

Further information on the IB community theme: *sharing our humanity*

As you are already aware, the IB community theme, launched earlier this year, encourages the whole community to focus on and engage with the theme ***sharing our humanity*** for the period to April 2010.

The heading ***sharing our humanity***, drawn from J F Rischard's book *High Noon*, includes the following specific global issues:

- Massive step up in the fight against poverty.
- Peace keeping, conflict prevention, and combating terrorism.
- Education for all.
- Global infectious diseases.
- Digital divide: the uneven distribution of access to electronic media.
- Natural disaster prevention and mitigation.

These are all clearly important and urgent issues for the whole of mankind. While participation is entirely voluntary, the IB encourages all schools to become involved. The project is also ambitious in that it aims to engage the whole IB community – including parents, students, all those working in schools, or working with or for the IB. To this end the IB will:

reflect and address the community theme in

- Presentations at IB conferences
- Publication of selected speeches
- Special features in IB World and on the public website

encourage and facilitate schools to address the community theme through

- The development of a dedicated online environment
- Highlighting and recognizing activities and projects

We wish to encourage IB World Schools to explore and address the theme individually or with other IB World Schools through:

- Regular classroom teaching by adjusting the focus and slant of normal classroom work, not by adding to it and within the existing curriculum frameworks
- "Special projects"
- Community service

The IB community theme provides opportunities to coordinate between two or three programmes, engaging all students on a common topic, e.g. global poverty. It also gives schools the opportunity to involve non-IB students within schools in an IB-related activity.

The project is being developed in stages, and schools will be provided with further information at various points during the course of the project.

The first stage of the project is to inform and raise awareness within the IB community.

Boyd Roberts, former head of two IB World Schools, has been appointed as part-time project director. Boyd has longstanding interests in international education and global issues and more than 30 years involvement with the IB. He recently initiated the International Global Citizen's Award, described in *IB World* in May 2007.

Internal meetings and presentations to IB staff are taking place to develop an appreciation of the theme, and its implications for the work of IB in all aspects. This includes considering the articulation of the developing community theme and the Schools to Schools projects that are already underway.

A dedicated online environment will be developed. This is intended for the whole IB community, including parents, students, and all those working in the IB and IB World Schools and will include the following features:

- Information and resources on the global issues under the theme of *sharing our humanity* posted by schools and the IB along with ways of identifying potential partners for projects and collaboration.
- Posting of teaching resources developed by schools and showcasing of projects and activities undertaken by schools.
- Moderation by the IB (a moderated "Wiki" environment).
- Hosting of global online conferences.

Outcomes

It is hoped that at the end of the three-year period, the following outcomes will have resulted from engagement with the community theme *sharing our humanity*:

- Enhanced student knowledge and understanding of global issues relating to the theme leading to practical actions in service and other areas.
- Greater understanding within schools of how global issues can be addressed within IB programmes.
- A showcase and archive of exemplary school projects and initiatives articulating IB values and student achievement.
- A bank of resources and materials for future use.
- Greater collaboration between IB programmes, IB World Schools and between IB and non-IB students within those schools.
- A strengthened IB community.

What can IB World Schools do now?

- **Send us your examples**

The IB is aware that many IB World Schools and teachers are already engaged in activities – inside and outside the classroom - which are relevant to the topics of the theme. Some have already featured in *IB World*.

We encourage IB World Schools and teachers to share current work and activities that relate to *sharing our humanity*. We are interested in all types of ways in which the issues of the

theme are currently being addressed – from small-scale changes teachers have made to their normal teaching to larger scale service projects.

Reports can be sent to communitytheme@ibo.org

- **Offer guidance and suggestions to schools on addressing the theme**

The IB is working to identify individuals in schools who could provide ideas and suggestions on how the theme can be addressed (or is being addressed already) within their normal teaching. Short papers, attributed to the authors, will be posted online when the new online environment is launched. It is planned to cover each principal teaching area / subject in each programme.

People who would like to put themselves forward to prepare such a paper in their teaching area are invited to send details, including teaching area, language of instruction, and a **brief** outline of what they would cover in such a paper. (There will, of course, be opportunity for any teacher to post ideas and suggestions online in any language).

Please write to us at communitytheme@ibo.org by October 15.

- **Become better informed about the global issues of the theme, and how they can be addressed in schools.**

There is a great deal available on the worldwide web and we would encourage you to research these global issues as much as you can. Here are a couple of links¹, relating to global issues more generally.

www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet

Oxfam's Cool Planet for Teachers website contains a great deal of relevant resources, including teaching materials

www.globalcitizensaward.org

International Global Citizen's award website which links to selected websites in various countries

Please email communitytheme@ibo.org with any questions or comments.

¹ The IB is not responsible for the content of external sites. Links do not constitute any endorsement, and none should be inferred.