

# Childhood development stages and learning on global issues

---

*Prof. Douglas Bourn, Dr Frances Hunt of UCL Institute of Education and Dr Hassan Ahmed of Education Development Trust*

*19<sup>th</sup> December 2017*

## Question

*Describe the childhood development stages; specifically, when is the best time to influence children's and young people's thinking on global issues?*

## List of acronyms

CDT	Cognitive-Developmental Theory
DEC	Development Education Centre
DERC	Development Education Research Centre
DGNO	Development Non-Governmental Organisation
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
ESDGC	Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship
EYFS	Early Years and Foundation Stages
GLP	Global Learning Programme
KS	Key Stage
Ofsted	The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
SCVO	Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
SIDT	Social Identity Development Theory
SIT	Social Identity Theory
SSCMT	Societal-Social-Cognitive-Motivational Theory

---

*The K4D helpdesk service provides brief summaries of current research, evidence, and lessons learned. Helpdesk reports are not rigorous or systematic reviews; they are intended to provide an introduction to the most important evidence related to a research question. They draw on a rapid desk-based review of published literature and consultation with subject specialists.*

*Helpdesk reports are commissioned by the UK Department for International Development and other Government departments, but the views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of DFID, the UK Government, K4D or any other contributing organisation. For further information, please contact [helpdesk@k4d.info](mailto:helpdesk@k4d.info).*

## Contents

1. Overview.....	2
2. Childhood development stages and their implications on learning .....	3
3. Global learning in education .....	6
4. Selected examples of global learning approaches and resources.....	11
5. References.....	12
Annex 1: Terminology .....	15

## 1. Overview

This helpdesk report provides a summary of available literature and evidence relating to childhood development stages; specifically, when is the best time to influence children’s thinking on global issues. This question is related to a second query covered in a separate helpdesk report that examines the development education landscape in the UK: specifically, what else apart from British Council’s Connecting Classrooms Programme is going on to build partnerships between schools in the UK and schools overseas? How many children/schools are part of something like this? These helpdesk reports are designed to help inform a business case and guide DFID’s thinking for a new approach to delivering development education in the UK when the current phases of Connecting Classrooms and the Global Learning Programme (GLP) ends. Key definitions and terminology can be found in Annex 1.

This review is based primarily on research and evidence provided by the Development Education Research Centre (DERC) at the UCL Institute of Education with additional information provided by a researcher from Education Development Trust. DERC has as part of its broader remit to provide a regular update of recently published evidence and research on themes related to global learning. Their database of evidence was therefore the primary source of evidence for this report, with some additional database searches being undertaken by Education Development Trust. Education Development Trust also contacted several academics and practitioners involved in global learning to ask for any evidence they were able to provide.

### Key findings include:

- There is no definitive consensus about at which age to start global learning.
- Global learning requires making complex ideas about the world accessible in age-appropriate ways and across all levels of education, including as early as EYFS.
- Starting global learning in primary school or pre-school provides the building blocks for more complex and critical engagements as children progress through the schooling system.
- Global learning in primary schools is more likely to take a ‘softer’ approach e.g. with a focus on values, learning about other countries and cultures and developing active citizenship, responsibility and voice.
- Global learning in secondary schools tends to have an increased focus on social justice and developing skills such as critical thinking. However, more critical engagements can be introduced in primary schools also.

- What is taught and when is often linked to teacher confidence to teach (complex) global issues and not necessarily children's capacity to learn from them.
- Whole school approaches to global learning in primary schools necessarily already include EYFS and KS1.
- There is a body of knowledge which shows that children begin to develop prejudices at an early age, but also that they start to understand concepts such as fairness, empathy and justice early on too.
- Advocates for early intervention suggest it can challenge negative stereotypes before they become too entrenched and fixed.
- There is also an argument that children's lives are global in nature, thus their learning should acknowledge that.
- Available literature shows that there is availability of teaching and learning resources relating to global learning in EYFS and across all the four key stages of education.

## 2. Childhood development stages and their implications on learning

Childhood development theories and theories of learning are extensive and cannot be adequately covered in this short desk-based review; neither is the purpose to do so. However, it is acknowledged that child development stages relating to physical, cognitive, emotional and social development have a profound impact on learning and are thus closely related to the development of a global outlook and understanding.

Some of the most important research on childhood development related to global learning has been undertaken by Rowan Oberman and her colleagues in Ireland (Oberman *et al.*, 2014; Oberman *et al.*, 2012; Ruane *et al.*, 2010). Their research suggested that introducing a global perspective into early childhood education, using open-ended and active methodologies, supports the development of global citizenship skills, attitudes and understanding. The programme was developed through three phases of research. The first phase examined young children's engagement with global justice issues; the second phase explored possible strategies for including global citizenship education in early childhood educational settings; and the third phase tested a draft global citizenship education programme

Their research supports and evidences the beneficial nature of starting to teach global learning and development education from EYFS and KS1. Using activities with global learning concepts and objectives has the potential of positively influencing children's understanding of both local and global issues. Their evidence is strongly rooted in an analysis of child development (Oberman *et al.*, 2014; Oberman *et al.*, 2012; Ruane *et al.*, 2010), the key theories of which are outlined below.<sup>1</sup>

**Piaget's theory of child development** (cited in Oberman *et al.*, 2014: 18-9): Moral stage theory consists of two stages: the **heteronomous stage** and the **co-operation and autonomy stage**. In the heteronomous stage, the younger child is a moral realist, focusing on the consequences of an act, and due to his/her egocentric nature is unable to sympathise with the protagonist. S/he is concerned only with rules and duties and obedience to authority figures. From the age of six,

---

<sup>1</sup> Many of these are listed verbatim from the sources cited.

children move into the stage of moral subjectivism, where moral acts are judged on the intention of the protagonist rather than the consequences of the act itself (Mitchell and Ziegler, 2007).

**Critiques of Piaget:** its focus on the psychological structures of the mind do not consider the socio-cultural context of the child. Also, the fixed definitions of childhood suggest children as passive recipients, which more modern perspectives would challenge.

**Kohlberg (1981)** (cited in Oberman *et al.*, 2014: 19): refined Piaget's moral stage theory and developed a three-level, six-stage theory of moral reasoning. **Pre-conventional stages (1 and 2):** the behaviour of the moral thinker is defined by the fear of negative consequence or reward. **Conventional stages (3 and 4):** the conventions of society come into play and behaviour is determined by the expectations of the family or local community. **Post-conventional stages (5 and 6):** move beyond societal or cultural conventions to develop abstract notions of justice, with the rights of others taking precedence over obedience to rules.

**Critiques of Kohlberg:** bias towards Western society, failure to explain all facets of moral development with its focus on justice reasoning and failure to acknowledge how children as young as four years of age are able to display various levels of moral reasoning.

**Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development** (cited in Oberman *et al.*, 2014: 19): developed the importance of the social world in cognitive development and takes into account the communicative or social and cultural contexts of the learning. Developmental researchers have increasingly drawn on theoretical frameworks which account more adequately for social and cultural dimensions of early development, informed especially by Vygotsky's 'Social Constructivist' theory, (reviewed in Woodhead *et al.*, 2003). In this view, the young child's development is as much cultural as it is natural. Stages are embedded in social practices as much as in processes of maturation. In fact, children's development might most accurately be described as 'naturally cultural' (Woodhead *et al.*, 2003).

**Lagattuta, Sayfan and Blattman (2010)** (cited in Oberman *et al.*, 2014: 19-20): Children begin to develop an understanding that people with different past experiences interpret things differently at six to seven years of age.

**Russell (2007)** (cited in Oberman *et al.*, 2014: 20): studied 7-8-year-olds over a four-year period and focuses on thinking skills and moral concepts children draw on to discuss a variety of complex issues including those of rights, justice, fairness and inclusiveness. Children of this age are able to: "reflect on moral issues, to engage each other, make reasoned judgements, justify their reasons, and change stance in light of opinions of others" (p.170 in Oberman *et al.*, 2014: 20). Children's ability to see a situation from another's perspective and to think outside the boundaries of rule-bound morality develops as they get older, as does their ability to reflect on their own thinking and beliefs.

**Cognitive-Developmental Theory (CDT)** (Aboud, 1988 cited in Oberman *et al.*, 2014: 20-21): children's attitudes to other national, ethnic and racial groups are informed by their cognitive and socio-cognitive development. CDT is heavily influenced by Piagetian theory, where up to the age of 6-7 children favour the in-group and exhibit strong prejudice against out-groups. This prejudice is heavily reduced between the ages of 7-12 when children begin to attribute more positive traits to the out-group and more negative traits to the in-group. More recently, Aboud (2008) recognises the influence of socialisation on children's intergroup attitudes, predominantly children of ethnic minorities. These children do not always exhibit the pronounced in-group bias in their

intergroup interactions before the age of 6-7. Aboud (2008, cited in Oberman *et al.*, 2014: 20-21) also acknowledges the impact of the media, education and parental discourse on children's cognitive mindsets but argues that their impact is dependent on the children's own cognitive abilities.

**Social Identity Development Theory (SIDT)** (Nesdale, 2004 cited in Oberman *et al.*, 2014: 21): identifies four phases in the development of children's intergroup attitudes: 1) Before the age of 2-3, children are unaware of cues regarding people's race, ethnicity and nationality. 2) Age 3, children become aware of people's race, ethnicity and nationality along with awareness that they are members of the in-group. 3) At age 4 children are likely to develop in-group bias. It does not suggest that they dislike out-groups, but rather favour the in-group. 4) At 7 years plus: children develop negative prejudice against out-groups as their focus moves outwards (not all children enter phase four as it is dependent on their internalisation of prejudices). Any perceived reduction in prejudice as children grow older can be a result of them becoming more aware of social sensibilities regarding the expression of prejudice against out-groups.

**Social Identity Theory (SIT)** (cited in Oberman *et al.*, 2014: 22): suggests systematic social group differences in children's geographical knowledge of other countries and intergroup attitudes, rather than the premise that knowledge and attitudes develop consistently in relation to age. Cited studies include Barrett (1996), Barrett *et al.* (1996) and Bouchier *et al.* (2002): English children's knowledge of other European countries varies according to their social class, their own geographical location and gender. Wiegand (1991): differences are dependent on social class, age and ethnicity.

**Societal-Social-Cognitive-Motivational Theory (SSCMT)** (Barrett, 2007 cited in Oberman *et al.*, 2014: 22): does not refer to any connection between age and the development of in-group bias and out-group discrimination. Incorporates all the factors that influence children's intergroup attitudes within one comprehensive framework. These factors include teacher, peer group and parental discourse and practices, education, the media and personal contact with members of other groups. SSCMT acknowledges that the impact of these information sources is dependent on the child's cognitive and social identity processes and suggests that these processes may be overridden by the specific contexts in which the child lives.

**Stereotype formation:** Research indicates that children are aware of difference from a young age. The role of teachers is seen as very important in developing pupils' skills to challenge (negative) stereotypes. There are different points of view:

Barrett (2005) (cited in Oberman *et al.*, 2014: 23): once a relative order of liking for different national outgroups has been established, this order tends to remain stable and consistent across the remaining childhood years. Barrett and Oppenheimer (2011): children's national negative stereotypes are formed by the age of 5-6 and develop through childhood until they form into strong beliefs by the age of 10-11. Contributing factors include: the influence of the teacher, the media, the curriculum, parent's own stereotypes and visits to other countries. As children grow older they are able to acknowledge the role of others e.g. parents in the development of cultural beliefs (McKown and Strambler, 2009).

Woods (n.d.) notices the development of negative attitudes in KS1 children: *"During my training as a primary school teacher I noticed that even young children in key stage 1 were capable of expressing negative attitudes to other cultures and places. In an increasingly global world I feel*

*that it is more important than ever to promote understanding and empathy of the world's people and places.”*

Weldon (2010)<sup>2</sup> (cited in Oberman *et al.*, 2014: 23): advocates for the study of distant places with young children in order to counter the potential acquisition of negative stereotypes of other cultures through advertising, family influences, and, as they get older, peer influences. She argues that children may develop negative stereotypes before they have any sound knowledge of the countries themselves and the people who live there.

Oberman *et al.* (2012: 54): young children (from 3 onwards) absorb prevailing social attitudes and prejudice. They form impressions of 'Africa' and African people from images in the media and in fund-raising campaigns. However, interventions with young children explored the lives and environments of people living in Ireland and Kenya through art and image work, plurality of identities, exploring similarities and differences between and within the countries. The findings support suggestions that children of early primary-school age are able to participate in and contribute to discussion relating to issues of race and diversity, with children raising issues about their own and others' ethnic and racial identities.

**Children's sense of place** (cited in Oberman *et al.*, 2014: 22-3): Children have a natural desire and ability to learn about different places (Weldon, 2010). Generally, children start to acquire knowledge of their own countries from the age of five, knowledge of other countries increases significantly by about age 8. Geographical knowledge is influenced by the mass media, television, foreign travel, school, social class, nationality, ethnicity and location (Bourchier, Barrett, and Lyons, 2002; Holloway & Valentine, 2000; Barrett and Oppenheimer, 2011).

A summary of developmental milestones by the Institute for Human Services for Ohio (2008) indicates that young children of 3-6 years tend to be ego-centric, illogical, magical thinking and their activities are mainly self-directed. These children develop as they progress through primary education until around the age of 12 years they are able to think hypothetically and have awareness of the consequences of their thoughts and actions. This includes an increased understanding of the affects of their behaviour on others, and the ability to predict this. This conceptual thinking develops further as learners' transit to secondary and sixth form education. In the late adolescent stage (15-17) insight and perspective taking is well advanced and there is greater consideration of other's values and beliefs. Cognitive skills have advanced to enable thought processes to either reject or accept hypothesis or possible outcomes in relation to behaviour.

All the above theories have implication for the design, content, depth and approaches of teaching global learning concepts across the UK key curriculum stages, and similarly for other countries and organisations involved in the formulation and the delivery of curricula.

### 3. Global learning in education

The four countries in the UK have different enabling environments for global learning and therefore different levels of embedding global learning into their school curricula. Although the GLP and Connecting Classrooms represent key flagship programmes, even schools that are not participating in these programmes have attributes of global learning integrated into their

---

<sup>2</sup> [www.rsd.k12.pa.us/Downloads/Development\\_Chart\\_for\\_Booklet.pdf](http://www.rsd.k12.pa.us/Downloads/Development_Chart_for_Booklet.pdf)



curriculum subjects. Some schools may include teaching and learning about global issues in one or two curriculum areas; others actively integrate global elements across the whole school, often engaging with an external organisation or programme that supports their global learning journey (Hunt and Cara, 2015). The emphasis on a whole school approach is important when considering at what ages global learning should be introduced. The evidence from a range of studies shows that by relating global learning to the overall mission and aims of the school, there will be a more long lasting and deeper impact (Blackmore, 2016; Hicks and Holden, 2007; Hunt, 2012; Oxfam 2016). The growing popularity of award based programmes which are whole school initiatives re-enforces this (Bourn, forthcoming; Bourn, et al, 2016; Hunt and Cara, 2015).

### 3.1 Global learning in EYFS and KS1

As the evidence from the review of the literature on child development states, there is strong evidence that attitudes and skills developed by children and young people are usually formed at an early age. It is during these early years that children are developing a sense of who they are, their relationships with others and their place in the world. The building blocks for global learning of fairness, sense of empathy and tolerance are a part of early years education.

But it needs to be noted there are conflicting attitudes regarding children's perceived 'readiness' to engage with complex global issues, the form global learning at this age/stage should take and also what value there is in incorporating it into the curriculum. Many schools in EYFS and KS1 do include elements of global learning and there are arguments for including it at this stage:

- Whole school approaches to global learning in primary schools necessarily already include EYFS and KS1.
- Teachers in EYFS and KS1 often have more flexibility to introduce topics that those at KS2 might not, and they may have more time for continuous professional development.
- Teachers move between teaching KS1 and KS2 in primary schools. If the focus is on training teachers (rather than direct interventions with pupils), then training KS1 teachers would also support KS2 pupils if they moved stage.
- Many global learning coordinators in schools are already working in EYFS and KS1.
- Young children develop prejudice and take on negative stereotypes. Global learning at this stage can help challenge these before they become too entrenched.

Many schools are adopting aspects of global learning in EYFS and KS1, with a focus on:

- soft global learning;
- values e.g. fairness, empathy;
- learning in the natural environment e.g. Forest schools;
- making connections to places and people throughout the world;
- creating spaces for children to think;
- celebrating diversity and learning about festivals; and
- a sense of belonging.

'Advocates for early intervention suggest it can challenge negative stereotypes before they get too entrenched and provide a scaffold onto which more complex themes can be added at a later age/stage.' (Hunt, 2012)

Oberman *et al.* (2012: 40) argue that young children are already constructing racialised, discriminatory and prejudiced world-views by the time they come to school and there is a strong imperative towards including global justice education in early childhood contexts. Research by Wood (n.d.) also found that many children at KS1 have already developed negative and stereotypical attitudes about distant places which may have been formed through subliminal messages and media influence. Oberman *et al.* (2012: 39-40) consider global learning interventions in early years can foster criticality, challenge stereotypes and develop thinking skills. They draw on Bruner (1960: 33) who argues that “any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development”, which means that “rather than seeing global justice issues as outside of the understanding of young children, educators should work at making complex ideas accessible in age-appropriate ways” (Oberman *et al.*, 2012: 40).

**Exploring fairness: (Oberman *et al.*, 2012: 51-2):** Children’s thinking around fairness develops considerably from pre-school age and is often seen as an appropriate global citizenship theme for early years. Exploring ‘fairness’ in a global context: risks reinforcing prevailing social attitudes, where labelling scenarios as fair and unfair is used to privilege and perpetuate a deficit model of development. Fairness is best explored as it arises incidentally in the classroom or pre-school rather than simulated or contrived scenarios. Pedagogy can be considered ‘critical’ (Andreotti, 2006) in that it provides spaces to analyse and experiment without telling learners what to think.

**Building empathy and perspective consciousness (Oberman *et al.*, 2012: 55):** Building and exercising empathy for characters in a Kenyan story and play activity enabled children to engage with the characters on an individual level, rather than to build generalised conceptions. They were reported to relate to the characters as ‘friends’ and ‘role models’. Fostering empathy has been identified as appropriate for early years’ global learning.

Oberman *et al.* (2012: 53) note the kinds of themes present in early childhood contexts and the types of global learning themes that could be developed at this age:

- Fairness: support children’s emergent understanding through open-ended explorations of fair/unfair scenarios in local, national and international contexts.
- Poverty: explore multiple aspects of the experiences of individuals living in impoverished situations e.g. food, homes, daily lives.
- Empathy and perspective consciousness: exploring different characters’ thoughts and concerns in picture books, children’s own books and children’s own positionality.
- Learning about the wider world, its people and places: explore the diverse and extensive landscapes between children’s country of residence and place that is the subject. Reflect on the diversity of people and landscapes in developing countries.

Oxfam’s curriculum and pedagogical framework for global learning (Oxfam 2015a and 2015b) provides strong evidence that global learning concepts can be taught at pre-school level. Thus, skills such as cooperation and communication which begin in the early years, can be continued in more progressive and complex dimension throughout learners’ education. Their curriculum offers an exhaustive and non-prescriptive guide to stimulate further thinking, discussion and planning of global learning in relation to the spiral depth of the curriculum.

Action research conducted by Alcock and Barker (2016) demonstrates that teaching global learning and development education has the potential to also impact on the development of basic skills, such as raising standards in pupils writing. This research is based on a local authority maintained primary school with an attached nursery school where pupils entering the school had lower than average communication, language, literacy skills and knowledge of the world.



Teachers' strategy of using global learning with a focus on writing resulted in improved creativity and better writing skills in pupils across KS1 and KS2. An Ofsted inspection in 2015 found 'rapid school improvement', with the majority of pupils judged to be making good progress. The Ofsted inspector noted: "the school uses global learning (global education themes) very effectively" with the result that learning was "more relevant and interesting" with "pupils able to apply their knowledge and skills to real-life problems" (Ofsted, 2015: 4, 6 cited in Alcock and Barker 2016).

### 3.2 Global learning in KS2

There is a growing body of evidence that demonstrates that global learning in KS2 is valuable for learners and fits in with the literature on theories of development and developmental stages (Gadsby and Bullivant, 2011; Bourn et al, 2016; Hunt, 2012; Hicks and Holden, 2007; Petersen and Warwick, 2015). Global learning at this stage often focuses on:

- 'soft' global learning (Andreotti, 2006) e.g. addressing diversity often through the celebration of cultural identities, promotion of mutual respect and inter-cultural learning; developing a sense of respect, responsibility and values in pupils; and encouraging pupils' as global citizens (Hunt, 2012)
- challenging stereotypes
- linking local to global
- building blocks to more critical engagements
- making difficult concepts accessible in age-appropriate ways.

There tends to be less emphasis at primary level on critical engagements with global learning and the teaching of controversial or 'difficult' issues, such as conflict, social justice and developing understandings of power inequalities in the world (Hunt, 2012). However, there appears to be an emerging sense that pupils in primary schools can cope with controversial and complex issues if the teaching is prepared and delivered appropriately (Cowan and Maitles, 2002; Oxfam, 2006a; Oberman *et al.*, 2012; Tanswell, 2011 all cited in Hunt, 2012). Oberman *et al.* (2012: 40 drawing on Bruner, 1960) argues that teachers should strive to make complex ideas accessible to all children in age-appropriate ways instead of seeing issues of global justice as being beyond the understanding of young children. Holden (2006, drawing on Croll, 2005) warns against leaving global teaching too late as "aspirations for the future are often fixed by the time they leave primary school".

### 3.3 Global learning in KS3 and KS4

Learning about global and development issues has been a feature of secondary schools in the UK for many years, either specifically in subjects such as geography, science or history or through wider social activities that have often been linked to projects and activities of charities and international development organisations (Bourn and Hunt, 2011; Edge et al, 2009; Hicks and Holden, 2007). At this age, the school curriculum is an important driver for learning about issues such as causes of global poverty through geography, understanding climate change through sciences and looking at African writers through English Language. There is evidence that 'real world' topics such as understanding trade relations and poverty through mathematics can bring a curricula subject to life and make it relevant.

Blackmore's (2016) research shows that at secondary school level, critical thinking, reflection and dialogue is possible through looking at global issues such as oil pollution and holocaust.

Research by Brown (2015) shows that young people are curious about global issues, wish to know more and want to contribute to making the world a better place. However, her research also identified that many young people are unclear about how much progress there has been made in tackling global poverty, that they need to be challenged to question their own assumptions about causes of inequality and above all, have the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills so that they can make informed judgements. There is also evidence that at KS3 and KS4 young people themselves wish to become active participants in making the world a better place, supported by numerous examples of extra-curricular activities, projects and resources (largely developed by NGOs) that can enable young people to see themselves as active global citizens (Hunt, 2017).

Bourn (2015) examined a European Commission funded development education project (*Schools for Future Youth*) for young people aged between fourteen to eighteen. The project results demonstrated that teenagers from UK, Italy and Poland who experienced an enquiry-based approach to learning encompassing global learning concepts developed personal and social competencies to preserve and promote democracy, human rights and fundamental freedom. These findings can be connected to the theme of the relationship between learning, behaviour and action which has been raised by a number of academics (Scheunpflug, 2011; Standish, 2012; Tallon, 2013). Young people in particular need to have positive experiences of acknowledgement, awareness and also agency, in order to give meaning to their experiences and establish linkages between the past, present and future (Jorgenson, 2010 cited in Bourn 2015). As Holden (2007 referenced by Bourn 2015) suggests, it is also important that the majority of young people feel they can do something to bring about positive change.

### 3.4 Global learning and post-16 years

Development education and global learning has been largely focused on primary schools and the lower end of secondary. When examinations start to dominate the life of a young person at school, the spaces for learning about global and development issues tend to be located within specific examination courses.

There are many courses at GCSE that explicitly include learning about global and development issues. Examples include a unit in Geography on Challenges in the Human Environment, covering urban issues and challenges, the changing economic world and challenges of resource management.<sup>3</sup> In the Combined Sciences course themes such as 'Building blocks for Understanding and Towards a Sustainable future are covered.<sup>4</sup> In Citizenship studies, one of the three schemes of work is on rights and responsibilities<sup>5</sup>. Similar themes can be seen in courses such as business studies, economics, government and politics, leisure and tourism and all of the natural sciences.<sup>6</sup>

Within the AQA A level courses the global issue themes are obviously discussed at more depth and examples include: Anthropology has a unit on global and local societies, environments and

---

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/geography/gcse/geography-8035/subject-content/challenges-in-the-human-environment>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/gcse/combined-science-synergy-8465/specification-at-a-glance>

<sup>5</sup> <http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/citizenship/AQA-8100-SOW.PDF>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects>

globalisation<sup>7</sup>; Chinese Mandarin has themes and units looking at local, national and global contexts<sup>8</sup>; Design and Technology specifically includes environmental issues<sup>9</sup>; Economics – unit on National economy in a global context<sup>10</sup>; Human Geography- unit on global systems and global governance<sup>11</sup>; Sciences: exploring key scientific issues<sup>12</sup>; Government and Politics: Unit on Political Issues<sup>13</sup>;

The World Development ‘A’ level which will be discontinued from 2018, together with the Edexcel Global Development AS level, had been important vehicle for promoting global and development issues within the curriculum. Research for this ‘A’ level showed that the course had a positive impact on the learners view of the world (Miller *et al.*, 2012). Evidence from this research reveals a complex picture of impact with the emphasis appearing to be more on social and moral aspects of development than the political, and positive changes in perceptions of global poverty and inequality in the world. There is also evidence that studying the A-level had an impact upon the students’ “future learning in higher education, with Geography and Development Studies being their preference.” (Miller *et al.*, 2012).

## 4. Selected examples of global learning approaches and resources

The following table is an indication of where some global learning providers have decided to locate their resources in terms of age / stage of development:

---

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/anthropology/a-level/anthropology-2110/subject-content/unit-3>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/languages/gcse/chinese-spoken-mandarin-8673/subject-content/themes>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/design-and-technology/gcse/design-and-technology-textiles-technology-4570/subject-content/unit-1>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/economics/as-and-a-level/economics-7135-7136/subject-content-as/the-national-economy-in-a-global-context>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/geography/as-and-a-level/geography-7037/subject-content/human-geography>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/as-and-a-level/science-in-society-2400/subject-content/unit-3-a2-exploring-key-scientific-issues>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/government-and-politics/as-and-a-level/government-and-politics-2150/subject-content/unit-4b>



### Approach

Philosophy for Children  
UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools Award  
Roots of Empathy  
  
Eco-Schools  
  
International Schools Award  
Oxfam's *Curriculum for Global Citizenship*<sup>14</sup>  
  
Oxfam Youth Ambassadors

### Age and stage information

Has resources from EYFS upwards  
Resource packs start from EYFS upwards  
Starts Seeds of Empathy programme in EYFS  
Resources for KS1, KS2 and KS3  
<http://www.eco-schools.org.uk/resources/>  
Resources from 4 years +  
Pedagogical framework for teaching global learning across all key stages of education  
Secondary school pupils

## 5. References

Alcock, Hilary L. and Barker, Linda Ramirez (2016) *Can global learning raise standards within pupils' writing in the primary phase?* DERC Research Paper No.16 London UCL Institute of Education [http://clients.squareeye.net/uploads/glp/GLP\\_pdfs/Research/DERC-Research-paper\\_16-pweb.pdf](http://clients.squareeye.net/uploads/glp/GLP_pdfs/Research/DERC-Research-paper_16-pweb.pdf)

Andreotti, V. (2006) *Soft versus critical global citizenship education*. Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review, 3, pp. 40-51  
<https://www.developmenteducationreview.com/sites/default/files/article-pdfs/andreotti%20focus%204.pdf>

Barrett MD and Oppenheimer L (2011) *Findings, theories and methods in the study of children's national identifications and national attitudes* European Journal of Developmental Psychology, 8 pp. 5-24. [http://epubs.surrey.ac.uk/2799/2/Barrett\\_%26\\_Oppenheimer\\_%282011%29.pdf](http://epubs.surrey.ac.uk/2799/2/Barrett_%26_Oppenheimer_%282011%29.pdf)

Blackmore, C. (2016) *Towards a pedagogical framework for global citizenship education* International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning, Volume 8, Number 1, pp. 39-56  
<http://www.ingentaconnect.com/contentone/ioep/ijdegl/2016/00000008/00000001/art00004?crawler=true>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/education-for-global-citizenship-a-guide-for-schools>

*The K4D helpdesk service provides brief summaries of current research, evidence, and lessons learned. Helpdesk reports are not rigorous or systematic reviews; they are intended to provide an introduction to the most important evidence related to a research question. They draw on a rapid desk-based review of published literature and consultation with subject specialists.*

*Helpdesk reports are commissioned by the UK Department for International Development and other Government departments, but the views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of DFID, the UK Government, K4D or any other contributing organisation. For further information, please contact [helpdesk@k4d.info](mailto:helpdesk@k4d.info).*

Bourn, D. (2015) *The Theory and Practice of Global Learning*, DERC Research Paper No.11. London, Institute of Education. [http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1492723/1/DERC\\_ResearchPaper11-TheTheoryAndPracticeOfGlobalLearning%5B2%5D.pdf](http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1492723/1/DERC_ResearchPaper11-TheTheoryAndPracticeOfGlobalLearning%5B2%5D.pdf)

Bourn, D. (forthcoming) *Fairtrade Award Programme in Schools in the UK*, DERC Research Paper no,18, London, UCL Institute of Education.

Bourn, D., Hunt, F., Blum, N. and Lawson, H. (2016) *Primary education for global learning and sustainability*. Cambridge Primary Review Trust Research Reports. York: Cambridge Primary Review Trust. <http://cprtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Bourn-report-160217-final.pdf>

Brown, K. (2015) *Young People's Understanding of Global Poverty*, DERC Research Paper no.14. London: Institute of Education. [http://clients.squareeye.net/uploads/glp/GLP\\_pdfs/Research/DERCrp14brown\\_web.pdf](http://clients.squareeye.net/uploads/glp/GLP_pdfs/Research/DERCrp14brown_web.pdf)

DFES (2005) *Developing a Global Dimension to the School Curriculum*. London: DFES. [www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/1409-2005DOC-EN-02.doc](http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/1409-2005DOC-EN-02.doc)

Edge, K., Khamsi, K., Bourn, D. (2009) *Exploring the Global Dimension in Secondary Schools: Final Research Report*. London: Institute of Education. Gadsby, H. and Bullivant, A. (ed.) (2011) *Global Learning and Sustainable Development*. London: Routledge.

Hicks, D. and Holden, C. (2007) (eds.) *Teaching the Global Dimension*, Abingdon, Routledge

Hunt F. (2012) *Global Learning in Primary Schools in England: Practices and Impacts*. DERC Research Paper No. 9. London: Institute of Education. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/da3a/83e0bc4d122df03cb47b496e9b8fc99a9620.pdf>

Hunt, F. and Cara, O. (2015) *Global learning in England Baseline Analysis of Global Learning Programme: whole school audit 2013-2014*. DERC Research Paper No.15. London: Institute of Education. [http://clients.squareeye.net/uploads/glp/GLP\\_pdfs/Research/DERCrp15huntcara\\_web.pdf](http://clients.squareeye.net/uploads/glp/GLP_pdfs/Research/DERCrp15huntcara_web.pdf)

Hunt, F. (2017) *Schools for Future Youth Evaluation Report: Developing young people as active global citizens*. DERC Research Paper no. 17. London: UCL Institute of Education. [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Frances\\_Hunt/publication/320596104\\_Schools\\_for\\_Future\\_Youth\\_Evaluation\\_Report\\_Developing\\_young\\_people\\_as\\_active\\_global\\_citizens/links/59ef8ae1458515c3cc43655c/Schools-for-Future-Youth-Evaluation-Report-Developing-young-people-as-active-global-citizens.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Frances_Hunt/publication/320596104_Schools_for_Future_Youth_Evaluation_Report_Developing_young_people_as_active_global_citizens/links/59ef8ae1458515c3cc43655c/Schools-for-Future-Youth-Evaluation-Report-Developing-young-people-as-active-global-citizens.pdf)

Institute for Human Services for the Ohio Child Welfare Training Programme (2008) *Developmental Milestones* Institute for Human Services, Ohio <http://www.ocwtp.net/pdfs/trainee%20resources/cw%20core/cw%20core%20module%207%20all%20handouts.pdf>

Miller, G., Bowes, E., Bourn, D. and Castro, J. (2012) *Learning about development at A level: A study of the impact of the world development A-Level on young people's understanding of international development*. DERC, Research Paper. No. 7. London: Institute of Education. <https://www.centreforglobaleducation.com/sites/default/files/Learning%20About%20Development.pdf>

Oberman R., O'Shea, F., Hickey, B, et al. (2014) *Research Investigating the Engagement of Seven- to Nine-Year-Old Children With Critical Literacy and Global Citizenship Education*. Dublin: Education for a Just World Partnership.

<https://www.dcu.ie/sites/default/files/chrce/pdf/GlobalThinkingResearchreportbyRowanOberman.pdf>

Oberman R., Waldron, F. and Dillon S. (2012) Developing a Global Citizenship Education Programme for Three to Six Year Olds *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning*.

<http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/ioep/ijdegl/2012/00000004/00000001/art00004?crawler=true>

Petersen, A. and Warwick, P. (2015) *Global Learning and Education*. Abingdon, Routledge

Ruane, B., Kavanagh, A., Waldron, F., Dillon, S., Casey, M., Maunsell, C. and Prunty, A. (2010) *Young Children's Engagement with Issues of Global Justice*.

[https://www.ideaonline.ie/uploads/files/Trocaire\\_CHCRE\\_report.pdf](https://www.ideaonline.ie/uploads/files/Trocaire_CHCRE_report.pdf)

Scheunpflug, A. (2011) *Global education and cross-cultural learning*, *International Journal Of Development Education and Global Learning*, 3, (3), pp.29-44

<http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/ioep/ijdegl/2010/00000003/00000003/art00003?crawler=true>

Standish, A. (2012) *The False Promise of Global Learning*. New York, Continuum

Tallon, R. (2013) *'What do young people think of development'*, Unpublished PhD thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

Woodhead, M. (2006) *Changing perspectives on early childhood: theory, research and policy*. background paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007.

[http://oro.open.ac.uk/6778/1/Woodhead\\_paper\\_for\\_UNESCO\\_EFA\\_2007.pdf](http://oro.open.ac.uk/6778/1/Woodhead_paper_for_UNESCO_EFA_2007.pdf)

Wood, S. (n.d.) Learning about distant places <http://www.tidegloballearning.net/primary-early-years/learning-about-distant-places-key-stage-1-sally-wood>



## Annex 1: Terminology

For the purpose of this review, the following concepts, keywords and definitions are given and adopted:

**Global learning:** The area of global learning has been subject to a wide range of terms and concepts that can be summarised as learning about global and international development issues.

Historically the main term used in the UK was **development education**. An example of a definition of this term was that produced by a range of NGOs across Europe:

“...an active learning process, founded on the principles of solidarity, equality, inclusion and co-operation. It enables people to move from basic awareness of international development priorities and sustainable human development, through understanding of the causes and effects of global issues to personal involvement and informed actions.”  
(www.deeep.org)

The term **global education** has been seen as more of an umbrella term bringing together the themes of development, environment, human rights, citizenship and peace. This term is most closely associated with the Council of Europe’s North-South Centre and Global Education Network Europe. They define the term as:

“Education that opens people’s eyes and minds to the realities of the world, and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and human rights for all.” (Wegimont and O’Loughlin).

The term ‘**global dimension**’ is associated with a specific initiative in England from 2000 to 2010 as a cross-curricula theme encompassing global citizenship, sustainable development, values and perceptions, social justice, diversity conflict resolution and human rights (DfES, 2005; see also Hicks and Holden, 2007).

**Education for Sustainable Development** has emerged as a key term over the past ten to fifteen years following the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development. Historically this term was seen as bringing together environmental and development education but today it is seen as a distinct concept in its own right although there are many different interpretations of the term. The concept is used to promote learning about global issues in Scotland and Wales. One of the most common definitions is that used by UNESCO:

“Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) empowers people to change the way they think and work towards a sustainable future.”

UNESCO aims to improve access to quality education on sustainable development at all levels and in all social contexts, to transform society by reorienting education and help people develop knowledge, skills, values and behaviours needed for sustainable development. It is about including sustainable development issues, such as climate change and biodiversity into teaching and learning. Individuals are encouraged to be responsible actors who resolve challenges, respect cultural diversity and contribute to creating a more sustainable world.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-sustainable-development>

Over the past decade, the terms '**global learning**' and '**global citizenship education**' have become popular and have tended to replace development education. Global learning first emerged in Germany as a term to locate discourses within the frame of globalisation and emphasise processes of learning. In England, global learning is defined by the GLP as:

“Global learning can be described as an approach to learning about international development through recognising the importance of linking people’s lives throughout the world. In the context of the Global Learning Programme, global learning encourages critical examination of global issues and an awareness of the impact that individuals can have on them.”<sup>16</sup>

**Global Citizenship Education** was first used by Oxfam in 2006 with their Framework for Curriculum Development. They define a global citizen as someone who:

- is aware of the wider world and has a sense of their own role as a world citizen;
- respects and values diversity;
- has an understanding of how the world works;
- is passionately committed to social justice;
- participates in the community at a range of levels, from the local to the global;
- works with others to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place; and
- takes responsibility for their actions. (Oxfam, 2015)

For the purposes of this report, it is important to note that despite these different concepts, there are a number of underlying themes that underpin all of the terms. These could be summarised as a distinctive pedagogical approach based on a process of learning that encourages promotion of a global outlook, understanding of causes of inequalities in the world, a belief in wanting to make the world a better place, looking at issues through different worldviews and encouraging a participatory, learner-centred approach.

These themes can be seen within the following:

- **Knowledge:** increased understanding about international development, globalisation and sustainable development, linkages between global and local issues.
- **Skills:** recognition that there are different interpretations of issues, to develop critical thinking, ability to question viewpoints and perspectives and challenge stereotypes, being open to the views of others and communicating effectively one’s own views.
- **Values** of fairness, tolerance, respect and concern for human rights and recognising that people have their own values base which may be different from their own (Andreotti, 2011; Bourn, 2015; Gadsby and Bullivant, 2011; Hicks and Holden, 2007; and Hunt, 2012).

**Global learning** is also defined as the application of development education by practitioners, teachers and pupils. Given the interconnected and interdependent nature of our world, the global is not ‘out there’. Our links to people and places on every continent means the global is part of our everyday lives:

- socially and culturally through the media and telecommunications, and through travel and migration;
- economically through trade and international finance;
- environmentally through sharing one planet; and

---

<sup>16</sup> <http://glp.globaldimension.org.uk/pages/11255>

- politically through international relations and systems of regulation (Oxfam, 2015b).

Think Global defines global learning as education that puts learning 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. They outline eight overlapping concepts that are at the heart of global learning:<sup>17</sup>

- global citizenship
- interdependence
- social justice
- conflict resolution
- diversity
- values and perceptions
- human rights
- sustainable development

**Childhood development and development stages:** In this review, the childhood period refers to ages 0-18 years. However, for the benefit of the review question, coverage focused on EYFS to high school level (3-18 years of age).

## Expert contributors

- Sue Bush, Torriano Primary School, Camden
- Kate Lea, Global Citizenship and Education Advisor, Oxfam
- Dr Bill Scott, Professor Emeritus, University of Bath
- Orla Devine, GLP Coordinator, Northern Ireland
- Tanya Wisely, IDEAS Coordinator, Director GLP-Scotland
- Susy Ndaruhutse, Director GLP-Wales
- Jess McQuail, CEO Think Global

## Suggested citation

Bourn, D., Hunt, F., and Ahmed, H., (2017) *Childhood development stages and learning on global issues*. K4D Helpdesk Report. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies.

## About this report

*This report is based on five days of desk-based research. The K4D research helpdesk provides rapid syntheses of a selection of recent relevant literature and international expert thinking in response to specific questions relating to international development. For any enquiries, contact [helpdesk@k4d.info](mailto:helpdesk@k4d.info).*

*K4D services are provided by a consortium of leading organisations working in international development, led by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), with Education Development Trust, Itad, University of Leeds Nuffield Centre for International Health and Development, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM), University of*

---

<sup>17</sup> [www.thinkglobal.org.uk](http://www.thinkglobal.org.uk)

*Birmingham International Development Department (IDD) and the University of Manchester Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute (HCRI).*

*This report was prepared for the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID) and its partners in support of pro-poor programmes. It is licensed for non-commercial purposes only. K4D cannot be held responsible for errors or any consequences arising from the use of information contained in this report. Any views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of DFID, K4D or any other contributing organisation. © DFID - Crown copyright 2017.*