

Connect Challenge Change

**A practical guide to
global youth work**

Stories, lessons and inspiration from
Global Youth Action led by DEA



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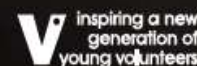
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Foreward

02

We face a wide range of global challenges – social, environmental and economic. It is easy to feel disconnected from these or powerless in the face of them. As a society we need to enable all people, especially young people, to have the opportunity to learn about global issues and make the connections to their own lives.

DEA has been running Global Youth Action since 2005 in partnership with 5 Development Education Centres. We have worked directly with over 3,000 young people – often from excluded backgrounds – in order to **connect** them to global issues, **challenge** their thinking and assumptions, and help them create **change** towards a more just and sustainable world. This has led to inspiring work by the young people including:

- A group of young people meeting with a Minister from the Department for International Development to discuss their concerns;
- Young people in Oldham challenging their own assumptions about the reasons for migration and then working to educate other young people, in order to strengthen community cohesion;
- Two young people from Cambridge making a video diary 'Undersize me' about their attempt to live on \$1 a day for a week, as a way of helping others understand about the challenges of international development.

In order to meet the multiple challenges we face as a society around sustainable development, community cohesion and international development, we need to ensure that all young people are given opportunities to think critically about these issues and to take action on them. Global Youth Action provides several years of learning about how this can be done in a meaningful way that supports young people's own development. We are proud of what we and our partners have achieved with Global Youth Action. We hope that you will also find the lessons from this programme of work useful in your own contexts.



Hetan Shah
Chief Executive

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hetan Shah'.

Overview

“ You know that you are involved in the community, you know you have made a difference, you know that you have got what young people want and not just what old people want. ”

GC Member



Global Youth Action is a national project supporting young people to explore and take action on the global issues that matter to them, through long-term Global Youth Action Projects and short-term, Global Bites –exciting tasters of global learning and action.

Through a global youth work approach we:

Help **connect** young people to the global issues that matter to them. We support them to make the links between the personal, local and global, and to **connect** with peers who share their passions and concerns.

Encourage young people to **challenge** themselves, to gain a more critical understanding of the world around them, and to **challenge** inequality and injustice.

Support young people to plan and take action to bring about positive **change** towards a more just and sustainable world.



CONNECT, CHALLENGE, CHANGE

Global Youth Action

Global Youth Action was launched in 2005 with funding from the Big Lottery Fund and aimed to:

- 1** Facilitate young people's involvement in sustained global learning and action through 'Global Youth Action Projects'.
- 2** Develop five regional 'hubs' to support global youth work practice and training in their locality.
- 3** Support a national network of young people to participate in the management and delivery of the project.
- 4** Develop and share good global youth work practice, approaches and resources nationally.
- 5** Influence local and national policy-making and help mainstream global youth work.

Global Youth Action supports young people to put learning into action, enabling them to make a difference on issues that concern or interest them and to achieve six key outcomes.

Primary outcomes

Personal development

Increased participation
Empowerment

Global learning

Making personal/local/global connections
Understanding global issues
Critical thinking
Five Every Child Matters outcomes

Secondary outcomes

Young people

Practical skills gained
Positive experience of first time engagement

Communities

Community cohesion and integration
Community impact and impact on the issue/campaign
Positive perception of young people

Youth work policy and practice

Good practice and innovation in youth action, creative learning and youth work
New resources and activities
Impact on and benefit to existing work and priorities of children and young people's trusts/services

In the first five years of the project we have worked directly with over 3,000 young people in Global Youth Action Projects and over 4,000 additional young people have benefited from project activities such as peer education workshops, training and events.

The project specifically aims to engage young people from minority groups and young people deemed 'hard to reach' in their local context. Nearly 30% of participants are identified as being from a minority group and 60% have been engaged from targeted groups experiencing disadvantage.

Working in these circumstances is not always easy. It takes time and continued engagement. Global Youth Action has, however, been successful in its stated objectives, and additionally has had wider positive effects within local communities. Independent evaluation of the project concluded that, "From all the evidence that we have seen Global Youth Action has undoubtedly been a big success story... youth work would be considerably poorer without it." 7

Given the global challenges that we face around international development and sustainability, as well as the need to support excluded young people in the UK to develop the skills and confidence to succeed, it is ever more important that global youth work becomes mainstream practice. Global Youth Action has resulted in significant learning about the practice and potential of global youth work.

What is Global Youth Work?

"Global youth work is informal education with young people. It encourages a critical understanding of the links between personal, local and global issues. It seeks their active participation in bringing about change towards greater equity and justice."



This definition sits alongside a set of principles of global youth work. Inherent in these principles is the recognition that the theory and practice should not focus on the 'development or underdevelopment' of particular communities in the UK or overseas, but rather on how globalisation shapes, and is shaped by, young people and their communities. This emphasis on globalisation seeks to update terms such as 'international work', 'international dimension to youth work' or 'development education' placing global youth work firmly within the tradition of youth work itself, aligning it with the principles of informal education with the added emphasis on young people taking action.

Global youth work is an example of DEA's wider work on global learning. DEA's definition of 'global learning' is: education in a global context fostering:

- critical and creative thinking
- self-awareness and open-mindedness towards difference
- understanding of global issues and power relationships, and
- optimism and action for a better world.⁹

So global youth work is a form of global learning. The tradition of informal education is particularly well suited to the global learning agenda as it starts from young people's own perspectives and experiences and develops a negotiated agenda for learning.

One of the most useful innovations of Global Youth Action is the development of a clear framework which synthesises some of the complex ideas of good practice in global youth work. This framework is based on the concept of **Connect, Challenge, Change**. This provides youth work practitioners with a simple framework for planning and evaluating their own global youth work.

Connect, Challenge, Change

Help **connect** young people to the global issues that matter to them. We support them to make the links between the personal, local and global, and to **connect** with peers who share their passions and concerns.

Encourage young people to **challenge** themselves, to gain a more critical understanding of the world around them, and to **challenge** inequality and injustice.

Support young people to plan and take action to bring about positive **change** towards a more just and sustainable world.

The Connect, Challenge, Change approach helps to ensure quality in global youth work, especially in short-term engagement opportunities with young people.

It is worth remembering, however, that the process is not necessary linear. For example, young people may initially be motivated by wanting to create a change. This can be used as a learning experience to make connections. The young people might be challenged to question whether the action they were planning to take is the best one to create the change they wish to see.

The Challenge aspect to the framework is critical, and often overlooked in work with young people. It is not uncommon for organisations to move straight from connecting young people to global issues into action for change. This is to miss out a learning opportunity and the space to help young people think more critically about complex global issues. For example, a group of young people who voice an interest in poverty following the Make Poverty History campaign may be directed towards a fair trade or drop the debt campaign. What distinguishes this 'campaigns' work from global youth work is the Challenge aspect. In this instance for this to become good global youth work the young people might be encouraged to explore causes and impact of debt locally and globally before deciding what action to take. This places the learning of the young people centre stage and takes it to a deeper level.

The Connect, Challenge, Change model is a simple tool for enabling the development of global youth work practice, communicating concepts and planning reflective learning. It remains a useful tool for youth work practitioners, but does not replace the need to continue to develop understanding and dialogue around global youth work.



External research relating to Global Youth Action explains the Connect, Challenge, Change framework: "Behind the 3C framework is the idea that global youth work in general, and Global Youth Action in particular, can:

Connect

by starting where young people are 'at', and helping them to become aware of, and make the connections between, themselves as individuals (identity, values and personal agency) and with the local and the global of their everyday lives and experiences (connected by the force of globalisation) and other people

Challenge

by developing young people's critical understanding of the world based on their values, world views, intercultural skills and their everyday global connections. Supporting them to question why things are the way they are and to decide if they will choose to challenge the status quo

Change

by equipping young people with the knowledge, skills and confidence to feel empowered and able to choose to shape and take action in local and global communities for a better world individually and collectively (rights in action). By the changes that take place internally within the young person as a result of their experience, reflection and learning and their ability to transfer learning to different contexts"¹⁰

“ Understanding more about global conditions has made me think about what I buy and if I need it ”

(GYA participant)

Why Global Youth Action?

Young people to have a right to express an opinion on decisions that affect them and subsequently should be supported to take action on the issues that matter to them. They need to understand their world, to make these informed choices. For this right to be realised work with young people must embrace the global context of young people's lives. Youth work practitioners need to be able to support young people on this journey. This publication aims to guide this quality practice.

What is the need?

Through DEA's previous work and subsequent research young people across the country showed they are deeply concerned about global issues but the majority are not taking action. (DEA, 2005; Lemos & Crane, 2006; V, 2007.)

Research carried out by V, the national young volunteers service, found that,

"Young people feel passionate about key global concerns, including terrorism, war, poverty, famine and climate change, however, the majority of young people do not act on these concerns."

"One of the challenges for the sector is how to engage more young people in volunteering by relating global concerns, such as famine and war, to the lives of young people, their friends and family." ²

Lemos & Crane research demonstrated that,

"The evidence is, in fact, that young people are concerned about what's going on in their communities and indeed in the wider world... They want to develop leadership skills

themselves and use those skills to positively influence each other. They want to work together on projects in their local communities and they want also to act on international concerns and issues. Young people are, in short, ready to be active, diverse, global citizens." ³

Global Youth Action set out to meet this identified need of young people and offer them the opportunity to engage in critical thinking and take action on global issues they feel passionate about.

What are the benefits?

In 2008 Mori conducted a poll to examine young people's attitude to global learning. They found that young people who experienced global learning are more likely to:

- be open to those from different backgrounds
- understand that they can do things to make the world a better place
- understand that what they do in their daily lives can affect those in other countries ⁴

What are the barriers?

Over and above the traditional barriers to youth involvement, particularly for some groups of young people, there are a number of specific reasons for the divergence between concern and action which research and consultation has consistently shown:

- Young people may not know about the opportunities available to them.
- The scale and presentation of global issues such as poverty and climate change can be overwhelming and it can be difficult to see what impact individuals can make.
- Young people are often targeted as campaigners for particular causes or organisations but are seen as the means and not necessarily the ends.
- Global issues can seem unrelated to young people's lives and not within their sphere of consciousness.
- Adults working with young people may find it challenging because of a lack of confidence in their own knowledge of global issues, or sometimes the political nature of the work.

Make Poverty History, G20 and other high profile campaigns have demonstrated there is real potential to harness young people's awareness and enthusiasm, and respond to their concerns. However, research shows that there is a need to expand the scope, depth and diversity of opportunities for involvement and a need to widen participation in this area of youth action, to involve those young people who may be most affected by global forces, but who feel the least empowered to take action. In response to these needs DEA created a project that provides young people with opportunities for sustained action as well as accessible, short-term opportunities, targeted at specific disadvantaged groups. The project also aims to influence youth policy and to contribute to the mainstreaming of global youth work.

“ Perhaps the contemporary challenge is to integrate international thinking and issues into youth work practice. ”

Lemos & Crane
2006 ⁵