

## Why promote Global Citizenship?

### **1. Global Citizenship is exciting and relevant to children, and gives learning meaning**

We know that children find Global Citizenship exciting and relevant. For example a survey carried out by Think Global ([www.think-global.org.uk](http://www.think-global.org.uk)) in 2008 found that over three-quarters of young people thought it was important that schools help pupils understand what people can do to make the world a better place.

### **2. Global Citizenship acknowledges that we have the power as individuals: each of us can change things, and each of us has choices about how we behave**

As individuals and collectively there are a huge variety of things we can do, and we can take inspiration from a long line of committed people who have worked to change how the world works. As Margaret Mead said:

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Examples of what people can do include

- speak up against injustice and discrimination;
- bank with an ethical investor;
- reduce waste - refuse unnecessary packaging, reuse and recycle as much as possible;
- buy Fair Trade products;
- become activists – for example we can take encouragement from the genetically modified (GM) foods debate: the Iceland supermarket chain banned GM foods after investigations prompted by six letters from a church group in Blackburn.

### **3. The world we live in is unfair and unequal, and Global Citizenship promotes the challenging and changing of this**

There is injustice and poverty within and between societies. In Britain, poverty has been cited as a cause of underachievement at school, as well as physical, emotional and social damage (Guardian, 14 Sept, 1999). Globally, there are many shocking statistics to illustrate inequality.

The 1998 Human Development Report from the UN stated that the amount people in Europe and North America spend a year on pet food, cosmetics and perfume (\$37 billion) would provide basic education, water and sanitation, basic health and nutrition to all those without those things, with \$9bn left over (UNDP, 1998).



And the progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals highlights both sides of this. The notable successes – for example large increases in enrolment in primary schools - indicate that unfairness can be challenged and overcome. Yet the slow progress in many areas illustrates that eradicating extreme poverty is a challenge the world has yet to solve.

#### **4. Global Citizenship enables the challenging of misinformation and stereotyped views about Majority World countries, and allows children to counter ignorance and intolerance**

There are many generalisations, assumptions and half-truths in the public domain especially, although not exclusively, about Majority World countries. Unbiased learning requires critical thinking - a key element of Global Citizenship.

And as research carried out in 2010 by the International Broadcasting Trust highlights:

“Schools work hard to inform and engage, but compete with overwhelmingly negative imagery that dominates portrayals of the developing world. Most young people have experienced a ‘connection’ with the developing world at some point, and school is often where these connections are made – whether issues are covered in lessons, charity activities organised or passionate teachers have championed development issues.” (IBT: 2010: 1)

Research by Stephen Scoffham (1999) suggests that children's attitudes about Majority World countries can be affected in a positive way through education.

Ignorance and intolerance take many forms. Attitudes of empathy and respect for diversity, as well as skills of co-operation and negotiation, are essential to combat the prejudice and discrimination which still exists in our society.

#### **5. In our interdependent world, Global Citizenship encourages us to recognise our responsibilities towards each other, and learn from each other**

There are many similarities and links between people across the globe, not only in terms of personal needs and aspirations, but also regarding communications and trade. How far can you send an e-mail? Where have the tasty items in your kitchen cupboards come from?

There are numerous examples of Global Citizenship in the UK and all over the world. A whole village in Orissa, India, became involved in a Sustainable Development initiative. This is a notice from the headquarters of the initiative (Hampshire CC Education 1997) that might inspire us all!

"What we spend on building may be destroyed overnight. Build anyway.

Give the world the best you have and you will get kicked. Give the world the best you have anyway.

The biggest people with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest people with the smallest minds. Think big anyway.

If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Do good anyway."

## **6. In our rapidly changing world, Global Citizenship is about flexibility and adaptability as well as about a positive image of the future**

If children are to hope for a fairer and safer future, they need a clear vision of what this would look like, as well as the means to attain it. As Professor Patricia J. Williams, of Columbia University said, when she gave the 1997 Radio 4 Reith Lectures on 'The Paradox of Race' (1997: 14):

"I do think that to a very great extent we dream our worlds into being ... an optimistic course might be charted, if only we could imagine it."

## **7. Teaching approaches used to promote Global Citizenship have a positive impact on pupils and can raise standards**

Teaching approaches used to promote Global Citizenship have a positive impact on pupils and can raise standards. For example:

1. The principles, ideas and activities on this site cover much of the inspection criteria for schools, especially in the areas of quality of education, raising educational standards and pupils' values, attitudes and personal development.
2. Active teaching methods such as enquiries, drama and simulations are particularly successful in promoting learning (Fisher and Hicks, 1987).
3. Research by Lynn Davies at Birmingham University (1999) showed that the involvement of pupils in decision-making systems, such as in school councils, could lead to a drop in exclusion levels where the school ethos supports democracy and equity and values both pupil and teacher performance and welfare.

Additionally, a further Think Global survey in 2009 found that the vast majority of teachers in England see global learning as an important aspect of teaching in schools: 94% feel that schools should prepare pupils to deal with a fast-changing and globalised world.



And a 2012 Oxfam survey of over 80 teachers found that

- 73% said global citizenship contributed positively to the school achieving educational outcomes
- 69% said global citizenship can help improve the behaviour of pupils
- 92% thought helping pupils learn more about global issues was important or very important.