

Opening Young Eyes



**K-12 students
need preparation
to deal with a rapidly
globalizing world.**

By Marian Kisch

A GIRL ESCAPES from war-torn Ethiopia and eventually makes her way to the United States. Two high school students study global warming in Antarctica. A college junior shares her experiences in Ireland with first graders in rural North Carolina. These students are all involved in programs intended to internationalize K–12 education in the United States.

“The world is already becoming one world,” Kristin Hayden, founder and executive director of OneWorld Now! in Seattle, says. “Change is happening rapidly. We are doing a disservice if we do not open youth to other cultures and provide the skills necessary to be effective in the world.”

International educators agree that K–12 students must be prepared to deal with global issues to succeed in college and in business. They assert that the U.S. education system lags behind other countries in this area.

But some programs are filling the void. International high schools, after-school programs, summer schools, and programs devoted to at-risk populations are meeting with great success. And schools are partnering with colleges, government agencies, and foundations to help fund and run these programs.

Engaging Youth Early

“We need to start in elementary school for students to develop the skills to compare, analyze, and think critically about international issues,” Brooke Ashley, assistant director study abroad at the North Carolina State University in Raleigh, says. “So, when students get to college, it’s not the first time they’re thinking about these issues.”

“Youth who are engaged in addressing global issues become leaders and effective participants in their communities,” Carole Artigiani, executive director of Global Kids in New York City, says.

Anthony Jewett, managing director of the K–12 Education Group at the National Center for Global Engagement (NCGE), agrees: “An invisible gate surrounds the minds and aspirations of kids growing up in urban communities. They only know those blocks where they live. We need to break the cycle of poverty and transform them through new opportunities.”



The Importance of Foreign Language Learning

Expanding foreign language opportunities through high school courses and education abroad programs are vital to preparing global citizens, according to educators.

“Any business person who has ever tried to do serious marketing research in a foreign country or has had to conduct serious business negotiations with counterparts who speak English, but also their own language, will tell you that they are at a serious disadvantage,” Michael Geisler, vice president for Middlebury College language school, schools abroad, and graduate programs, says.

“Much of America’s isolation in the world stems from the fact that we have so few Americans who can speak foreign languages,” he continues. “We need to build a strategic language reserve and make it a more consistent high school product.”

Partnerships Expand Possibilities

Because K–12 foreign language instruction is being cut all over the United States in an era of fiscal austerity, Middlebury College has recently partnered with K12 Inc. to create an online language program for middle- and high-school students. This new company, Middlebury Interactive Learning, will also run the summer Middlebury Monterey Language Academies (MMLA). K12 will market and manage the online program with Middlebury College developing and managing the academic content.

Online programs will begin this fall with beginning Spanish and French, adding intermediate and Advanced Placement (AP) courses in succeeding years. Other languages will gradually be added. These programs will be taught with videos of native speakers in real settings such as Paris, Madrid, Senegal, and Buenos Aires. Vocabulary will be taught from fruit and vegetable markets, for example. Animation, videos, music, and games will be used in the language instruction.

The summer institute, which began in 2008 in conjunction with the Monterey Institute of International Studies, is a four-week summer language immersion program for students in grades 8–12. It has since expanded to four more colleges. Approximately 1,000 students attended the 2010 program, with offerings in Arabic, French, Chinese, Spanish, and German.

Rachel Butera, a Middlebury graduate who worked in the 2009 Chinese summer program, says, “Kids become better global citizens through this program. They are forced to see the world in a different way and to become more accepting of other’s ideas. It helps them develop more open-minded and unbiased opinions.” Butera’s education has served her well. She will be teaching English in rural Yunnan, China, for the next two years.



A OneWorld Now! student working with Jordanian youth to help renovate and restore schools

Specialized High Schools

Five years ago Aimee Horowitz, together with the College of Staten Island and the Asia Society, had an idea: to start a small public high school that would concentrate on international studies. Thus, the College of Staten Island High School for International Studies (CSI) was born, locating near and partnering with the college, and affiliated with the Asia Society’s International Studies School Network (ISSN).

This high-achievement high school and the college maintain a close relationship. High school students use the libraries, science labs, and sports and recreational facilities at the college. Students also take some AP and college classes there. In turn, college professors teach and college students tutor at the high school.

The program at CSI is different from many other New York City schools. First, all students are required to take four years of a foreign language, choosing from Mandarin, Spanish, or Japanese. Second, each student meets each day in small advisory groups to talk about academics, community, and personal issues.

Service learning is an integral part of the program. CSI students are required to complete 120 hours in a cause of their choice, and educate and involve others. AIDS, child soldiers, and human trafficking have been explored. This fall, a former child soldier will come to the school to speak about his experiences in Uganda.

CSI students connect to the outside world on a regular basis, through blogs, films, and a monthly newspaper, *The International Insider*. What began as an after-school production turned into a journalism class. Students edit stories, many from authors who have been through the travel and exchange program, prepare the layout, and raise funds to produce the newspaper.

Travel is an important component of the CSI program. In Costa Rica they worked with children in a school. In China they helped build a house. Through a connection with the Asia Society, funded by Americans Promoting Study Abroad, five sophomores will go to China this year.

Two students went to Antarctica with Students on Ice to learn about the effects of global warming and other human actions on the environment. When they returned, the teens collaborated with three high school seniors to create an art exhibit about how to protect the environment.

“Through travel, students see how others live, appreciate what they have, and see that kids in other lands enjoy similar things,” Horowitz says. “When they see how alike people are, it is powerful.”

Sister Cities Make Good “Buddies”

One of the first international high schools opened ten years ago in Chicago: Walter Payton College Prep School. Forty percent are admitted to this selective school based exclusively on entrance exams. But to ensure diversity, socioeconomic factors are taken into account in 60 percent of the cases.

Walter Payton hooks up with schools all over the world through the U.S. Sister Cities Initiative, run by the U.S. State Department in Chicago. They help the school find resources, seek out partnerships, locate sister schools in other countries, and build cultural, economic, and business relationships.

Payton has paired with schools in countries such as Switzerland, France, China, Japan, and Morocco. The schools work together on projects, carry on discussions using technology, and communicate with their foreign buddies.

Through video technology, teens have spoken with experts in Spain, peered into museums in Italy, explored a Moscow library, and even witnessed heart surgery in Moscow.

During spring breaks or in the summer, some students go abroad. Approximately one-fourth of Payton students take an international trip during their high school years. Each trip has a different focus, such as building homes in Guatemala.

“I believe these students are going to be leaders because of the unique education they have been exposed to,” Principal Ellen Estrada says. “It’s best for them to be able to look at issues they will face from multiple perspectives, consider the implications, and their effects on the world and their country.”



Students participate in an exercise during a leadership workshop. Below: Students and staff play a name game during orientation.



Connecting with Asia

Walter Payton is also associated with ISSN as one of its mentor schools. Beginning in 2003, the Asia Society helped establish new public schools, mostly for low income (80 percent) and minority (75 percent) students, and supports them for several years.

Most of the 23 small schools are located in urban areas of New York City, Los Angeles, Charlotte, Chicago, Denver, Houston, Austin, San Antonio, and Rochester, with rural Mathis, Texas, added to the mix.

The goal is to graduate students who are ready for college and who are globally competent. According to the Asia Society, globally competent students must have the knowledge and skills to investigate the world, weigh perspectives, communicate ideas, take action, and apply disciplinary and interdisciplinary expertise. A global perspective is infused throughout the curriculum and the culture of each ISSN school.



Upon returning from his study abroad experience in New Zealand, North Carolina State University student Joe Morrow visits the second grade classroom he virtually corresponded with for a semester through the program.

Funding for the schools was initially provided by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation as well as through other grants. The Asia Society provides initial support and professional development, curriculum and course frameworks, performance assessment, evaluation studies, coaching, and access to travel for three to four years.

“Language and culture knowledge is critical to work effectively with people around the world,” Anthony Jackson, Asia Society’s vice president of education, says. “Every major issue in the world has an international dimension.”

Another program, the Confucius Classroom initiative, links Chinese language programs in the United States with those in China. Fourteen states and the District of Columbia are participating in this effort. “We want to establish high-quality, sustainable Chinese language programs in

all regions of America, strengthen understanding, build bridges between students, and create models for teaching of world languages in American schools,” Jackson says.

Southern Scholars Program

The Bardoli Scholars Program, sponsored by NCGE, is an 18-month program for low-income and minority high school juniors and seniors. Seventy students from nine schools in Charlotte, Houston, and Atlanta participated last year. The program begins with a spring orientation, followed by a three to five-week summer trip abroad. This trip is paid for by the districts, Bardoli, and the students, who raise up to \$800 for spending money and some airplane fares.

When they return, teams of five develop a project, complete with budget and business plan, to present on the Martin Luther King (MLK) Day of Service in January. Students apply for grants of up to \$500 for expenses by making presentations at a community forum consisting of teachers, donors, and parents. Two long-time funders are Sylvan Laureate Foundation and Shell Oil Company. In the spring, scholars attend global readiness workshops to prepare, in part, for their final summer internship at a local company or nonprofit organization, such as Intel Computer Clubhouse or the district attorney’s office, both in Atlanta.

NCGE is now trying to get companies to adopt schools with connections to its products. “This will make the learning real,” Jewett says,

Reaching Out to At-Risk Kids

Several other programs are geared to internationalizing education exclusively to low-income, first-generation-at-college, or at-risk populations. These include Global Kids, Upward Bound, and OneWorld Now!

Upward Bound ConnCap (Connecticut Collegiate Awareness and Preparation) Program at Wesleyan University in Connecticut opened in 1966. There are now 957 Upward Bound programs throughout the country. This summer program—six weeks for middle and high school kids—aims to help teens succeed and get into college. About two-thirds fit both the low-income and first-generation-to-college categories. The program is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and the state of Connecticut. Wesleyan provides office and classroom facilities. Some 150–200 students attend each summer, free of charge.

The program includes academic and leadership development, cultural awareness, and foreign language—this past summer Arabic and Chinese. “All kids get a taste of foreign language while they’re young,” says Donna Thompson, director of the program.

Although not scheduled every summer, international trips are an integral part of the program. Over the years, students have traveled to Greece, Austria, Germany, and



OneWorld Now! students enjoying a little bit of shade while exploring the ruins in Jerash, Jordan.

France. Thompson hopes to take some students to China in 2011 for a student leadership conference. All returning students have to make presentations at school and in the community, similar to the requirements for CSI.

But she emphasizes that the trips are not vacations; they are learning experiences. “Everyone has a job to do.” They might be the navigator, historian, photographer, or journalist.

“These trips promote team building, organizational skills, leadership development, and responsibility,” Thompson says. “Every day they are asked to reflect and debrief about the issues they’ve confronted. The trip changes their perceptions and attitudes.”

Thompson relates an example of how the program is life changing. A girl who came from a very poor background with a drug-addicted mother, traveled to Austria. “She told me that when she returned and went back to her old neighborhood she saw the same adults on her block hanging around doing nothing. She told us that when she was older she will have traveled the world and they will still be on the block doing nothing. ‘This program was a catalyst for the way I want to live the rest of my life,’ she told me.”

“Going on a trip like this opens their minds to the world,” she continues, “and empowers them to go off and take advantage of opportunities out there, including college.”

Global Service Learning After School

Another program geared to at-risk and low-income youth, Global Kids, offers after-school and summer programs to 10 New York City public high schools.

“We want to help students understand that global issues are complex and solutions are hard,” Artigiani says. “They need to take responsibility to be informed and do what they can.”

This program, which works with teens 1–5 times per week, is funded 40 percent by foundations and corporate grants, 40 percent

by government-backed contracts, and the remaining 40 percent by individuals and family foundations.

The curriculum of GK’s flagship program, Power of Citizenry, combines sophisticated content with youth-led service learning and social action projects on issues such as ethnic conflicts at home and beyond. “Young people easily identify with others in the world,” Artigiani says. “They do their own research, become media literate, and learn they have a right to participate in decisionmaking. We’re developing lifelong citizens.”

Global Kids has a two-pronged approach: To use real-world issues to engage youth in learning and developing critical skills, and to promote engagement and informed participation in the democratic process.

Students identify and tackle various issues of concern. An ongoing project is to promote passage of the Dream Act. This bill would provide legal status and a pathway to citizenship for immigrant youth who completed high school in this country and who want to go to college or the military. Students collected signatures, performed street theater based on the theme, and testified before legislators. Other projects include access to clean water, human trafficking, and child soldiers.

Each year 50 students plan, run, and facilitate workshops at a conference attended by more than 500 students from all over New York City. The 2009 theme, “Got to Have My Rights,” featured workshops on child labor, juvenile justice, and the impact of war on children.

For those who don’t have programs in their schools, Global Kids offers a program in its offices on Friday afternoons; some 30–40 students participate.

Special opportunities abound for participants. United Nations Ambassador Susan Rice invited 32 girls to meet with her at the UN. “Despite having little time to prepare, the girls asked substantive and intelligent questions,” Artigiani says: “Do you ever disagree with your colleagues? Do you find pressure more effective than incen-

tives in the Sudan? Since you're such a strong supporter of women's rights, why did you support Obama instead of Hillary Clinton?"

A longstanding partnership with the Council on Foreign Relations in New York City has given Global Kids participants some unique experiences. Throughout the year, the Council hosts roundtables on topics ranging from global climate change and HIV/AIDS in the developing world to nuclear proliferation and genocide.

During the summer, the Council sponsors an intensive three-week summer institute on U.S. foreign policy at its headquarters. Some 25–30 students participate in roundtables with noted international affairs experts, attend interactive workshops led by Global Kids staff and go on field trips. All participants identify a project of interest, explore it, and share what they've learned with their schoolmates and communities. Topics have included human rights, ethnic conflicts and war, child labor, migration, and genocide.

"We want these students to inspire others to learn about international affairs and take action on issues of concern," remarks Artigiani.

Other activities include virtual fossil-dig camps, and actual trips to Nairobi, Kenya, to work on human rights issues.

Erin Bauer, an English and literacy teacher at the High School for Global Citizenship in Brooklyn, where GK staff go into social studies and global arts classes, praises the program: "It gives the kids a place to belong, to become active in global issues, and to work on campaigns and activist projects. It has opened their eyes as to what they can do when they leave high school."

Bauer cited one 2010 graduate who aspires to be secretary of state or an ambassador after he works at the United Nations. Through GK, he has traveled to Japan and Peru.

Global Kids is expanding; this year it is piloting programs in two Washington, D.C. schools.

Preparing Future Leaders

OneWorld Now!, another organization helping minority, underserved, and low-income students, works with eight public high schools in Seattle. It offers a three-pronged approach: language, leadership, and education abroad. This program, which served 150 students last year, requires teens to spend six hours per week after school on these three areas for two years. Funding is through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, federal government support, and individual donors. Some education abroad providers grant scholarships.

Students study Arabic or Mandarin, for which they receive high school credit. These languages are used in the four to six-week education abroad experiences, typically to China or the Middle East (Morocco, Jordan, or Egypt). About 25 percent of the students go abroad where they rebuild schools, work in an orphanage, or clean up the beaches. They also continue their language studies in a nearby university.

"Leadership is the backbone of the program," Hayden says. The program covers five aspects: personal development, social justice and social identity, intercultural communications, global citizenship, and social entrepreneurship. An experiential approach is used.

"There are many complex problems in the world," she continues. "We need all the great minds to come together to solve them. And we need to bring in voices not usually heard. This program is a great way to prepare those who need to be at that table, to make us strong as a nation."

Once a year, students participate in a global leadership conference. And extraordinary things happen. In last year's conference, a workshop, "What Would You Do?" focused on refugee experiences during wartime. Some of the attendees were from Kenya, Somalia, and Eritrea. Students talked about their own experiences, like what it feels like to bribe a guard, leave your family behind, or have 30 seconds to choose a few items to take with you.

One 14-year-old girl spoke about her experience fleeing Ethiopia. When her family finally crossed the border into Kenya, the women and men were separated, and they were forced to sleep outside their tents to prevent being killed when soldiers fired into the tents at night. "I didn't think I would feel comfortable talking about this," she said, "but when the others did, I felt empowered."

Students also get to connect with students around the world through the Global Arts Project. Photographer Eric Henderson traveled with Hayden to Rabat, Rio de Janeiro, New York City, and Seattle where teens photographed their communities and later exhibited their work in Rabat and in Starbucks coffee shops in New York City and Seattle.

Cultural Correspondents Partner With Rural Schools

This is also true in the North Carolina State University program. This school partnered with the North Carolina Center for International Understanding to offer the Cultural Correspondents program, in which study abroad students are paired with K–8 classrooms in rural areas to share and learn about global issues via Web conferencing.

Piloted in the fall of 2007 and expanded to four other North Carolina universities, the program has connected more than 1,000 K–8 students with 70 education abroad students in 21 different countries. Of approximately 150

To learn more about the DREAM Act, visit www.nafsa.org/dream.

For information on all of NAFSA's advocacy efforts, please visit NAFSA's new advocacy Web site, www.connectingourworld.org.



students from North Carolina State who go abroad each semester, some 30 participate in the program, connecting with students in 18 schools.

“The children absolutely adore the program,” Ashley says. “They are excited, and attendance is better when the cultural correspondent ambassador is scheduled to teach.”

The K–8 teachers are equally as enthusiastic, she notes. There is a 100 percent return rate and a waiting list to get into the program.

Emily Gray, a 2010 North Carolina State graduate, was a Cultural Correspondent in Cork, Ireland, in 2009. She was paired with the entire first grade at Carolina Forest Elementary School in Jacksonville, North Carolina.

Once a month Emily “met” with 40–100 first graders in the schools’ media center via a Web conference. She planned the lessons via e-mail with the teacher, which was integrated into the regular course of study. Through the magic of technology, the children took turns presenting to Emily what they had learned on a particular topic. Then it was

Emily’s turn to use pictures, drawings, and video to teach on that topic from the Irish perspective. They covered issues such as money, transportation, historical figures, holidays, animals, and plants. When Emily came back to the United States, she visited her class and was overjoyed at the reception she received.

“Service has always been a big part of my life and I wondered how I could still help my community back home if I went abroad,” she says. “This program helped keep me balanced.”

International Perspective Recognized in District Strategic Plan

Also in North Carolina, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) is dedicated to offering a wide array of world language and education abroad experiences. It begins in elementary schools with language immersion programs in Spanish, German, French, Japanese, and Chinese. Arabic is offered 90 minutes per week through another program. In the middle and high schools, students can continue these languages or add Latin or Spanish for native speakers.

Kelly Price, director of global studies, world languages, and study abroad programs, says the district’s commitment starts at the highest level: CMS’ strategic plan calls for expansion of exchange programs. Through these programs, the district seeks to increase knowledge of the world, improve language fluency, and make students more culturally and globally competent.

Foreign exchanges take place on both ends at CMS. Some 50–60 students come to the district each year, and about 11 go on semester- or full-year trips to countries such as Croatia, Argentina, Germany, Israel, South Korea, and South Africa. CMS students pay for these experiences themselves, although they may receive scholarships to assist with their travel expenses.

In addition, each summer approximately 40 high-potential students of color have an opportunity to participate in exchanges to any one of 30 countries, including Costa Rica, Australia, China, Guatemala, and South Africa, through the Bardoli Scholars Program. The first summer students participate in a three-week education abroad experience with intensive language and cultural immersion.

When they return, these teens attend several after-school seminars through the Global Leadership Academy to develop a community service project, which they launch on MLK Day of Service. The following summer they intern with a local nonprofit, corporate, or government agency.

“We want to get these kids hooked, to broaden their perspectives and to serve as ambassadors in their schools,” Price says.

Tara Brown, study abroad specialist for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, believes students can use these experiences “to become more culturally sensitive and more self-confident, and to enhance their global competitiveness.”

Successful Outcomes

Students enrolled in these programs have high graduation rates and most go on to college.

At OneWorld Now!, 99 percent go to college, with a majority continuing to study the language. In CSI high school’s first graduating class last year, all but two graduated, with those graduating one year later. Many Global Kids go to high achieving colleges, majoring in international affairs. At Payton, 99 percent go on to college. From the Asia Society’s INNS’ eight schools, 92 percent graduated on time and 94 percent went on to college, 70 percent to four-year institutions. They outperformed schools with similar demographics by 75 percent.

The various programs also have helped prepare students to live in a global world. “Global competence is a crucial shift in our understanding of the purpose of education in a changing world,” Jackson says. “Students everywhere deserve the opportunity to succeed in the global economy and contribute as global citizens. We must fashion a more creative and visionary educational response to the interconnected world of the twenty-first century, starting right now.”

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