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The International Global Citizen's Award takes off.

Boyd Roberts and colleagues from around the world describe a distinctive new award for individual students.

The International Global Citizen's (IGC) Award programme encourages participants to become better global citizens, and recognises when they have done so. The project has aroused considerable interest since initially proposed (in *IS* magazine, January 2007) and 14 schools in ten countries are now offering the award, on a pilot basis, with others to follow.

Starting with their everyday lives, young people ask questions like: How do my day-to-day actions impact upon other people and the environment? How do other people see the world differently from me? How can I make a difference? What have I learned about myself and others from what I have found out, and what I have done?

Voluntary and non-competitive, the award recognises change, development and action, rather than reaching a fixed standard. Within a school, the more students who receive the award, the better!

Participants (aged 11 and over) engage in development and change in four areas, over at least six months:

- Understanding other outlooks and cultures
- Personal global footprint
 - Being good with money
 - Environmental responsibility
- Influence and involvement with others
 - Service; Advocacy, persuasion and promotion; Active decision-making)
- Recording and reflecting
 - on changing knowledge, attitudes and actions

Many existing school activities can be embraced within the award framework, but everyone taking part will find they are also doing something new.

Schools follow a common model but implement it in ways appropriate to their context. Each school has two partner schools, networked to share detailed perspectives and provide feedback. But each school takes responsibility for making its own awards. Students are partners in the whole programme –including the award process. We are trying to embody responsible global citizenship as we work. Adults involved are less “experts”, more fellow global citizens, with skills to share. All schools exchange views and ideas, and participate in decisions about the programme's future development – this interacting global community is one of the award's distinctive features. Communication is electronic, and costs are low. Central administration (all voluntary so far) is being kept to a minimum. The “award” includes a donation to a nominated charity. Schools of all types are welcome. The pilot group comprises national, international, IB, non-IB, public and independent schools, including CIS/ECIS members.

All participating schools share a vision for developing better global citizens, but approaches are different.

In some cases, the IGC Award is associated with whole school initiatives to address the challenge of living in an increasingly global world.

For Christopher Charleson, head of Sotogrande International School, "It is one of those things that when you read about it you know it is exactly what you are looking for! We see the IGC award fitting perfectly with our overall philosophy of developing global citizens and as an excellent way of bringing together some of our ideas about intercultural understanding, global citizenship and solidarity.

A group of students and staff is working on our intended outcomes, to agree on the big ideas, establish a process for assessing our success in achieving them, co-ordinate all the global citizenship activities and bring some coherence to what we are doing. We are starting the award with a group of MYP3 students (age 14-15) and will open it up as soon as possible to anyone above that age interested in participating. We want involvement in this area to be coherent and progressive for all participants, and to ensure they can experience enrichment, fulfilment and, very importantly, have fun!"

At Academia Británica Cuscatleca, El Salvador, "We aim to create outstanding citizens and are therefore always on the lookout for programs and activities to help us achieve this goal" comments coordinator Andrew Murgatroyd. "The IGCA fitted this perfectly for us, supplementing what we currently offer. We like the way the Award particularly focuses on the idea of citizenship which we feel was previously under resourced. Activities range from recycling to house building, internet discussions to assembly presentations. As students inspire us with their ideas and activities, we expect them take ownership of the Award."

For Park House English School, Qatar, the IGC Award, with its service element, is being introduced with the school's first group of year 12 students. "We seek to encourage our students to consciously consider their place in the world, in ways that they have never thought of before and the IGCA gives us the framework to do this" says coordinator Nichola Smith. "We are aiming the award at our new year 12 students, when they are in the beginnings of adulthood. We feel at this age all our students should have taken on responsibilities that the personal community service will provide. The "influence and involvement section" offers them the chance to test their leadership skills and organisational abilities. We are introducing "school service" initially and will broaden our horizons as we progress."

The student population of The English Academy, Kuwait, is mainly Kuwaiti. "The goals of the IGC Award mesh well with the desire to give our students a broader global perspective," says coordinator Andrew Corney. "A group of teachers is guiding how the program is implemented, and how to include aspects of global citizenship in the personal and social education program and throughout curriculum areas. The award is open to students from Years 7 to 13, with an after school program including environmental action, cross-cultural awareness, and community service."

Sara Gleeson, coordinator at the British International School of Phuket, Thailand, says "students and staff hope that through IGC award participation we will learn about many ways to care for our environment and to care more about other people in our world.

We are involving a homeroom class of Year 8 students and a group of Year 12 students, and look forward to:

- sharing "A day in the Life of..." fact sheets with "email pals" from other award schools
- surveying parents and students on brand purchasing
- encouraging "a day without electricity" or "switch off" times at school
- publishing our efforts through displays, newsletters and school assemblies.
- encouraging parents to reduce their carbon emission by car pooling, and to consider carbon offsetting for flights

- reducing our own ecological footprint
- writing to our Queen of Thailand about our efforts
- our students gaining a bronze level IGC Award
- encouraging more students and schools to be involved in the future."

At Broadgreen High School, Liverpool, UK, coordinator Martina Hedges is focusing the award on a project relating students to the local Indian community in Liverpool, and including a proposed visit to engage with a rural community in India, and to work together on environmental projects. Aspects of the award are also being introduced into the regular personal/social education programme for year 12/13 students.

Sha Tin College (STC), Hong Kong, is introducing the award with students in its Environment Action Group. Coordinator Glenis Paul says "Students are starting to recognise that they have an impact on the people around them and the wider world and are thinking about the importance of taking responsibility for the choices they make.

We are focusing on the school's environmental sustainability and face quite a number of immediate challenges. The group has initiated a one-year action plan aiming to reduce total energy use, solid waste, harmful emissions and water use, and promoting fair trade products. Students' regular volunteer work includes teaching English in local schools, visiting the elderly, and helping at local charities with tasks from painting apartments to sorting out donated clothing and furniture. These activities are being incorporated into the IGC award."

Other participating schools are Commodore Options School, St Timothy's School, and Stonewall Middle School, USA; Amman Bacculaureate School, Jordan; St George's British international School, Rome; International School of London and Utahloy International School, Guangzhou China.

Very different approaches, very different contexts, but all part of a growing international programme to help us live as more responsible citizens of our shared planet.

The programme can be introduced at any time of the year. For more information visit www.globalcitizensaward.org.

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