



EBB Philosophical Q & A

How does Education Beyond Borders (EBB) seek to carry out its mission? (Closing the education divide through teacher professional development and community education.)

Through our travels and experience, we are finding that other than the initial teacher training, teachers rarely are afforded additional professional development, resources, or opportunities to conference with colleagues. Our [model](#) empowers teacher leaders to develop their skills as workshop/conference facilitators and share knowledge and skills they have learned or have developed with their colleagues in regions where access is a major issue. We form partnerships with and generate support from individuals, educational institutions, corporations, governments, NGOs, local/global agencies, and stakeholders. We form and build relationships with teachers, education officials and communities in the regions in which we work. We clarify the intrinsic benefits and incentives for participation. Most recently, teacher trainers from Kenya have facilitated workshops within their own country and in Tanzania demonstrating the empowering aspect of the South-to-South connections and collaborations. For us, education is a collaborative effort lasting a lifetime; our learning model is designed to connect global best practices to those at the local level who can build their capacity and, in so doing, change their communities. It is also through this approach that we hope to connect schools for a continued and sustained relationship—enabling teachers and students to grow together through shared experiences and global education.

What volunteer opportunities are available with EBB? i.e.: I know that curriculum development has come up as a possible area where EBB might need people, but what curriculum does EBB develop? Have we done any yet? What specific actions would a volunteer be expected to carry out? Who would contact him/her about this?

There are many ways you can get involved: by being a part of a team of teachers that works together to create and administer workshops with the goal of equipping teachers in other countries with resources and best practices; by helping to develop and/or donating educational resources by collaborating with and mentoring teachers across the globe; or by connecting your class with a class in another country for collaborative learning projects and friendship. You can also assist by initiating fundraising projects like adopting a class, developing partnerships with other related organizations to advance mutual goals or taking sabbaticals to work abroad. The fact that we are still a young organization, allows for many volunteering opportunities in various operations like grant writing, membership, data collection, media, research, etc. To join one of these committees see the [volunteering page](#) of our website or email info@educationbeyondborders.org. As for developing curriculum, we have created materials to deliver various methodology workshops (Inquiry Learning, Collaborative Learning, Differentiated Instruction, Project Based Learning, Peer observation/feedback). We have also identified areas where curriculum/content can be developed for certain topics like: gender equity, HIV/AIDS, sexual health, health & nutrition, sanitation, guidance and counseling, water use, environmental issues, peace building/conflict resolution, etc. The content in some of these areas has already been co-authored with our local colleagues to be applicable within the local context. Also, through mentoring, there may be the opportunity to collaborate with a colleague and develop materials together. The first point of contact would most likely be through a regional representative.

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What exactly does EBB do besides run summer workshops for educators in other countries?

One of the more important impacts we have been able to achieve is to network and create efficiencies to support communities by introducing various NGO's or agencies to community leaders to help support the needs of that community and work together to help support and empower each other. We also facilitate connections between those from North America and their colleagues in the countries of our operations to create collaborations and mentorships that often include their students. Some members have developed a sister school relationship with some of the teachers/schools we have visited. We have also initiated and supported [On Campus](#) groups at Canadian universities who develop their own initiatives that align with our mission and empower young leaders to support global initiatives in their local communities and/or abroad. It is important that ours is an active membership and we aim to facilitate local and global discussions; to invite, gather, distil, synthesize, and disseminate the best collective wisdom from teacher leaders from every culture to make all teachers even more effective in contributing to the creation of a world that works for all.

Again, our prime focus is to develop sustainable projects based on membership and community input. We pride ourselves on providing quality programs and will not spread ourselves too thin at the expense of existing projects.

What can people do locally throughout the school year to help out EBB?

People can spread the word, join our network (It's free! Just hit "join" on our website), start collaborating with colleagues, share resources, ideas and stories, volunteer to support fund raising and operations, etc. Involvement in Canada is based on the initiative and ideas of members. If you have an idea for a project or collaboration you would like to start, contact us [directly](#) or via [discussion forums](#) on our site and let's start talking.

What can people do locally throughout the school year to help close the education divide and support our colleagues in other parts of the world?

Educate themselves on the realities of access to education and resources in countries in need, and understand the need for empowerment and capacity building as a means of community development—**not** charity. Work with other members (many are doing their own great initiatives), implement global projects locally (global awareness show and tell, showcases, community events, etc.), and possibly connect with other teachers and their classes nationally and abroad to have open, first-hand discussions on issues of global relevance. Those of us who work in the classroom should also reflect on our own perspectives and privilege and seek to promote the values of global citizenship in the classroom and expose students to their classmates in other parts of the world. See your classroom as a portal to the rest of the world; raise awareness of the realities of daily lives lived in other parts of the world and our global interconnectedness. Teachers need to better understand our role and the fact that we may be contributing to a widening global educational divide by not facilitating global collaborations specifically from a variety of cultural views.

One of our major goals is that EBB workshop participants build relationships and professional learning communities during projects and stay in contact with teachers and education officials after the project completion. This is achieved through email, Skype, Facebook, Twitter and the EBB website.

How does EBB choose where to go?

EBB is exclusively not-for-profit, and each project is designed to be sustainable, culturally relevant and adaptable to the changing needs of the school community. EBB's strength is its membership base. New members bring with them the desires and the experiences to assist their colleagues in developing or needy communities at home and abroad. Members keep EBB informed of needs in their communities

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and schools and work with us to develop strategies to address community challenges using local knowledge, strategic geographic position and individual experiences to enhance the educational infrastructure of their countries. Members communicate with each other and form alliances to strengthen their connections to other communities. They are committed to the field of education and possess a wide range of interests and skills to contribute to EBB's mission. The number of new projects is only limited by the energy and commitment of our members who want to make a difference. Because our database of members spans many cultures and languages, there should be no restriction to the location of our projects or the reach of our collaborations. Once the idea of a new project materializes, it needs to be vetted against our sustainability and capacity-building criteria before it will be initiated.

Here are other points that could be of help. For example: why help teachers and not students? Why should Canadians (internationals) go abroad to “aid” teachers?

The important thing is that we at EBB do not see ourselves as going to ‘help’—we are going to learn, work and develop alongside our colleagues. Travelling to another country is one of the best ways (though not the only way) teachers can learn more about the world and gain ideas from teacher-colleagues. Whatever our teaching context, we learn from our local and international colleagues as we share ideas and learn more about each other's contexts, and as a result of our collaborations our respective classrooms are enriched. Whether you are from North America or a host country, if you travel with EBB, realise that you are doing so primarily to broaden your own awareness and experience, not just to ‘help’ other teachers. You will benefit immensely from the rich professional development experience of collaboration with other professionals. In addition, due to its fundraising efforts and educators from North America and host countries volunteering their time, EBB is able to provide an opportunity for in country teachers to learn from each other in a culturally and curricular relevant way. We do not claim to have all the answers or know more than other teachers; rather EBB provides an opportunity that can enrich the delivery of education that would not otherwise be possible in isolation.

The important thing here is to recognise the long-term, systemic impact of a teacher in any context. One inspired, empowered, globally aware teacher has a profound impact on the hundreds of students in their care (and ultimately their community) from that point on in their careers. School buildings, or school supplies, do not teach students - teachers do. By working with and bringing together hundreds of teachers, EBB is able to impact thousands of students in a positive way.

While many countries spend a significant portion of their budget on education, the majority of that funding goes to basic teacher salaries and school infrastructure, leaving little left for professional development. Despite its crucial connection to economic and social development, teacher training is often uneven, protracted, or unsupported. Teachers are not just a resource for our children; they are the key to development. Thus Education Beyond Borders aims to make a difference in the training and professional development of teachers particularly in regions of the world where access is limited.

The reality is that many teachers in Northern and Southern countries feel powerless to affect change, and often times the involvement of teachers from other parts of the country or world can be a positive catalyst to support educational change. Also many teachers in rural or under-resourced schools lack access to educational resources. We have witnessed teachers organize themselves into Professional Learning Communities where they are in charge of mapping the course to their professional learning. They count on each other for support. We have seen teachers from rural schools attend workshops, become facilitators, and eventually lead facilitation training for other teachers. By connecting with teachers within the country and around the world, we can share our struggles, our successes, and our inspiration.