

GYA Real World

The Global Youth Action Project

“ People live their lives to their beliefs so it's hard to challenge them ”

GYA participant

This section of the publication sets out in detail the working of Global Youth Action. This not only explains the structure and activities of Global Youth Action, but also provides case studies and key learning points to guide and inspire global youth work practice.

There are six core elements of Global Youth Action:

1. Regional hubs of global youth work
2. Global Bites
3. Global Youth Action Projects
4. The Global Collective
5. Training for young people
6. Youth work training

Local & Regional 'hubs' of global youth work

Global Youth Action is delivered by a project coordinator in each of the five regional hubs:

- GLADE in Ilminster, Somerset
- Global Education Derby
- The Harambee Centre, Cambridge
- Lancashire Global Education Centre, Preston
- Leeds Development Education Centre

The GYA hubs work in partnership with youth organisations and specialist agencies in their area to engage a diversity of young people in the project and take a lead role in the development of global youth work locally and regionally.

This has developed organically and differs in each region. A number of regions have built links with their local youth services, others have developed relationships with existing voluntary centres in their region and others have formed links with local youth work training providers and Higher Education Institutions to embed global youth work in youth worker training.

The development of a strong hub and a supportive network offers the prospect of sustainable global youth work beyond Global Youth Action.



Over the last two years, Global Education Derby has worked closely with the East Midlands Regional Youth Work Unit to develop a regional hub for global youth work. A network of practitioners has been established, meeting once a quarter under the name of "Global East Midlands (GEM) The network for youth workers promoting International Youth Work and Development Education".

GEM aims to bring together young people with practitioners in the field of youth work and global learning in order to promote opportunities for engagement and active participation with the international community and to address issues through global citizenship education in the East Midlands. Network meetings are attended by a youth workers from local authority and voluntary sector services, Development Education Centres and national / international development NGOs such as Christian Aid, Oxfam and Y Care international.

The network's key objectives are to:

- Promote opportunities for young people to engage with the international community through exchanges and volunteering.
- Develop and promote training for youth workers in the areas of international youth work and development education.
- Develop and implement local based strategies for support and project development leading to clear outcomes for young people.
- Disseminate good practice across the region.

Funding from DFID secured by Global Education Derby for global youth work in the East Midlands has been key to the success of this network.

Key Learning points:

The Derby model has demonstrated the importance of global youth work training for local youth workers.

The hub has successfully worked across the voluntary and statutory sector, recognising the skills, knowledge and expertise of different organisations. The involvement of the regional youth work unit has been important in establishing the hub at a wider regional level.

The development of the hub in Derby owes much of its success to the commitment of individuals involved and their ability to work together to develop global youth work. This is important for developing hubs to bear in mind.

globalbites

Global Bites are short-term or one-off tasters of Global Youth Action. Global Bites follow a global youth work approach, including the three elements of Connect, Challenge and Change, but do not require long-term commitment.

They are specifically designed to engage young people we are finding hard to reach and to provide them with opportunities to take the first steps towards global learning and action. Despite being short, by following a Connect, Challenge, Change approach, Global Bites maintain a quality experience that leads from learning into action.

Connect

Short, fun, exciting sessions bring a group of young people together, connect them to a particular issue and make the connections between the personal, local and global dimensions of the issue.

Challenge

Participants are supported to challenge themselves and their ideas, critically explore the issue and develop a personal or group challenge based on one of the following themes:

- Influencing decision-makers
- Environmental action
- Raising awareness
- Celebrating community
- Challenging inequality & social justice

Change

Challenges are carried out and the young people involved are supported to reflect on their learning and action and to think about change at personal, local and global levels. They are also signposted to further opportunities within and beyond the project. A number of the young people get involved longer term and are inspired by this first taste of global learning to join Global Youth Action Projects. Challenges have included getting friends to sign up to a sustainable lifestyle contract or organising an interfaith football match.



Global Bites: the first steps to global learning and action
By Jessica Witchell, Global Youth Action Coordinator, GLADE

At GLADE we have developed Global Bites, short taster activities, and globally themed days and events in recognition that short, fun activities can be more effective in engaging young people in the project than an approach that requires long-term commitment from the start. The idea is that having a light touch or a flexible agenda gives young people who might never have thought about these things the chance to participate at a level that they feel comfortable with. Once we have gained their initial attention they are often enthused into further participation.

Global Bites are often developed and delivered by the Global Collective (see page 38) and have now become a major strand of work for Global Youth Action.

Taster activities

We always begin Global Bites with very short engaging activities, however sometimes, when we need to drop in and just gauge interest or get a conversation started we run these as stand-alone taster activities (Global Nibbles!). For example:

- Art, craft and practical activities that get people talking.
- Using photos and everyday items as visual aids to spark off discussion.
- Short ranking activities about issues that are important to the group.

Themed days and events

We have extended this flexible approach to one-day events that are open access for young people to drop-in and take part in a variety of activities. As most of the events are based at GLADE it is also a chance to sow the seed for future involvement. For example;

- 'Go bananas!' fair trade event involved making a banana tree out of scrap materials, fair trade quiz, playing a giant snakes and ladders game, making banana smoothies and learning about the people who grow bananas.

We also value the contribution and impact that black and minority ethnic (BME) individuals can offer through sharing their own stories and cultural heritage. Many of our events have provided a space to meet people who originate from other countries as well as addressing global issues. This is particularly relevant given the predominantly white rural population and the isolation that many BME young people feel.

For example in a celebration all things Brazilian, participants were offered the chance to learn Capoeira, play in a Samba band and explore the effects of de-forestation in Brazil through making a mural as well as eating Brazilian food. Brazilian people living in Somerset helped put on the event via the Portuguese Association.

Reaching out to young people

GLADE has also worked in partnership with other organisations to engage more local young people in global youth work. Jean Heath, Local Service Team South Somerset East, provides the following account:

"Incredible Tuesdays is a club which offers a variety of social and educative activities for young people with Special Needs aged 12-25 years old. In order to meet our "Five Outcomes" we regularly include global issues in our 12 weekly programme and aim to make the input as fun as possible but with a strong educative balance.

During the past six months we have benefited from using the resources/staff from GLADE to enhance our programme and we look forward to continuing working together. Subjects covered during this period have included:

Global gifts – looking at where our Christmas presents are made and who made them. Making our own wrapping paper decorated with patterns copied from African fabrics.

A look at a popular TV soap from Africa and comparing/discussing issues.

It has all been thoroughly enjoyed by the group and has undoubtedly raised their awareness over a number of global issues and stimulated them to look beyond their own lives. They are now keen to take action."

Conclusion

We feel that the relaxed atmosphere at these events and the variety of activities available is conducive to young people really appreciating diversity and learning about different issues. Many participants have continued their involvement with the project after this initial contact.

Key Learning points:

There are ongoing issues about balancing project and outcome based work with the process of global learning. However, through exposure to new ideas, giving it a go and deciding if they want to take it further, young people can develop and go on to take a leadership role. This journey needs to be supported and followed up with progression opportunities and signposting.

“ The global issues and themes within the project - diversity, challenging stereotypes, understanding and empathy for others and sharing cultures to aid understanding - were embraced by all the young people taking part in the project. ”

Youth Worker
Burnley Youth Theatre

Global Youth Action Projects

GYAPs are sustained youth-led community action projects. Through a quality global youth work process young people critically explore the local/global issues that matter to them and take action to bring positive change in their communities. GYAPs engage young people for a minimum of 30 hours over four months. In common with all quality global youth work they start with the experience of the young person, enabling them to connect with the chosen issue making links with their own lives and the lives of others in their community.

“ It’s our future, and our generation that will have to clear up the mess. Younger people need to understand what is going on around them, and accept the responsibilities that come with it ”

Sophie, 16

Following the Connect, Challenge, Change model young people are challenged to critically examine their views and those of other people and are supported to develop a youth-led action project. GYAPs may evolve or change over time; the themes of GYAPs vary, depending on the interests of young people and current global issues. Participants have the opportunity for structured reflection on their involvement and supported opportunities for accreditation and for exploring progression.

Young people make Positive Steps towards Community Cohesion

Members of Oldham Youth Advisory Group, 'Positive Steps', trained as peer educators and took their learning about immigration, refugees and asylum seekers to other young people in the area.

What happened?

Oldham has a history of racial tension between white and Asian young people. The Positive Steps group, 16 young people from Oldham - predominantly young women with Bengali heritage, decided they wanted to do something about racial tension for a Global Youth Action Project.

It all started with our workshop on migration and immigration that explored the reasons why people come to the UK and Oldham. This both sensitised and outraged the group. Minorities of Europe, a partner to the GYA project, trained the group as peer educators to be 'Champions for Change' on community cohesion in Oldham. The group developed a residential for other young people so that they could implement their peer education skills by delivering workshops. The residential was held in Liverpool with the intention of exploring a different locality and having contact with different young people. The project developed well beyond its starting point of refugees and asylum seekers and now runs workshops on identity, black history, fair trade, the environment and recycling.

“ Before we started this project I didn't think there was as much segregation as there actually is in Oldham ”

Young Person

Connect

It was a very organic process that started with the young people's interests. They had originally wanted to do a youth exchange with Slovakia and this sparked off debates about their community and issues that mattered to them, especially around refugees and asylum seekers. They were not sympathetic because of the power of the media portrayal of these communities, and did not link the current issue with their own family experiences of parents coming to the UK to work and the difficulties they faced.

The discussions around migration and immigration locally led to looking at race issues and slavery in America. This led on to discussions about India at the time of partition, links with migration to the UK and exploration of personal identities.

Challenge

The Champions for Change training helped them to see issues from different perspectives, find common ground and move forward. The project on refugees and asylum seekers challenged them to look at issues of personal identity and think about the experience of their parents as well as their personal experience. They are now more critically aware of media stories and popular information and are prepared to challenge these

Change

The young people are engaging other young people in Oldham in the debate around difference and diversity and aim to encourage a mixing of different races, cultures and religions in the area. They are especially enthused by the idea of peer education for social cohesion and that they can make a difference to other young people locally.

The group is developing their project to work on social cohesion in the new academies in Oldham that are segregated between white and Asian young people. Some of the young people involved are on the development group in 'Oldham for Me' and 'My Place' and two have become volunteer youth workers.

Outcomes from the evaluation

Personal agency and action for change: they have a strongly developed sense that they can make a difference locally by working with their peers. They have more of a problem-solving frame of mind, wish to take personal responsibility and know they can effect change.

An ability to grasp the inter-connections between the personal/local/global.

Knowledge and understanding of global issues: the GYA project has developed these considerably, in particular around issues of asylum seekers, social justice, black history, racism, segregation, social status, freedom of speech, the BNP, poverty, fair trade and recycling.

Skills development: analysed by the group as: increased communication, information finding, facilitation, leadership, decision-making, self esteem, ability to exchange ideas and a growing interest in conflict resolution.

Young people now have much wider horizons. Oldham can be quite insular, but group members now want to go further afield and they are especially keen to find out what is happening to young people in different parts of the world and to meet with other young people in UK.

“ Young people have gained an understanding that they can effect change, and that they are part of the problem, but also part of the solution – they can affect other young people ”

Youth Worker

“ I've learnt from the project that I am involved in the community and I know that I have made a difference ”

Young Person

Key Learning points:

It was important to remain flexible and wait until the young people felt that they were ready to take things forward. The project changed over time and grew to incorporate many different themes and dimensions. The peer learning dimension to GYA has been very important.

Global youth work can be a powerful approach that is qualitatively different from 'general' youth work because it is a more holistic, including the personal, local and global.

The group were predominantly from Asian backgrounds and they have needed to take time to decide how to make their group more diverse and so more representative of the youth population in Oldham in order to work on social cohesion issues.

The Global Collective

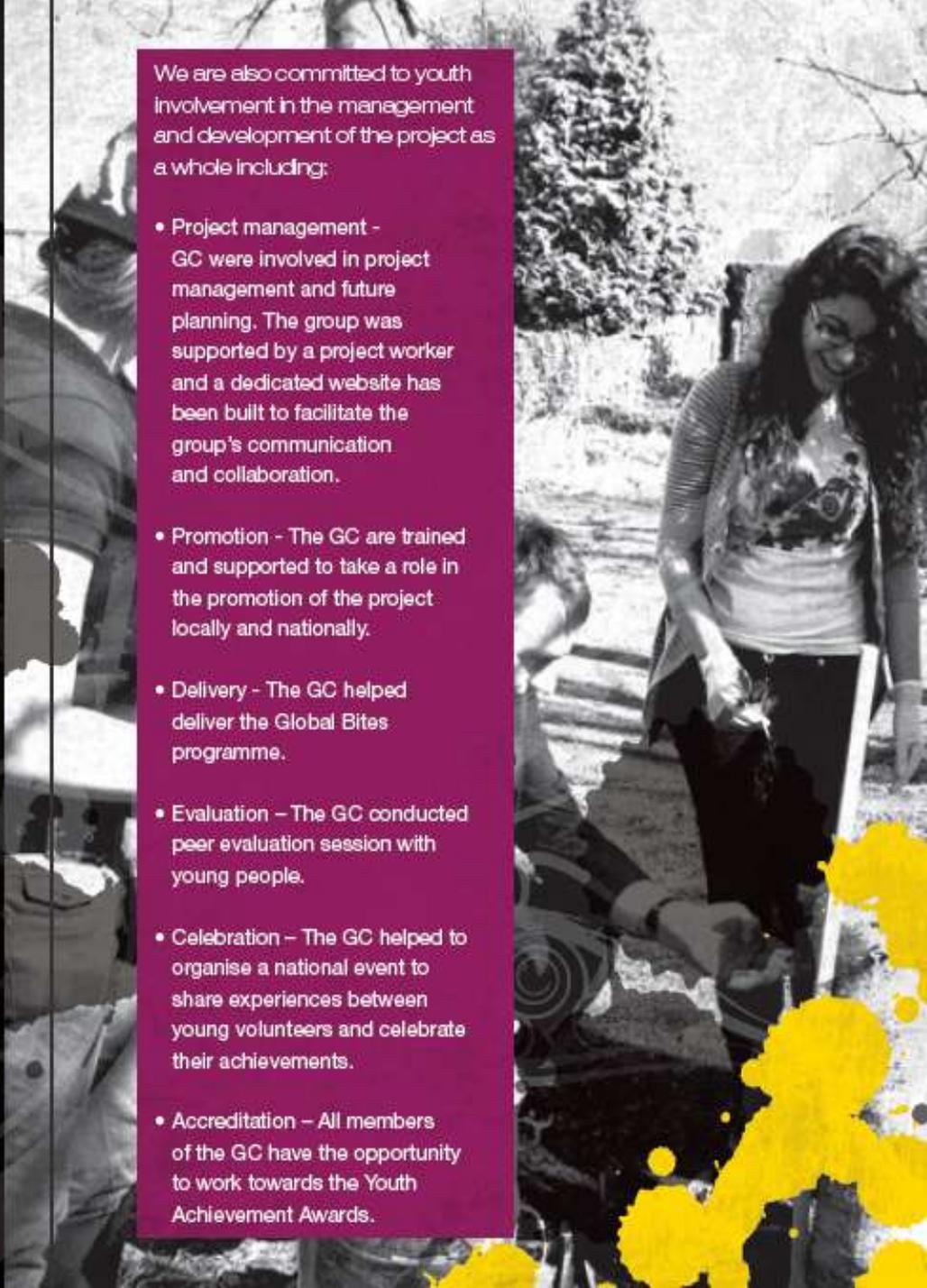
“ Young people like to feel that they are making a difference - especially with a constant media highlight on the negative aspects of today's youth ”

Lauren, 15

The Global Collective (GC) is a national network of young people who help develop and deliver Global Youth Action. Members take part in and support youth action in their local area and help to get young people's voices heard on the global issues that matter to them.

We are also committed to youth involvement in the management and development of the project as a whole including:

- Project management - GC were involved in project management and future planning. The group was supported by a project worker and a dedicated website has been built to facilitate the group's communication and collaboration.
- Promotion - The GC are trained and supported to take a role in the promotion of the project locally and nationally.
- Delivery - The GC helped deliver the Global Bites programme.
- Evaluation - The GC conducted peer evaluation session with young people.
- Celebration - The GC helped to organise a national event to share experiences between young volunteers and celebrate their achievements.
- Accreditation - All members of the GC have the opportunity to work towards the Youth Achievement Awards.





Examples of what the GC have been involved in:

The GC are the voice of GYA and in 2008 they launched 3C, a newsletter written by young people about young people's global youth action. The Global Youth Action website also includes space for the GC to communicate, collaborate and promote the project. To support this work we have also provided media and communications training, including podcasting, interviewing, activist filmmaking and news reading.

As well as supporting the development of the project locally and nationally, other activities the GC have been involved in include:

Delivering peer workshops on global issues and global action.

Producing films about Global Youth Action.

Taking part in the 'Have your Say' debate in the Houses of Parliament.

Organising, managing and hosting a celebration event for 100 people.

Hosting DFID Minister, Michael Foster MP at a project in Somerset and presenting Global Youth Action.

Voices from the Global Collective:

"I have only been involved with the Global Collective for two years and I have been more active and, most importantly, been leading the changes myself more than I ever was. Although I have met with councillors and people in authority before, we only ever got a say on the issues adults and the Government wanted young people to talk about. With the Global Collective you are not the token youth voice. You want to change something; you take the initiative and create a project that you feel is important.

The best thing about the Global Collective is you never feel directed. You always feel involved and are always working towards action. I have got a lot more out of being a part of the Global Collective in two years than I got out of the formal organisation in seven!"

(Kirsty, GC member)

"And why do we do it? The real question is why wouldn't we? There is so much going on out there and so many people who sit back and think 'well, it has nothing to do with me,' when in fact global issues affect everyone and everything around us in different ways. We're part of this project because we care about these effects and we believe we can make a difference. It's important to us to try and make a better world to live in, for us and future generations

(Ashley, GC member)

Participation and The Global Collective A conversation with Leeds DEC

“ Young people like to feel that they are making a difference - especially with a constant media highlight on the negative aspects of today's youth ”

Lauren, 15

At the beginning of the GYA project Leeds DEC recruited four 'hard to reach' young people to join the newly formed national Global Collective. The success of The West Yorkshire Collective has taught us a lot about participation and the specific opportunities that global youth work can bring.

What does 'hard to reach' mean to you and in your local context?

Principally we mean young people who are struggling to access or maintain a relationship with formal education. The young people we have worked with so far have faced issues around disability, housing, domestic violence, pregnancy, sexuality and racism. These issues have meant they feel their formal education experiences do not meet their needs, and so they stop going or do not engage fully.

Why is participation important to you and the project?

We're trying to work with young people who have not engaged well with education in the past and we believe that the young people have to be fully involved in creating and building the opportunities, in order for them to feel like it reflects their interests and needs. Only then will they become engaged with the educational experience.

What attracted young people to the project/the Global Collective?

Besides the residential! Joking apart the young people that got involved had never really travelled around Britain that much and that was the first step in broadening their horizons. They were stimulated by the critical thinking that is at the core of what we do. They don't make too much of it when talking about their experiences, but they usually vote with their feet.

Why do you think your group has shown such enthusiasm?

Various reasons, first - it's the way in which we've worked with them - the door has always been open even when they haven't been in touch for a while, or if we've had a disagreement about their behaviour. From what they have said this seems to be a different style of working to that which they have experienced in the past.



Second, the opportunity for critical thinking. We don't patronise them or underestimate their ability to think about difficult or contentious issues. We don't close down issues, we open them up.

Third, we're offering something they don't get anywhere else - the global perspective on their lives. Fourth, we take their opinions seriously - they seem to get a lot from being involved in steering group meetings.

What have they done as part of the Collective?

One big project was about stereotyping - starting from the issue of them being labelled as chavs - they wanted to explore what stereotyping was all about. This eventually led to them looking at how British people's individual heritage affected the way they were stereotyped. They filmed interviews of people talking about these experiences and then edited the footage into a short film. They launched the film to an audience of other young people and youth workers/teachers.

They've been involved in residencies, steering group meetings, one-off events like the climate change day in Manchester and speaking at the My Life My Say event in Parliament, recruiting other young people to the collective, workshops and sessions in the DEC, contributing to AGMs...

What impact has their involvement had on them personally?

Improvements in their self-confidence and critical thinking. Meeting new people from different places has been very formative for them - I think they are more open-minded about diversity. They learnt a lot from the peer education training they are more confident and more skilled at speaking to other young people in semi-formal environments. Broader horizons in terms of what they might do with their lives, what opportunities they would consider and who they might be friends with.

Any parting comments?

It's said that some young people have got too much going on in their own lives to worry about to be interested in the wider world. Our experience has been quite the opposite. The young people have shown an enthusiasm to engage with global issues and a startling capacity to understand the impact these issues have on others as well as on themselves. The barriers the young people face through their personal circumstances have not affected their ability to think critically and with compassion.



“ This energy and enthusiasm was stimulated by a 20 minute workshop from Harambee one lunchtime four years ago and has become the group's legacy. As one young person says 'we are just not aware how little steps add up to one big journey' ”

Liz Mayne,
Youth Work Locality
Coordinator for Cambridge South

Training for young people Global Peer Education

Young people are recruited to the Global Collective through the Global Peer Education training course. They spend a residential weekend gaining skills and knowledge, building as a team, action-planning, leading activities and having fun together.

The Global Peer Education training enables the Global Collective to talk confidently about global issues and lead Global Bites workshops with other young people. It also has important developmental outcomes for many of the young people who have expressed increased confidence and communication as well as building lasting friendships with other young people. This training is used to bring all Global Collective members together and develop their capacity to help lead the project nationally and locally.



“ I got referred through the Youth Offending Team. I enjoyed it so much I carried on going. I could express myself through music and it was good to make a CD. It shows people what young people are capable of. In the Peer Education course I learnt how to explain things properly if you are a team leader. We learnt about global warming and poverty. We did role-plays and games, trying to get people energetic. It's built my confidence, I've learnt more. I can talk about these things now - its part of my talent ”

Mark, 16

Youth work training

Global youth work training and research have been important elements of Global Youth Action. In developing training and research the project aims to reach beyond the young people currently engaged, to share expertise and tried and tested methods enabling more youth workers to confidently deliver global youth work.

A suite of training was available for practitioners and organisations, from half-day, issue based workshops to term-long accredited global youth work training. Additionally we have developed resources, and can offer advice on curriculum and workforce development.

Through Global Youth Action we have trained more than 600 youth work practitioners and managers.

This has been through:

A national, accredited 'Introduction to global youth work' training course.

Locally and regionally delivered global youth work in-service training.

Joint young person/youth worker training in preparation for GYAPs.

Bespoke training commissioned by youth organisations responding to specific needs.

Issues based training, for example 'Responding to Terrorism'.

Curriculum development training for managers.

Workshops at events.

Global Education Derby (GED) developed a model of global youth work training. The model involved an initial free one-day training and 'taster' session on global youth work, followed by the offer of a weekend training residential to which one youth worker and two young people from each prospective GYA project/organisation were invited. Each youth worker, with their respective young people, then took the GYA programme back to their youth work setting and ran it themselves, with support from GED. The DEC worker felt that this had "a very positive impact and helped youth workers to understand the theory and practice of global youth work" which in turn aided the quality of the ensuing GYA projects in the area.





In evaluations youth workers highlighted the following beneficial aspects of global youth work training:

"Making connections with the world."

"The youth work approach."

"Its about what young people are interested in."

"It is a process (and about outcomes)."

"Global is in the local, regardless of whether you're tackling it, it's not 'out there'."

"Explores how to integrate global youth work into all youth work."

"Credibility of trainer."

"Training days are good for theory and principles and trialling activities."

"This training should be compulsory for anyone working with young people."

HEI research

DEA, in partnership with De Montfort University and Global Education Derby, has also conducted research into the state of global youth work in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the UK, which included interviews with all youth and community work course leaders in the UK.

The research has found that demand for global youth work training was high, and that the two primary motivations for bringing a global dimension to youth work training are, "as a result of the growing influence of globalisation", and responding to the 'expressed needs of the field.'¹¹

It found that only seven of 27 course leaders who responded to the question believe that HEIs are meeting the needs of the field in training for youth workers who can deliver effective global youth work, demonstrating a clear need for more consistent and coordinated global youth work training.

The new National Occupational Standards for Youth Work (LLUK, 2007), The Professional Validation and Curriculum Requirements and the Subject benchmark statements for youth work all include reference to the importance of global youth work and potentially measure training youth workers against these standards.

Diversity

Integral to the work of GYA is the promotion of an approach that genuinely celebrates the diversity of culture, perspectives and values that exist locally and globally; that reaches out to disadvantaged and marginalised groups, that is anti-oppressive, and that is inclusive of all young people. Furthermore, the diversity of young people involved in the project also creates a dynamic learning environment and informed community action as individuals share and connect their experiences of, among other things, poverty, racism or the criminal justice system.

“ I know that we are connected to people across the world. I don't think my friends think this – it's not that I am and they're not or something, they're just not aware ”

GC member

Minorities of Europe, an NGO with over 20 years of experience across Europe in intercultural exchange and learning, are a key national partner and support us in involving a diversity of BME organisations and individuals. They have also developed a training programme for BME young people involved in GYAPs.

Reaching out – Diversity in Global Youth Action

By Clayton Lavallin – Former GYA coordinator Harambee Centre

“ I’m not hard to reach, I am just easy to ignore ”

Global Youth Action participant

Cambridge is a diverse city, home to 40 languages and 14 faiths. Sadly, however, it also suffers with issues around community cohesion and inequality. There has been an increase in incidents of racist attacks, violence and a widening of inequalities between different groups including asylum seekers and refugees, leading to a more polarised and segregated community.¹² A recent report underlined connections between the lack of community cohesion and social exclusion citing “poor achievement in education/employment” as both a cause and consequence of increasingly “poor levels of self-esteem/confidence and/or belief in the community’s social value”.¹³ It is in this context that The Harambee Centre has developed Global Youth Action.

We have worked hard over the last three years to reach out to young people from a diversity of backgrounds, particularly those most affected by these issues, bringing them together, and supporting them in global learning and action. We have engaged young asylum-seekers, travelling young people, looked after children, young offenders, young people from a wide range of minorities, many young people not in education, employment or training, and from rurally isolated areas of Cambridgeshire.

