

## Encouraging and recognising ethical development and action

**Trying to lead a better life and make a difference are at the heart of the new INTERNATIONAL GLOBAL CITIZEN'S AWARD programme which aims to help implement the IBO's learner profile and mission.**

**Submitted to IB World, 2007**

Developing "internationally minded people, who, recognising their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better world." Ethics are central to the aims of IBO programmes in the learner profile. IB learners "strive to become...principled, open-minded, caring, risk takers" – or, in the words of the website, "engaged world citizens".

In the academic curriculum (and assessments), we focus, quite rightly, on knowledge, skills and understanding. But the ethical dimension requires something more. It requires students to **care**, and, as a result to **act**. And IBO programmes recognise this, of course, with the service element.

As head of an IB school, each year at IB graduation, I would urge leaving students to make a difference, to help "make the world a better place". I always said this with a tinge of guilt. Could we have done more to help them start this while they were with us? Our young people **are** global citizens: global citizenship is not being prepared for – it is being lived **now** - well, or not so well.

And then the IB Diploma results would come, and worthwhile students who had, perhaps, been much better "citizens" would not be awarded the IB Diploma. How could we recognise that a "good" student means more than getting good results?

And what about global issues or "international mindedness"? Although these receive more prominence in the PYP and MYP, the DP structure dates from a time when global issues were simply not as pressing. Even if we could find time for global issues in the timetable (as has often been proposed), is another subject, taught like others, the best way to encourage students to be "engaged world citizens"? How do we move beyond knowledge, or indeed understanding, towards caring and action? And as adults are from a generation that has helped to produce the problems we are discussing, surely students should have more say in "global issues" and "global citizenship". Adults certainly don't have all the answers here! Many IB schools offer the Diploma to some students only. Is there anything that offers all students the possibility of being part of something international?

It is thinking like this that is behind a new programme, the **International Global Citizen's Award**, now being piloted. To some "global citizenship" means ideas of "world government". But here we mean recognising that people have effects on the planet and its inhabitants – people, plants and animals - and a responsibility that goes with this – something on which I would hope we can all agree.

The Award programme is a grass-roots programme operated by individual schools, but using the same international model, which they are helping to shape.

It

- involves students in all aspects, including the award process itself

- focuses on engagement and personal experience
- concentrates on values, attitudes and action
- promotes and recognises **change and development** – not the “standard” reached.

It is concerned with real-life decisions relevant to global citizenship, with the skills and background information to make such decisions well - and with practical action.

The programme is

- non-competitive (and there is no limit on the numbers receiving the award)
- voluntary (as it requires making lifestyle changes out of school)
- for young people aged 13 and over, although adults are welcome too

The award programme involves **a commitment to action and development** in four areas - relating directly to students and their everyday lives - over at least six months. Although some of the activities may be undertaken in groups, the award is to **individuals**, and it is individual development that is encouraged and recognised.

### **1. Understanding other cultures and outlooks**

While this can include reading, Internet research, watching films or TV, direct personal interaction is also required.

### **2. Personal global footprint**

In our normal everyday lives, we are having an impact on the lives of other people, and on the environment. This has been described – rather loosely - as making a “footprint”. We can make a difference by choices and actions relating to our normal lives.

Aspects include:

- **Being good with money**

Reviewing how we spend our money and the impact this has on other people and the environment.

- **Environmental responsibility**

Here, we find out more about our personal environmental impact – direct and indirect - and, again, make some lifestyle changes in response; for instance reducing water use, recycling, perhaps changing what transport we use. Activities relating to wildlife and conservation could also figure.

### **3. Influence and involvement with others**

The importance of working with others will be well understood in IB schools. Here there are three aspects:

- **Personal community service**
- **Advocacy, persuasion or promotion**
- **Active participation in decision-making processes**

### **4. Recording and reflecting on change**

Keeping a regular diary, blog or other record of activities undertaken, and reflecting on developing knowledge, awareness and actions as a global citizen. There is plenty of scope for creativity here. Schools determine which languages may be used, and those who prefer to use diagrams or art can do so. Diploma students will certainly use

the skills acquired in Theory of Knowledge as they grapple with some complex issues. In general, students will reflect according to their abilities. Reflection includes discussing personal development with others as part of the award process.

Although ambitious in many ways, the award programme involves a limited time commitment averaging around 2 hours per week in and out of school. It can incorporate existing programmes and activities, including, obviously, the community service elements of MYP and CAS, as well as such things as Roots and Shoots, Life-Link or Amnesty International membership. However, as it is more comprehensive, it will involve all participants in undertaking something new.

The IGC Award is made by individual schools. This gives flexibility to schools to reflect local concerns and issues. Global citizenship does not mean exactly the same thing everywhere. And just think of the impossibility of trying to assess something like an individual student's development as a global citizen by a centralised system! But all schools follow a common model and guidelines. And schools receive and give each other input on their programmes and award processes. This provides international credibility. With e-mail communication, this is quick, simple and cheap. This programme simply could not have happened ten years ago! Being part of an international programme is motivating to staff and students, and surely global citizenship should be approached internationally. Initially the award is available at bronze level, but we expect silver and gold levels to follow, for participation over 12 or 18 months.

The IGC Award is being run on a non-profit-making basis, with central costs as low as possible. While it can incorporate the many excellent overseas projects described in the pages of IB World, it can be done entirely locally: access to students and schools is important. All work undertaken has been on a voluntary basis and many people have played their part, notably Samia Al Farra and Amman BaccaLaureate School, and Andrew Brown, an IB graduate of Pearson College, Canada, who has been working on the website. Participating schools will be playing an important part in how the award develops during and after the pilot stage.

### **Where do IB schools come in?**

IB world schools can automatically become recognised centres for the IGC Award (although the programme is open to all students, whether engaged on IB programmes or not). Introducing a more formalised system to promote and recognise global citizenship shows that it matters to the school, and to others – and would, hopefully, encourage many students to join.

Although the IGC award only began – as an idea - in October 2006, three IB schools are already preparing to pilot it this year: Amman BaccaLaureate School, Jordan; Broadgreen High School, Liverpool, UK; and Academia Britanica Cuscatleca, El Salvador. By the time this appears, I hope that some of the other schools in China, India, Italy, Jordan, South Africa, Togo, Turkey and the UK currently considering it will also be on board.

At the end of the programme, students will receive a certificate, but, it has been suggested, might also nominate a small donation to a charity. But most important will be the change they have undergone.

It is hoped that more schools will wish to join the project at this early stage. Schools will be contributing to its development as an international programme, and, through

the interactions with schools from very different contexts, deepening their understanding of global citizenship.

For much fuller information visit [www.globalcitizensaward.org](http://www.globalcitizensaward.org)  
Queries, comments or reactions to [info@globalcitizensaward.org](mailto:info@globalcitizensaward.org)

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