

OXFAM YOUTH AMBASSADORS

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

A teacher's guide to supporting
Oxfam Youth Ambassadors



OXFAM

Oxfam Youth Ambassadors are young people who are passionate about working together to make a difference. They want to be creative, get organised and do something about the issues that matter to them. Oxfam Youth Ambassadors are truly active global citizens.

Why should you support Oxfam Youth Ambassadors?

As a teacher, you know your students work best when they are active, motivated and involved. You also know they care about poverty and social injustice. Supporting Oxfam Youth Ambassadors allows you to bring these things together, empowering your students to make a difference and gain recognition from the UK's leading charity fighting global poverty.

Once you register your school, students form a group and begin working together to lead others, participate actively and have a voice. Once they've demonstrated these three skills, you let us know and we'll send their Oxfam Youth Ambassador badges. Youth Ambassadors are recognised for their passion and involvement. The badge is open to all, regardless of ability.

“Being involved with something that makes a big difference and doing it alongside such great people has been incredible – the skills I have learnt are not easily forgotten.” Shane, 17

What are the benefits?

Student-generated outcomes

Youth Ambassadors plan and determine the outcome of their actions, putting them at the centre of all activities.

Change personal learning to independent learning

Youth Ambassadors develop personal learning and thinking skills such as organisation, time management, creativity, communication and responsibility.

“We choose what to do and how to do it – we were asked ‘what do you want to do next? We’re not often asked that. We’re in the driving seat. I’ve learned I can take more initiative” Tara, 14

Supporting curriculum development

The aims of the the new National Curriculum for England are to:

- promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and
- prepare pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

Oxfam Youth Ambassadors develop pupils in both areas. They'll learn transferable skills such as literacy and communication. They'll also apply curriculum knowledge from subjects like Geography, English, RE and Citizenship in real life settings.

“I’m better at geography – there were questions about water and I could answer them... We learned subject specific vocabulary. My level in geography went up – I didn’t know some of the questions before” Emilie, 14

Wider school benefits

We know schools have a wide range of outcomes you want to achieve to enable your students to lead happy, fulfilled and active lives now and in the future. Supporting Oxfam Youth Ambassadors enables schools to demonstrate how they are investing in their students' wellbeing and ongoing personal development.

Student Leadership

Schools must ensure students are prepared for the 'opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life', and should 'have mechanisms in place to ensure pupil voice is heard and acted upon.' Oxfam Youth Ambassadors help the school to fulfil these responsibilities.

Passing on your passion

Supporting a small group of Oxfam Youth Ambassadors gives you the perfect chance to pass on your passion for your subject and to inspire and motivate your students.

“You don’t always see this side of students, for me it’s been very motivational. Time is a challenge, but it’s very rewarding” Pam, teacher

Ofsted

Ofsted will consider students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) including developing 'the skills and attitudes to enable them to participate fully and positively in democratic modern Britain'.

Ofsted also considers how well students are prepared for the next stage of their education, training and/or employment. Oxfam Youth Ambassadors will develop invaluable skills in planning and leading activities, as well as developing their ability to think globally. Some 93% of business leaders say this is essential for future development.

To help schools meet Ofsted targets Oxfam Youth Ambassadors:

- Develop a range of SMSC outcomes, including an awareness and respect for diversity – both in the UK and globally – with an ability to recognise and value differing opinions and views
- Take part in and lead activities requiring social skills both with their peers and with adults from their school, community and further afield, using approaches that emphasise values and respect.
- Develop their political literacy and understand the principles of political life, with the skills to think critically about the challenges we face now and in the future.

For more information about how global learning can enhance a school's Ofsted performance please go to www.oxfam.org.uk/education/policy/education2012

Getting your Youth Ambassadors group started

Begin by identifying interested students and support them as they begin to work together as a group. The 'Running a Group' youth guide has lots of tips to help you get started and there's a powerpoint presentation to explain the Youth Ambassadors project to students. A successful group of Youth Ambassadors requires your support, as many of the skills needed are ones which young people are still developing. However the Youth Ambassadors should be encouraged to take on as much responsibility for running their group as possible. You can build in curriculum links by encouraging the Youth Ambassadors to bring their work into the classroom to share with peers, or to bring issues covered in class into their group work.

The next step is to register with Oxfam using the online registration form. At this stage we just need to know your contact details at school.

At the end of each term we'll ask you for a brief summary of the group's actions and a summary statement of each Youth Ambassador's contribution. This can be written either by you or by the Youth Ambassador and signed off by you. You'll return this information to us using the online Youth Ambassadors form.

Once the Youth Ambassadors have demonstrated the three skills across three separate actions, we'll send their Youth Ambassadors badge. Youth Ambassadors are eligible to receive a new badge each year.



Young people from London launch GROW with a picnic on London's Southbank. Photo: Rhian O'Sullivan/Oxfam

Size of the group

Make sure your group of Youth Ambassadors is not too large, as it will be harder for students to reach decisions or take ownership in a large group. With large numbers (eg more than ten) consider having more than one group. However keep total numbers manageable as you will have some light-touch record keeping and feedback to Oxfam to do.

Meetings

Agree a regular meeting time and place for the Youth Ambassadors and help them to meet at least once a week. Encourage them to find a system for their meetings, and get them to think about specific roles for individuals such as chair, note-taker, timekeeper etc.

Maintain momentum

Momentum may be lost if Youth Ambassadors do not feel they are achieving their targets. Encourage small, easy-to-achieve actions first before undertaking larger actions. Consider having more meetings at the start to get through the initial discussions and onto taking actions quickly. The Youth Ambassadors badge will help to provide a structure and momentum for the group's activities.

Facilitation

The Youth Ambassadors are the driving force behind the group, and they are the ones who should be making the decisions and taking the action. Your role is to support, advise and facilitate what happens, for example by helping students to organise themselves or directing them to resources.



London Group celebrate International Food Day at the Camden Oxfam shop.
Photo: John McLaverty/Oxfam

Resources

Oxfam provides a range of materials to help you support Youth Ambassadors independently. The Calendar of Action provides term by term suggestions for bespoke projects to get the Youth Ambassadors motivated and inspired. The youth action guides provide practical guidelines for organising group work and taking action. The Youth Ambassador registration documents are online at <http://bit.ly/19C1wMQ>

There is a wealth of resources for Youth Ambassadors and the termly calendar of action and learning at <http://bit.ly/15CbVFq>. Use this page to plan learning and action with your group.

Support from Oxfam

Our regional Education & Youth Co-ordinators can provide advice and support on the telephone or by email. They'll also know about other opportunities your Youth Ambassadors can get involved with and they manage issuing the Youth Ambassador badges. Contact the relevant Education & Youth Co-ordinator at:
North of England: 0161 234 2793
Midlands: 0121 6343611
South west: 01179 166475
London & the south east: 0207 802 9981
Alternatively you can email education@oxfam.org.uk

Visits from Oxfam

If you would like Oxfam to visit your group please contact the relevant regional coordinator.

RECOGNITION

Oxfam wants to recognise the achievements of the Youth Ambassadors. Make sure you inform us at the end of every term about their activities so we can present badges promptly. We'll also publicly celebrate their achievements and progress through the Oxfam website and related publications. Successful Young Ambassadors may also be invited to special events to share their stories and experiences.

Front cover photo: Oxfam

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