

ACTION ON GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP TEACHER TOOLKIT

Review by Anna Grindle

Global Action Plan (GAP) Ireland (2017) *Action on Global Citizenship Teacher Toolkit*, Dublin: GAP

The *Action on Global Citizenship Teacher Toolkit* is an activity resource that aims to bridge the gap between Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Development Education (DE) through an environmental education perspective. Set firmly within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and acknowledging the need for a generation of youth to be aware of and believe in the goals, the resource aims to support students to grow into active global citizens, to be skilled in evaluating their own personal ethics and the impact of their decisions, and ultimately be drivers of change.

At first glance, the resource is attractively laid out and very accessible at fifty pages long. The resource makes use of key methodologies which have had long-standing appeal in the field of Development Education, can be applied in the context of different themes and support processes of questioning, thinking, discussion and reflection. The resource is structured into eight chapters; each focusing on a particular theme with notes for introductory, main and extension activities. Promoted as a toolkit, the resource should be used as such and it is helpful to think of each chapter more as a mini-teaching unit than a single lesson. The resource makes clear links to the Junior Cycle of the Irish Curriculum, in particular highlighting several Statements of Learning (SOL), and Learning Outcomes in the Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) Short Course in Global Citizenship.

Sustainable Development

The introductory chapter on *Sustainable Development* (SD) provides an introduction to the SDGs, outlining suitable activities for pupils to explore

common discourse around SD. The first activity is simple and energising, asking pupils to jot down words or phrases associated with SD, before working in groups to draft their own definition of Sustainable Development and then referring to official definitions.

The main activity is a more complex take on the popular moving debate, and effectively provides an opportunity for students to engage with all 17 SDGs. Rather than a simple agree/disagree debate with two options, pupils prioritise the SDGs in groups of four – having already listened to peers outline key indicators and issues associated with each SDG. After four rounds of moving debate the students have engaged with all sixteen thematic goals, with one final round pushing them to choose which goal is the most important. This develops the notion of the complexity and interconnectedness of the SDGs; that while they are all important individually they need to be considered together, as one impacts the other. Finally, students consider SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) and the need for people to work together.

Development

The second chapter on *development* packs a lot in. The teachers' notes delve straight into key words and concepts within development discourse: *aid, development, economic circumstance, social development etc.*, and refer to a Venn diagram to frame Sustainable Development. Consisting of three interlocking circles of social, environmental and economic factors; then merging spaces of socio-economic, socio-environmental, and eco-economy factors before positioning sustainable development at the centre, this diagram seems quite complex given that it is students' first point of enquiry into the concept. The suggested United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) video 'What is Human Development?' stretches the discourse even further with phrases like 'qualitative life, participation in economy, qualitative education' flashing up against a fast-moving, infographic-based animation background with voice-over commentary.

The introductory photo-matching activity involves matching one of eight photos to an official definition of development. While it is beneficial for students to engage with official definitions, at times they present quite a lot of information for students to absorb. The photo-matching activity is a suitable exercise, providing examples of different types of development, and good visual resources to support whole-class and group work. However, the preliminary stimulus material in the video and diagram is incongruent and confusing, missing the opportunity to consider the meaning of development in its simplest terms.

The main activity uses the Development Compass Rose to enable students to think critically about the positive and negative effects of a development project - considering natural environmental, economic, social and power/governance issues through a visual framework and trigger questions. This methodology allows the teacher to pitch the case study to the level of the students: they might consider the impact of a national infrastructure project, or something local such as the development of a new shopping centre.

It would be worthwhile to consider this chapter in two parts. An initial exploration of the concept of development would be helpful, also highlighting the difference between aid and development. The photo matching activity can be used to emphasise how different interventions can contribute to development, wellbeing and human rights. The chapter could then offer a more in-depth exploration of development, revisiting the photos and matching them with definitions of development. The Development Compass Rose could help students consider how an intervention can accommodate a more holistic approach to development.

Ecological Footprint

Chapter three considers our personal relationship with the environment through the impact of our daily lives, known as our *ecological footprint*. The concept of footprints on wet sand offers an excellent metaphor for students to relate to. The notes provide a clear definition of an ecological

footprint, and the introductory activity encourages pupils to think about their own water/carbon footprint over a day which really brings the concept down to individual and collective experiences.

The main activity is a simple and effective take on the popular World Café activity. Students take their own drawings and photos of things that contribute to their own ecological footprint, and suggest actions that could be taken at individual, school/community, national and global levels. With the carousel elements of this methodology, each group builds on the ideas of the former. The extension activity provides a practical opportunity for students to follow through on some of the individual actions suggesting how they collectively make a big difference.

Global Justice

Chapter four, focusing on *Global Justice* looks at fundamental concepts such as power, influence, reach and action, while engaging students on climate change for the first time. The idea of introducing the concept of power as repression (power over), empowerment (power within and power to) and collective action (power with) is strong. However, I feel there is a need to devote more time to develop students' understanding of power as a concept in its own right. Power is a useful conceptual approach that can be used to: understand the causes of poverty and environmental issues; understand impact and why some people are impacted more than others; as well as how power can inform responses to issues, whether at a programme, policy or campaigning level. It is also important to reflect on our own sense of power and how we use it.

The idea of looking at individuals and organisations and applying a 'power analysis' to their work in relation to climate change is a worthwhile exercise. An analysis of actions and responses to an issue lays a helpful reference point for when they plan their own action project as part of the focus on campaigns in chapter eight. The climate change video which leads into the exercise aims to provide a child-friendly introduction to climate change, but like the activity that follows, considers power only

in relation to *responses* to global issues, ignoring the role of power in relation to the causes of climate change and who is most impacted by it.

By focusing on power in relation to actions as a *response* to climate change, the teaching notes in this chapter do not offer a critical exploration of justice. Overall, the flow of the introductory, main and extension activities in this chapter is confusing. The activities seem simplified and misplaced within the scope and trajectory of this resource. For example, the extension activity suggests establishing a justice group without actually having critically considered the concept of justice, the relationship between justice and rights, and the historical relationship between power and global injustice.

Poverty and Inequality

The fifth chapter on *poverty and inequality* has an excellent introductory activity which takes diverse, frank and detailed personal testimonies from people across the globe, and asks students to consider other people's experiences in light of their access to basic needs, rights, provisions and services, as well as indicators of empowerment. Students are encouraged to consider the subjective nature of poverty, assessing the reality of people's lives – what exactly is sufficient food in a day, and who determines this? The testimonies link the themes of the SDGs to lived experiences, and offer learners an opportunity to see how factors work together to either empower or limit an individual's experience.

The main activity focuses on the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals. The referenced video is useful in setting the context, however, the use of V-Charts to frame actions for MDGs and SDGs is quite a self-limiting activity. A preferable activity may have been to research key achievements from the MDGs, acknowledge the limitations of some of the targets and identify reasons why they were not met. Students could consider why new goals were included in the SDGs, why there is a greater range and scope of goals, and what influenced this.

This chapter might work better by considering terminology related to poverty such as ‘relative poverty’, ‘extreme poverty’, ‘intergenerational poverty’, ‘poverty in Ireland and the UK’, ‘child poverty’, and ‘fuel poverty’. It is also worth considering measurements of poverty, e.g. the proportion of people living on less than \$1.00 a day. Students could research why there was a need to develop criteria for ‘measuring’ poverty, how such statistics are used, and how they have changed over time.

Climate Change

In chapter six, the theme of *climate change* is introduced. The mix-and-match climate facts activity is a strong introduction for this topic. It integrates facts, draws on what students already know, and makes reference to Ireland’s contribution to climate change. Challenging students to explain climate change to a younger person is a quick test of their understanding of the complexities of the issue. Again, it engages the pupils on an emotive level, asking them to consider if it made them feel shocked, concerned, unsurprised or interested. It might be worthwhile for pupils to then reflect on whether (or not) and how these feelings act as triggers for action. The main activity, using the problem and solution tree, provides a framework to explore the complexities of an issue like climate change. It can act as a good reference point for learners over the course of a topic or series of lessons.

Sustainable Communities

Chapter seven focuses on *sustainable communities*, and its inclusion is on merit. Students need to form a good conceptualisation of these terms - separately and together. What does sustainability mean for the planet, policy, innovation, our own personal lifestyles and choices? The notion of communities is being redefined – the community in which you live, communities of interest, the notion of a global community. Putting these concepts together is integral to the way we need to live. However, the activities do not provide an adequate engagement with the concept.

The introductory activity and the extension activity are about access to water; they flow together well and could be examined further on their own merit. The introductory activity asks students to consider what access to clean and safe drinking water means to them and how this might vary from country to country. The research aspect of this activity could be a lesson in its own right – with groups looking at different countries to contrast the limitations of water resources, reasons for this and innovative responses to use precious resources. The extension activity, placing students in solidarity with others by experiencing what it is like to walk to collect and then carry water can be a powerful experience for many young people.

The main activity, a case study on Cortes in Honduras is confusing. It is more a case study on planning for action at a time of disaster, rather than developing an idea of what a sustainable community is. Students essentially examine a rather simplistic map and decide where they might live, and after reading about Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and unstructured information on Cortes, are asked to plan an escape route given that a flood has taken place. The teaching guidelines are minimal. Students are not guided through a process of considering why the town of Cortes is vulnerable to flooding, or to understand what is meant by a community asset. The information fleetingly mentions the principles that inform Disaster Risk reduction (DRR), an approach similar to participatory rural appraisal (PRA). PRA has been influential in the development of systems which form the basis of planning for communities to live more sustainably, and to use local assets, skills and knowledge as a starting point for development. Instead of looking at an escape route, students could study a successful example of where implementing these principles of community-led and asset-based development projects have been put in place, and so developing a firm understanding of what these concepts look like in practice.

While the Cortes case study draws on principles of community resilience and participation, it isn't specifically about sustainable

communities. To understand sustainable communities, students first need to consider key questions. Is a sustainable community about nurturing and developing community spirit and links, or is it about a community living sustainably through community-based planning? It could be both.

Campaigns

The eighth and final chapter looks at *campaigns* as a key way in which young people can take action on issues that matter to them. The introductory activity asks students to identify and examine a campaign they are familiar with, with the help of some guiding questions. Alternatively, students can contrast information on two ocean waste campaigns detailed within the resource. The suggested organisations are interesting – addressing a problem which has recently had much media coverage. The campaigning side of their work goes hand in hand with practical steps, research and technology to take action on the issue, and it's important for students to understand that campaigning is one part of a number of responses to tackle global issues.

The main activity provides a framework for students to identify an issue and plan an action campaign of their own. Tools include a mind-map template to develop their ideas, as well as an action-planning matrix which helps pupils to consider the impact of different actions in terms of time and resources available, and what will have the biggest impact. This is supported by a visual resource to encourage pupils to think about actions at home, in the community and on a national scale.

An action project tracker helps students set out the key steps, actions, time-frame and responsibility for their project. The 'important steps' listed seem a little late at this stage, and really should have been built into the mind-mapping and action planning phase. The extension activity suggests pupils connect with the global South through a celebration of culture, twinning with pupils in a partner school, or sharing their action project ideas. All activities are worthwhile and would form an excellent project if planned well.

Reflection

The resource provides an additional chapter focusing on *reflection*, with the provision of a few tools to assist. The timeline tool is a useful visual resource and could be used over the year at different points for pupils to review their learning. Pupils could also think of the affective dimensions of learning – were they at any point overwhelmed, did they have an ‘A-ha moment’? The Pair & Share activity is quite a powerful oracy tool to allow students to speak out their learning and reflect on how their values, attitudes and skills have been challenged, grown and developed – as well as hearing this back from someone who has been actively listening.

Conclusion

This is a bright and accessible resource, providing some new takes on methodologies which have had enduring appeal. The eight chapters cover a lot of ground by touching on a range of key themes relevant to global citizenship. The resource is firmly aimed at a post-primary audience, although many activities would work well at upper primary at the teacher’s discretion. The resource should be used as a toolkit, with scope for a teacher to take many of the activities and structure their use according to the needs of their class.

In terms of curriculum, it fits well with the Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) Short Course in Global Citizenship and the Junior Cycle of the Irish Curriculum. In the Northern Ireland Curriculum, it sits within the Environment & Society area of learning at Key Stage 3, as well as the Global Dimension strand of Learning for Life and Work. It could also be used as a good base-resource in global youth work or extra-curricular setting focusing on issues of citizenship.

A couple of chapters, I felt, tried to cover too much without perhaps attending to the core concept in enough detail. However, at no time did I feel like students would be unengaged through any of the activities – they were all very active, using a variety of source material and options for students to work in different groupings. The launch of this

resource was supported by a series of 3-hour workshops for secondary teachers offered across Ireland, to allow teachers to explore the SDGs through interactive and creative activities. It is encouraging to see a teacher training element linked to a resource – all too often teachers are inspired by training, but left with the task of finding resources. This resource is excellent in providing a very accessible introduction to global citizenship themes, using key active learning methodologies and frameworks, which practitioners will be able to apply to other contexts and issues. This resource provides just enough content and stimulus material, coupled with flexibility for the practitioner.

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