

Becoming better global citizens

Coordinators from around the world describe their experiences of the International Global Citizen's Award to Boyd Roberts

More than a thousand young people around the world have received the International Global Citizen's (IGC) Award – a voluntary and non-competitive programme promoting and recognising development of students as global citizens. Participants commit, over a period of at least six months, to understand more about other cultures and outlooks; review their 'personal global footprint'; work alongside others; and record their engagement and reflect on their development as global citizens.

Twenty-five centres in 16 countries have offered the programme since it was piloted in 2007. Using a flexible, common international framework, schools and participants make the programme their own. While some existing activities can form part of the award, for all participants – and centres – there will be something new and different. Participants look at their lives as global citizens where they are, here and now, so no travel is required.

Peter Muir introduced the programme at Bali International School and now at Discovery College, Hong Kong. "Teachers often aim to develop an understanding in their students of various local and global problems in the hope that students will act to address them. The IGC Award challenges students by actually requiring them to take action.

"The learning that students get out of this is very powerful. Students are convincing their parents to buy environmentally friendly products, and find themselves in line at the cafeteria trying to persuade their peers not to buy bottled water. They actually develop a real sense of caring about these issues," he says.

At the British International School Budapest, Caroline Mawdsely says "We have found the IGC Award a great route out into the community for our students; engaging in simple projects has introduced our teenagers, who think nothing of travelling across time zones, to



IGC Award participants raise funds and awareness at their IGCA fair at Singapore International School, Hong Kong, secondary section.

experiences that are completely new and challenging for them even though they are round the corner.” This includes running a breakfast club for local children who would otherwise go to school on empty stomachs.

Like some other centres, Singapore International School, Mumbai, has incorporated and amended various existing activities and work to form part of the IGC Award for its students. Model United Nations, the study of world literature texts and preparation of an international day focusing on culture have all been embraced in the Award framework.

Award coordinator Jasmine Madhani comments that the Award has helped students “in developing tolerance and appreciation towards other cultures and this is especially desirable in today’s world as the world is increasingly interdependent.”

At Amman Baccalaureate School the IGC Award is integrated with the IB CAS programme and the El Hassan Youth Award, Jordan’s version of the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award. Each programme is distinctive and Abdel Razzaq Najjar, who introduced the Award, says that together they promote “development of the student’s character so that he/ she becomes beneficial to society and the globe.”

Joanna Phan introduced the Award in Grade 6 at Singapore International School, Hong Kong, partly by extending the social studies programme. So, for example, a Chinese language immersion trip to Taiwan gave greater attention to awareness of other cultures – including email

correspondence with students from Taiwanese schools before the visit. In the secondary section, Rachel Grantham worked with participants on an IGFA fair to promote causes and concerns.

Christ the King Sixth Form College, UK, integrates the IGC Award and academic work in languages within an international graduate programme for students aged 16-18. Rebecca Crean reports that “students have been looking at a variety of issues including media representation of a range of countries; the environment and its impact on trade and living conditions; and many other topical, internationally-focused issues.

They have been going to a partner secondary school to mentor lower school students in languages. “Reflection has been undertaken by creating blogs, interviewing each other and giving feedback to their mentor. The Award has provided our students with the opportunity to develop their international awareness and receive recognition for their work” says Rebecca. The Award’s flexibility means that “each student can focus on areas of personal interest and can tie their Award work in with their academic subjects”.

At Collège Champittet, Switzerland, participants devised an exhibition on cultures of other countries. “They were requested to make one face-to-face interview with someone from that country” reports Matthew Roberts. “This was perhaps the most fruitful element of this unit, with some great interviews being made and filmed by the students, to share at the exhibition. “

An IGC Award challenge to reduce the school’s ecological footprint “has been a real turning point for our students, who are now more accustomed to working independently and collaboratively with their peers. The solutions were highly creative and sometime innovative.”

At Academia Británica Cuscatleca, El Salvador, Walter Arevalo, Carmen Villalta, and director of studies Judith Shorrocks “are absolutely delighted with the way the IGC Award has taken off in our school. It is not the Award itself that is the prize. Students are proud to be involved and really enjoy the opportunities to lead and make a difference.

“They focus on a desire to change students and parents in their awareness of the world around them and the impact that they can have by thinking globally and acting locally.” With older students mentoring younger participants “our current model now really does allow for authentic leadership opportunities amongst our older students”.

A common programme and aims, but implemented very differently in different contexts. People around the world – mentors and participants – working to effect change on the ground. Would you like to join us? For further information about the International Global Citizen’s Award, which can be introduced at any time of the year, visit www.globalcitizensaward.org For queries, or if interested in introducing the Award, please contact boyd@globacitizensaward.org

Boyd Roberts, former Head of two international schools and author of Educating for global citizenship, initiated and oversees the International Global Citizen’s Award.

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