

Teesside One World Centre

Raising Standards through Development Awareness (RSDA) was an action research project, funded by the Department for International Development, which aimed to **provide evidence of the educational benefits of a global dimension in the formal school setting.** By working with 4 schools across the Teesside area to embed an ethos of global thinking the project looks at the impact of this work upon academic standards and levels of achievement in education.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

If you would like to find out more about the Raising Standards through Development Awareness project, Moving On or any of the work of Teesside One World Centre please contact Naomi Priestley using the details below:
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Raising Standards through Development Awareness Project

METHODOLOGY

The project worked with four schools: **two primary schools, a special needs school for boys with behavioural problems and a secondary school.** Initial work with the group included a range of meetings with staff, student councils and governors to build a support base for the project. **A baseline assessment activity for each Key Stage to evaluate the level of global awareness** in individual students and the group as a whole was undertaken.

Using the information from the baseline assessments and feedback from meetings and staff training sessions **Individual School Action Plans (ISAPs) were formed.** These reflect the distinctive nature of each school and their perceived needs in introducing a global dimension. Each school selected a different pathway to introduce a global dimension into their school.

Interim assessments occurred at the end of year 2 and final assessments at the end of year 3 of the work programme with schools.

Painting a picture of a particular group of children at a set point in time, **the assessments demonstrated largely positive changes in the knowledge and understanding, skills and attitudes and values** of those taking part and reinforced the views of the staff from each of the schools as to the positive impact of the project upon their children and young people.

PROJECT INPUTS WHAT WE DID WITH SCHOOLS

Each of the 4 project schools was offered a **range of support to begin introducing a global dimension to their curriculum and everyday practices.**

These included:

- Continual professional development sessions tailored for each school
- **Model classroom workshops**
- Assistance with medium & long-term planning
- **£400 of resources**
- Resource advice and audits
- **Curriculum auditing**
- Support for global school partnerships
- **Links to other organisations offering support and partnership**
- Availability of project officer for on-going support and advice
- **Meetings with school governors**

The project team in collaboration with each school hosted two conferences. The first, held in year 2, celebrated the ongoing work of the

schools. The second and final conference took a child-led approach and gave the participants the opportunity to take action on issues during a global school day.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The project realised that to assess global awareness there was a need to develop a tool kit that covered not just the areas of knowledge and understand but also skills, attitudes and values. **Due to time constraints the project team were unable to fully explore the development of a toolkit.** This is something which would be useful for development education workers and school based educators alike.

The project was monitored by a steering group and an external evaluator reviewed the project to assess initial and interim progress and provided a final evaluation in July 2005.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

The external evaluation showed:

- That in all cases **expectations of the benefits of the project to the school community had been exceeded.**
- The work was seen to have **added value** to curriculum work.
- Ongoing reporting to staff and governing bodies was praised.
- **Development education resources and advice relating to resource use have been embraced by the schools.**
- The project has made a **positive impact on children in all schools in terms of attainment, evidenced in greater knowledge and understanding of world issues, personal growth through development of more positive attitudes and moral values.**
- The project has helped to give a clearer focus and direction to the curriculum and to provide a coherent framework for the various initiatives in which the school is involved. The result is **greater curriculum breadth, balance and enrichment.**
- **Global school partnerships have been effective in engaging staff throughout the school.**
- Learning has led children and young people to share ideas and knowledge with their parents and members of their communities.
- **ICT is an area which schools have shown interest in with regards to developing a global dimension further.**
- Schools would value more opportunities for sharing learning with others local schools.

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CHANGES IN POLICY AND PRACTICE

A global dimension is now a component of the **school development plan** in 3 of the schools.

Backing from senior management and school governors is evident in each of the project schools.

In all schools a **global dimension is evident in more multiple curriculum subjects** and is

supplemented by planned themed days and weeks.

In one of the primary schools a one world study theme is written into curriculum planning of each

two-year cycle; the **global dimension is explicitly identified within**

schemes of work and is delivered by a variety of subjects including geography, PSHE and citizenship.

Global dimension will be included in the responsibilities of the role of the PSHE coordinator in one of the primary schools.

Interest in a global dimension will be included in future staff appointments at the special school.

TIMESCALE

It was initially envisaged that 3 years would provide ample opportunity to work with schools to embed a global dimension. It transpired that this was **just enough time to build sustainable foundations rather than deep rooted understandings and practice of the elements of education which make a global dimension.** The time afforded by the project at times did not coincide with that set aside by the schools whose involvement with the project occurred in the midst of a range of statutory and non-statutory commitments.

WORKING WITH SCHOOLS

All of the schools involved with RSDA self selected to take part. Initial interest in the global dimension was low and so realistically finding appropriate schools was problematic.

Schools reasons for participating were varied but commonly reflected the need to tackle issues faced by children living in isolated, monocultural areas where racism is high and understanding of the global in the local and the local in the global is traditionally low.

Initial expectations of the project were very different in each school and what was expected in terms of participation differed from that of the project team. This highlighted the **increased need to work with prospective stakeholders at the planning and proposal stage of projects.** This would allow work to reflect the agenda of the school community more effectively. **Children and young people should be included in this process to ensure that their voice is heard.**

Each of the schools identified a lead teacher who liaised with the project officer. Although attempts were made to reach as many members of staff as possible, in all but one case the emphasis to promote and deliver the project work fell to the lead teacher. This caused particular problems to one school with the sad loss of their lead teacher during year 3 of the project.

In working with 3 different types of schools, (primary, secondary and special needs), RSDA overstretched its research capacity. **Concentration upon one sector such as secondary or primary would have helped to narrow down the many factors which may have influenced research outcomes.**

Additionally, it would have helped build networks of schools within the Tees Valley area which could enable wider shared learning and contribute to sustainability.

Although opportunities for staff training and capacity building were available very few schools chose to take up this option. In some cases it proved difficult to pin down suitable dates within already packed professional development training and in others changing priorities meant events were cancelled. This training was offered as a free element of the project and this in itself may have affected uptake. **It has been suggested that training sessions would have attracted greater interest if a nominal fee had been attached to it.**

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

The changing climate in education necessitated the provision of evidence as to the impact of development education. This was the agenda of Teesside One World Centre in engaging schools in the project. Schools also wanted to show that they were raising standards and on the surface this was a shared aim. **In reality the schools were less focused on engaging with project activities which had an emphasis on standards issues such as literacy skills.** The agenda of each of the schools differed from that of RSDA and at times it proved a problematic partnership. **In the longer term RSDA allowed Teesside One World Centre to establish good working relationships with each of schools which will facilitate further work.**

RSDA also allowed Teesside One World Centre to **develop stronger relationships with LEA officials and members of Childrens Services across the Tees Valley area.** The project worked with schools in three local authorities and brought interest from the remaining two which has strengthened partnership in future ventures.

TAKING FORWARD THE LEARNING

The learning from RSDA has allowed Teesside One World Centre to work in more effective ways with our key client groups, schools & communities. We wanted to look at how we could best build upon the foundations laid by projects such as RSDA to increase sustainability and interest in global dimension in schools. **"Moving On" is a 1 year research project which has resulted from the learning captured during RSDA.** Funded by Oxfam it works with the secondary school involved in RSDA and another school with links to Teesside One World Centre to explore ways to build upon initial interest in a global dimension with focus upon specialist school status.



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