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GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

Going “beyond the bake sale”: Becoming more locally, globally engaged

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What is global engagement?

Since its inception, the International Baccalaureate (IB) has worked with schools, governments and international organizations to help create internationally minded young people who can work together to make a better and more peaceful world. International-mindedness is fundamental to the ethos and philosophy of an IB education, focusing on the development of multilingualism, intercultural understanding and global engagement in all dimensions of educational processes and school life. Global engagement includes taking responsible action to educate yourself, inform others, advocate for change and undertake service with the community. Action can span a range of activities in which young people gain experience, knowledge, and understanding of themselves, each other and the world beyond the classroom. Active engagement inspires an education without borders that reaches cultures and nations, overcoming stereotypes and prejudices that can separate people and create conflict.

Engaging with global issues can raise students’ self esteem, confidence, and belief in their own efficacy for creating positive change. Global engagement creates opportunities for students to practise skills in research, public speaking, teamwork, negotiation, and writing within a safe and structured environment. By being globally engaged, students can develop multiliteracies, expand their understanding of language and culture, and build the competencies they need in order to make ethical decisions, solve problems and manage conflict.

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Finding the global in the local

Advances in technology, communications and transportation have deepened and broadened our interconnectedness and interdependence. More than ever before, changing local circumstances can have repercussions around the world. At the same time, events happening far away and emerging global challenges often impact local communities.

Learning in the broadest contexts, IB students can build a deeper understanding of the interrelated issues and opportunities facing local and global communities. Students can actively engage with a range of global issues at the local and national levels. Learning locally through service, students develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions they need to recognize their growing responsibility for creating a more just and sustainable world.

For some students, international travel offers unique opportunities to expand horizons and learn about real-world global challenges. However, students don’t have to leave the classroom to “go global”, and schools can promote global engagement without organizing extended field trips or expensive journeys. The “glamour of the global” can sometimes obscure important opportunities for service that lie just outside the classroom door.



Fundraising and education

Student-led fundraising can be a meaningful way for young people to take action as they become more personally involved in responding to local and global challenges. However, sometimes fundraising can be a way to avoid authentic global engagement. Simply “throwing money” at a problem can lead to impersonal, uninformed participation in service activities. Schools can help by providing students with opportunities that unlock the educational potential of fundraising. Good practices include:

- developing more sophisticated understandings of complex global issues
- exploring shared values in the context of diverse cultures and multiple points of view, including moral responsibility, power and privilege
- thinking critically, systemically and creatively about global and local challenges in the context of ongoing teaching and learning across the curriculum
- looking for local connections
- building personal and lasting relationships with people, organizations and causes
- discussing ethical issues about fundraising, including accountability and integrity
- investigating the history and efficiency of charitable organizations, including their commitment to “work with” rather than “give to” others.



Money alone is often not enough

Realistic, responsible global engagement does not have to involve fundraising. Some people are able and willing to contribute money to good causes, and some challenges require extensive financial resources. However, money alone is often insufficient to resolve global challenges: generosity of mind and spirit, creativity, networking, and sustained attention to a cause can also bring about incremental but significant change.

There are many examples of young people who have gone “beyond the bake sale” by leading or participating in service that is inexpensive and feasible. This kind of action promotes strong connections between local and global communities, and offers real-life experience. Art and music can engage students in self-expression and dialogue with other cultures, establishing a common sense of belonging. Small questions can lead to big innovations. For example, in 2005 Srija, a 10-year-old girl in Hyderabad, India, participated in an education event about climate change. She asked why there was so much negative talk about carbon footprints, rather than positive examples of what people could do with their hands to create a more sustainable world. Srija’s “Handprint Campaign” (www.handprint.in) now inspires sustainable development campaigns throughout Asia.

Felix, a nine-year-old boy in Germany, read about Kenyan Nobel laureate Wangari Maathai whose “Greenbelt Movement” planted over 30 million trees in Africa. Felix made a school presentation in 2007 that inspired “Plant-for-the-Planet”, gathering over 30,000 Ambassadors for Climate Justice (ages 9–12) who are organizing a global campaign to plant 1,000 million trees by 2020 (www.plant-for-the-planet.org).

Opportunities for service and action in IB programmes

Students in all four IB programmes are invited to take action that expands their circles of concern. An important aspect of the Primary Years Programme (PYP) is inquiry that can lead to student-initiated action. In the Middle Years Programme (MYP), the community project offers students opportunities to explore their right and responsibility to implement service as action, and all MYP students are required to meet their school's expectations for service in each year of the programme. The IB Diploma Programme core includes creativity, activity and service (CAS) which encourages students to engage with global issues at the local level, and the IB Career-related Programme (CP) includes service learning as one of the four components of the CP core.

All IB programmes aim to build a deeper understanding of local and global communities. IB programmes offer many opportunities to practise social skills (such as collaboration, empathizing, and conflict resolution) and communication skills (such as networking and interacting with people who have different identities and obligations).



player.vimeo.com/video/129023537

MAHARAT IN DHLAIL—EMPOWERING WOMEN DISPLACED BY REGIONAL CONFLICT

Background

Ibn Khuldoon National School (IKNS) is a K-12 non-profit national coeducational bilingual school in Bahrain that has offered the IB Diploma Programme since 1990. The founders wanted to provide students with an education that would help them develop in harmony with their culture and tradition and meet the high standards of international education. Most students at IKNS are from Bahrain or other Arabic-speaking countries.

IKNS students are encouraged to engage in community and world affairs. School clubs, organizations and committees explore a variety of local, regional and global issues. Students at IKNS carry out fundraising campaigns to educate the community and provide families with opportunities to donate to worthwhile causes.

Inquiry/challenge

How can students approach charitable giving as an opportunity for authentic global engagement? This story involves two sisters at IKNS, Maryam and Alya Al-Ammari, who worked with their extended family and the larger school community to understand a global crisis deeply, and to respond with cultural understanding and respect. Their global engagement aimed to be sustainable and to have lasting impact in a very local setting. They established meaningful relationships and built a caring network of supporters and contributors.

Students at IKNS were moved to respond to the plight of people displaced in the Syrian conflict. Millions of displaced Syrians face enormous challenges in food security, health and sanitation, protection, and social cohesion. Education, training and employment are among the most urgent and ongoing needs. In collaboration with the local community and non-government organizations working in Jordan, students gathered first-hand information about the life of refugees in the village of Dhilail. Through extended engagement with trained aid workers and experienced relief agencies, the students focused their inquiry on how they could best support women refugees, many of whom wanted to gain new skills and provide additional income for their families.

Action/solution

IKNS students envisioned a space for women to learn sewing skills as a path toward financial independence. After eight months of planning and hard work, their vision became reality when the Maharat Sewing Centre opened in 2014 near Amman, Jordan. The students learned that principled responses to global challenges must be sustainable. In addition to helping to establish a new sewing centre, students held fundraising events to support the centre's annual operating costs.

The sewing centre's impact in the community grew as its mission extended to local Jordanian women. A skilled and experienced local teacher created special sewing courses to meet the needs of the women who came to the centre. The classes offer a flexible approach that recognizes the women's other important family responsibilities. The sewing centre has become a warm, welcoming hub of community activity.

Reflection

This project has helped the IKNS learn about and become knowledgeable advocates for refugees around the world. Through their fundraising work, the lead IKN students grew in their personal understanding of the connections between the plight of displaced persons and global politics. They gained skills in dealing with complex situations, cultural differences, communication and political engagement.

For IKNS, this initiative was both inspirational and educational. It raised the standards of global engagement and encouraged the students at IKNS to interact personally and responsibly with local and global communities. It showed that students, in service with and for others, can help to bring about lasting positive change.

Next steps

The Maharat project will work next on securing and stabilizing the funding for the centre, working towards self-sustainability. The centre aims to expand access by offering sewing classes for a broader range of abilities.

IB programme standards and practices:

Standard A: Philosophy

- developing and promoting international-mindedness and all attributes of the IB learner profile across the school community
- promoting responsible action within and beyond the school community
- promoting open communications based on understanding and respect

Standard C3: Teaching and learning

- engaging students as inquirers and thinkers
- building on what students know and can do
- supporting students to become actively responsible for their own learning
- addressing human commonality, diversity and multiple perspectives
- using a range and variety of strategies
- developing student attitudes and skills that allow for meaningful student action in response to students' own needs and the needs of others



FAQs

How can schools get started with opportunities for service that go “beyond the bake sale”?

Model service learning within the school and highlight a range of scales, examples, activities and approaches.

Build a school culture that offers students opportunities to look beyond themselves.

Develop habits of mind in which students and teachers consider what positive impact they can make in the world, what goes on beyond classroom walls, and how they can become personally involved.

Work with parents and school leaders to support service learning initiatives.

Listen to and learn from students: their interests, inspirations, experience and passions.

Plan assemblies and guest speakers who can share first-hand reports of global engagement.

Prepare for possible local disasters and emergencies with community leaders.

Look for local examples of longstanding or emerging global issues.

How do you help students evaluate charities, NGOs, organizations and fundraising drives?

Research different groups including their effectiveness, activities, efficiency, longevity, and financial practices. Government reports and sites like Charity Navigator can help with this (www.charitynavigator.org).

Explore how students can form their own organizations and educational events.

Establish school policies that model good financial stewardship and transparent practices for any fundraising events.

Provide support for inquiry into and reflection on authentic, responsible, sustainable, ethical responses to local and global challenges.

What are some challenges involved in going “beyond the bake sale”?

Helping groups and individuals to balance academic, social, family and service commitments

Working with child protection regulations and complying with all relevant health and safety requirements

Finding organizations who can work with young people

Providing teacher professional development on global issues and responses

Managing school calendars and timetables

Prioritizing and making choices among many equally pressing local and global needs

Where can I find out more about organizations and activities for global engagement that go “beyond the bake sale”?

Contact other IB World Schools and share information about service programmes.

Build relationships with community organizers, projects and agencies.

Debate global engagement policies and practices (<http://think-global.org.uk/getinvolved/thinkpieces>).

Search for local, national or international organizations like those listed below that support responsible civic engagement for young people:

www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/youth

www.ignited.eu/ignited-coalition.html

worldsavvy.org

www.freethechildren.com

www.oxfam.org.uk/education/teacher-support/educational-support-for-fundraising

In all IB World Schools, charitable fundraising that supports global engagement should be conducted with best practice in mind. This includes careful research, high ethical standards, accepted accounting standards, protection of individual health and safety, as well as being in accordance with all relevant local and national laws and school regulations. The IB does not endorse individual charities or fundraising events.

About Global engagement good practice guides

This series explores common activities that can engage students in service and action that can support the development of international-mindedness in IB programmes. They provide background information, establish connections, suggest ways of working and pose questions for reflection that teachers and other school leaders can use to make their own decisions about how best to develop international-mindedness in the unique context of each IB World School and the learning needs of individual students. These guides share observations and suggestions from a global community of IB practitioners. The IB does not endorse or require participation in specific global engagement activities.