIONS to this National (- and Global) Nature & Climate Emergency – to their peers, their parents, families and whole communities. So PCI has worked with students and teachers to develop short (15-20 min), mid- (45-min) and Full-length musical versions for schools. If you are interested, **please write to:** david@peacechild.org – and book a zoom conversation to discuss how your school / drama group / community environment group of young people aged 10+ might be empowered to co-create their version of the story. We are happy to help you as a resource to advise your production, providing production resources - film clips, powerpoints, music scores, backing tracks etc. – that you may require.

3 x Different School Versions: A 45-minute version is being developed to premiere at the Opening Concert of the [2026 International Eisteddfod](#) at Llangollen, Wales on July 7th with an international cast, orchestra and choir. That, and the 2-hour Full Length musical requires a big effort, and long time scale to produce. Quicker and easier is the 20-minute version (*See Base Script that follows.*) Designed as a conversation-starter for School and Community Briefings, it uses extracts from the film + 5 x *Peace Child* songs in a story that pits 5 x young Idealists against 5 x young Realists finding solutions to the Climate & Nature Emergencies the film describes.

Summary: The show starts with the Realists' song, [WORLD](#) – that ends: 'Our world is dying today.' That is unacceptable to the Idealists who want to live! (Songs: [I WANT TO LIVE I and II](#)) The Realists show by using expert's testimony from the film that the PROBLEMS are now so bad, it is all-but impossible to change humanity's direction of travel. The Idealists counter with the SOLUTIONS evidence from the film and cite the Dream of Martin Luther King (Song: [I HAVE A VISION](#)). They argue that it is entirely possible for their generation to change direction. The Realists argue that most youth are not bothered and want just to have fun, and hope it never happens. The Idealists argue back fiercely that it will only not happen if their generation makes it NOT HAPPEN! They assert their "belief in us" – and agree to work together with their peers around the world to ensure the survival, regeneration and prosperity of all natural and human Life on Earth!



SHORT-FORM BASE SCRIPT

by
David Woollcombe

Bare Stage. Music starts as the image of the World in Space – with the title: PLANET IN NEED – comes up on the screen at the back. 2 x Groups of 5 x Youth – the Realists and the Idealists – come on from either side of the stage and stand, Stage Right and Stage Left – facing each other. One realist comes forward and sings:

SONG 1. [WORLD](#) [KEY: E MAJOR]

Realist Youth (*sings*)

World – look at the way we are
Look at the things we do
Look at the words we say
Life! – look at the way we live
Look at the love we had
Look at the things we made

5 x Realist Youth (*joining*)

Gone, gone are all those lovely days
Gone are all the peaceful ways
All that's left is old and grey
And our world is fading
Our world is dying – today!

5 x Idealist Youth (*responding*)

Can't you see the tide is changing?
Don't you know that truth is fading?
People coming out from under
Slowly rising to the thunder

5 x Realist Youth

Listen to the shouting people
Broken churches, broken steeple
There's no one for them to follow

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Every one's a God tomorrow |
| 5 x Idealist Youth | Can't you see the world is dying? Repentant people all are crying |
| 5 x Realist Youth | Law and order has been drowned Chaos rules and has been crowned! |
| All | <i>(fortissimo)</i> World – look at the way we are Look at the things we do Look at the games we play Life! – look at the way we live Look at the things we build Look at the love we've killed |
| 5 x Realist Youth | Gone, gone are all those lovely days Gone are all the peaceful ways All that's left is old and grey And our world is fading Our world is dying – today! |
| Idealist Youth 1 | I cannot believe our World is Dying?! |
| Idealist Youth 2 | We cannot be that stupid?! |
| Realist Youth 1 | I'm afraid we are! |
| Realist Youth 2 | Look at the Science |
| Realist Youth 3 | Ocean Flip-flop! |
| Realist Youth 4 | The Gulf Stream turning around bringing Arctic winters and tropical summers to Northern Europe – |
| Realist Youth 5 | Making it physically impossible to grow almost any food in this part of the world. |
| <i>Etc. + other evidence as desired: contact the Author at: david@peacechild.org to secure a selection of evidence from the National Emergency Briefing Film to show as a powerpoint or video. Each piece of evidence is introduced and explained in simple terms by the Realists, who conclude -</i> | |
| Realist Youth 1 | Face it, guys: we're toast! |
| Idealist Youth 1 | There must be something we can do?! |
| Realist Youth 2 | There's a ton of stuff we can do! Scientists and Economists have been pointing out solutions for decades - |
| Realist Youth 3 | We've just been too stupid to follow the science. |
| Idealist Youth 1 | I don't want our beautiful world to die! |
| Idealist Youth 2 | I don't want to die! I want to grow up – have a full life! Have a job, children, grand-children – I want.... I want to live! <i>(Music starts)</i> |

SONG 2. I want to Live [KEY: F MAJOR]

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Idealist Youth 2 | <i>(Sings)</i> - I want to live The right to live my life I want to search far and wide Have the right to wonder why I want to learn all the secrets The world has to give, I want the chance to live my life I want to live – I want to live! |
| 5 x Idealist Youth | We want to be, we want to see A world that's good and free |

I want a home, someone to love
To share their life with me
I want to have and to hold
A child of my own
We want to live, we want to love
I want to live, I want to live.....

- Idealist Youth 1 *(approaching the Realist youth – who have kept to their side looking on, sad and uneasy, at the idealists)* Don't you want to live too?
- Realist Youth 1 Sure we do! It's just, realistically, we don't stand much of a chance!
- Realist Youth 2 The Planet needs Peace!
- Realist Youth 3 And we're fighting more wars now than ever before....!
- Realist Youth 4 The Planet needs people who are selfless and care for others!
- Realist Youth 5 But we, the people, are selfish and greedy and care only about ourselves!
- Realist Youth 1 Our Planet needs people who care for the plants, the forests, the animals, the climate!
- Realist Youth 2 And most of us don't care at all about them!
- Idealist Youth 1 But surely most of us want to LIVE!
- Idealist Youth 2 The Planet needs people who choose LIFE –
- Idealist Youth 3 Not DEATH!
- Idealist Youth 4 *(turning to the audience)* You want to live, don't you?! *(get a loud "YES!")*
- Idealist Youth 5 Do you?! *(get a louder "YES!")*
- Idealist Youth 1 You do too, don't you?!
- Realist Youth 1 I guess!
- Idealist Youth 1 C'mon! Don't be so boring! – Sing it with me! *(Music starts - up-tempo Version)*

SONG 3. I want to Live II [KEY: F TO G MAJOR]

- All I want to live, I want to live
The right to live my life
I want to search far and wide
Have the right to wonder why
I want to learn all the secrets
The world has to give,
I want the chance to live my life
I want to live – I want to live!

(modulation) I want to be, I want to see
A world that's good and free
I want a home, someone to love
To share their life with me
I want to have and to hold
A child of my own
I want to live, I want to love
I want to live, I - want - to – live!!

The audience and Narrators applaud – except one Realist Youth, who stands to one side, looking sad...

- Idealist Youth 1 You know the Scientists tell us that it is now cheaper to save the planet with renewable energy than to destroy it by carrying on using oil and coal!
- Idealist Youth 2 It will create more jobs too!
- Idealist Youth 3 And make us healthier!

Etc. + other evidence as desired from the SOLUTIONS featured in the National Emergency Briefing Film. Show as a powerpoint or video. Each piece of evidence is introduced and explained in simple terms by the Idealists, who conclude -

Idealist Youth 1 But first – you have to have Peace!

Realist Youth 1 And we’re fighting more wars now than ever before....!

Realist Youth 2 And plundering the planet like there’s no tomorrow....!

Realist Youth 3 There’s no Peace between People and the Natural World!

Realist Youth 4 Peace – like everything else you’re talking about - is just wishful thinking!

Idealist Youth It’s NOT! –

Realist Youth 5 So HOW do you do it?! How do you make Peace?

Idealist Youth 1 You love each other...

Idealist Youth 2 Care for each other...

Idealist Youth 3 Want the best for each other...

Idealist Youth 4 Treat others as you would like to be treated yourself...

Realist Youth 1 Nice idea, but ...

Realist Youth 2 Dream on!

Idealist Youth 5 You have to start with the Dream!

Idealist Youth 1 “I have a dream today!”

Realist Youth 3 Martin Luther King!?

Idealist Youth 2 Of course! The I HAVE A DREAM Speech!

Idealist Youth 3 “I dream of a day when the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will sit down at the table of Brotherhood!”

Realist Youth 4 We’re not all saints like Martin Luther King!

Idealist Youth 4 He wasn’t a saint!

Idealist Youth 5 He was a realist! He knew how people had to behave if our world is to survive!

Idealist Youth 1 "We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools"

Idealist Youth 2 Do you know about the World House?

Realist Youth 5 The World House?

Idealist Youth 3 The last chapter of his last book –

Idealist Youth *(together) **Where do we go from here?** (they hi-five each other)*

Realist Youth 1 I’ve never heard of it...

Realist Youth 2 Me neither!

Realist Youth 3 What’s it about?

Idealist Youth 4 It’s completely brilliant! He imagines the world as a great big house with all the peoples of the world living together in it...

Idealist Youth 5 Everyone looks out for each other, eats together, educates each other’s kids, empties the trash, cares for the sick and the elderly....

Idealist Youth 1 And looks after the building!

Idealist Youth 2 Together!

Idealist Youth 3 You don’t have Superpowers sitting in the Penthouse telling everyone else what to do!

Idealist Youth 4 And you don’t have armies packing the basement with nuclear bombs preparing to blow us all up!

Idealist Youth 5 You have a Human Family
 Idealist Youth 1 Who bicker and fight like all families
 Idealist Youth 2 But when push comes to shove, as it has right now, look after each other!
 Realist Youth 4 Well that sounds plausible!
 Realist Youth 5 Realistic, even!
 Realist Youth 1 We have to build a World House
 Idealist Youth 3 Together.
 Idealist Youth 4 I told you! Start with the Dream!
 Idealist Youth 5 The Vision!

SONG 4. I have a Vision [KEY: A MAJOR]

Idealist Youth 5 I have a vision, I have a dream
 Idealist Youth 1 We have the answer or so it seems.
 Realist Youth 2 Don't you see the truth, to fight is not right,
 ALL We shall have our rainbow, we will have our sunlight!
 If we unite!
 Idealist Youth 2 There's a way you see, where no one gets hurt
 There's a way with love if you try!
 Realist Youth 3 There is hope and faith to keep us alive
 In your darkest day, just pray!
 ALL Reach out with love, gather all your courage,
 Reach out with love, seek a brighter day!
 Love as our sword, peace as our weapon
 Reach out with love! Let us win this way!
 Idealist Youth 3 Martin Luther King had a vision!
 Realist Youth 4 He had a dream
 ALL He had the answer, or so it seems!
 He knew the truth - to fight is not right
 We can have our rainbow, we can have the sunlight!
 We must unite!
 Idealist Youth A new world,
 Realist Youth A new light!
 Idealist Youth A new world,
 Realist Youth A new light!
 Idealist Youth A new Hope,
 Realist Youth A new light!
 ALL Reach out with love, gather all your courage,
 Reach out with love, seek a brighter day!
 Love as our sword, peace as our weapon
 Reach out with love! Let us win this way!
 ALL We have a vision!
 Realist Youth 1 Well – that's a nice little Vision
 Realist Youth 2 Thanks for sharing it with us!
 Realist Youth 3 Shame it will never happen.
 Idealist Youth 1 You don't think it could happen?!
 Realist Youth 4 It could – but it won't.

Realist Youth 5 Young people are just not bothered – none of us are!

Realist Youth 1 We all know people like us don't have the power to change anything...

Idealist Youth 2 So you're just going to sit back and let our world die?!

Realist Youth 2 What choice do we have? If it's inevitable – just relax, chill out! Let it happen.

Idealist Youth 3 It might not happen!

Idealist Youth 4 Only if our generation makes it NOT happen.

Realist Youth 3 Ask around: I swear 99% of young people don't care!

Realist Youth 4 And most of my friends don't have the first clue about any of this stuff...

Realist Youth 5 I didn't until you brought me here and forced me to listen to all this!

Realist Youth 1 Nobody cares!!

Idealist Youth 5 I care!

Idealist Youth 1 So do I – we MUST do something about it!

Realist Youth 2 Tell me one thing you can do about it?

Idealist Youth 2 Well.... (*struggling*) I have absolute faith that our generation will....

Realist Youth 3 Will what?

Idealist Youth 3 Make sure it does NOT happen

Realist Youth 4 Why?!

Idealist Youth 4 Because! Because I don't believe that God put us here on earth to destroy all life for ever!

Realist Youth 5 C'mon! You believe in God now....!

Idealist Youth 4 I do, actually. But more - I believe in us!!

Idealist Youth 5 So do I! Face it: if we want to Live, we can't allow insane governments to lead us over a cliff like this lot is doing!

Realist Youth 1 You think we can do any better?

Idealist Youth 1 Yes. I do!

Idealist Youth 2 I do too! – I don't believe in God, but I'd like to believe that, if there is one, she didn't put us here on this beautiful planet to destroy all life forever!

Realist Youth 2 So - you really think we can build a World House?.

Idealist Youth YES!!

Idealist Youth 3 (*to the Realists*) The Planet needs people like us who believe we can!

Idealist Youth 4 If you want to live, you must believe!

Realist Youth We'd like to but ... (*severally*) It's too silly! You're delusional! Stupid dreamers!

Idealist Youth 5 C'mon! BELIEVE! (*music starts*)

SONG 5. I Believe

Idealist Youth 1 If the sun lost it's shine
And the trees started to die!
I guess I'd still be full of hope –
And yes, I know the reason why!

Idealist Youth 2 If the wind grew too old,

And the seas started to dry
Yes I would still be full of love –
Don't ask – don't ask me why!

ALL
I still believe in God
I still believe in us His people!
And if you really want to know
I still believe in this His land

Idealist Youth 3
Idealist Youth 4
So don't turn your head away –
Don't give up on who you are
Just keep loving more each day –
And the world will shine for you!

Realist Youth 2(*coming round*)
Realist Youth
I guess it's all in the mind –
What you feel is what you see
So within your heart just sing these words
Come sing – come sing with me!

ALL
We believe in God
We believe in us His people!
And if you really want to know
We still believe in this His land

We believe in God
We believe in us His people!

Idealist Youth 5
I believe

ALL
Yes! We believe

Idealist Youth 1
I believe

ALL
Yes! We believe

ALL
We believe in this His land! (*repeated*)

Curtain Call – all bow.

THE END



David Woollcombe - CV



David Woollcombe - is the President and Chair of Trustees of Peace Child International (PCI) and a life-long advocate for the education and empowerment of young people to act on the priority issues that will face them in their lifetimes.

David co-created *Peace Child* in 1981, initially to create US-Soviet Youth Exchanges to help end Cold War tensions. He arranged the 1st US-Soviet youth / cultural exchange in 1986 to tour performances of his musical play, *Peace Child* across the USA and USSR with a cast of Soviet and American singers and dancers. PCI capitalised on this success and used the period of glasnost to accelerate US-Soviet rapprochement with dozens of reciprocal exchanges and tours.

With the end of the Cold War in 1989/90, David turned PCI's attention to the Hot War being waged by humanity against the environment, making PCI a market leader in the field of Education for Sustainable Development. PCI's youth-created version of the Rio Earth Summit Agenda 21, *Rescue Mission : Planet Earth* - was translated into 23 languages and sold over 500,000 copies.

David went on to organize the Young People's Earth Summit in Hawaii in 1999 and five follow-up World Youth Congresses which brought together youth from 100+ countries to explore solutions to what they considered to be the world's most pressing problems. Recently, that has led PCI to focus on youth job creation programmes for bottom-of-the-pyramid youth: it is a massive youth problem worldwide as the demographic youth bulge and disappearance of many jobs to automation and digitization requires the world to create 6 million new jobs a month, just to keep pace.

David stood down as CEO of PCI in 2014 and now serves as its Chair of Trustees. His faith in young people, and the value of their participation in decision-making, remains undimmed. As Kofi Annan writes in his introduction to David's book, *Youth-led Development*: "Young people are the most precious resource our planet possesses. Providing for youth is not just a moral obligation, it is a compelling economic necessity." David writes: "I believe that our world would benefit immensely from a more muscular inclusion of young people in our decision-making process and in the execution of those decisions. Youth-led development (YLD) is born in the faith that young people can contribute constructively to the good of society in the years before their 18th birthdays. I have spent my adult life operationalizing that faith - devolving insane amounts of responsibility on to young shoulders. Very, very rarely have they let me down. Young people are equal to any task!"

david@peacechild.org - May 2020



National Emergency Briefing Film Link: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/12181851?fl=so&fe=fs>; Enter password: WatchChatAct!