

# Developing Ethical Global Leaders Of The Future

**2013 research by Cone Communications and Echo Research, carried out amongst over 10,000 citizens in ten of the largest countries by GDP, revealed high expectations when it comes to companies 'Corporate Social Responsibility' (CSR) policies. Ninety-one per cent of respondents believed that companies must go beyond the minimum standards required by law to operate responsibly, whilst many consider CSR when deciding where to work (81 per cent), where to shop or what to buy (87 per cent) and which product and services to recommend to others (85 per cent).**

As CSR is no longer viewed as an option but an imperative ('think global, act local'), multi-national corporations of all sizes must look for employees who will have the ethical and cultural awareness to thrive in an international marketplace.

Before university and work experience, schools play a formative role in helping students see the world through others' eyes, and in preparing them for careers that could take them to all corners of the globe. Indeed, a 2012 survey of UK Business leaders by the British Council and global education charity, Think Global, found that employers place greater emphasis on knowledge and awareness of the wider world than a candidate's degree classification or A level results. It highlights the importance of a well-rounded education in preparing students for the world of work at an international level.

One curriculum that puts global awareness at the heart of its programme is the International Baccalaureate (IB). Founded in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1968, the IB approaches all subjects with an emphasis on pursuing cross-cultural and inter-disciplinary links, beliefs and traditions, equipping students with a broad appreciation of foreign cultures and citizenship.

The IB Learner Profile provides the qualification with an overarching concept of how to develop international mindedness, encouraging students to be inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective, all of which are qualities

that encourage students to accept and understand other cultures.

As a programme that spans ages 3 – 18, split into the Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP), the new IB Career-related Certificate (IBCC) and the most well-known Diploma programme (IBDP) at post-16 level, a full IB student is encouraged to consider different cultures and ideas to an extent that few other qualifications can match.

Moreover, compulsory elements of the IBDP such as Creativity, Action, Service (CAS) encourage students to put their awareness of local and global issues into practice, helping them develop teamwork and time management skills, and gain experience of social responsibility. Spending several hours a week in CAS related activities, on top of their academic studies, students are expected to volunteer at extra-curricular school events and take part in external activities, ranging from physical environment projects to community outreach.

IB students at ACS International Schools, for example, have used their CAS hours to perform at open days and other local community events, fundraise and plant trees in the local area, as well as engage in international projects. These wider projects include expeditions to Kenya, Namibia and Bulgaria, where students have assisted in renovating school buildings, and broadened their understanding of different cultures and global issues such as poverty and malnutrition.

Other projects that have allowed CAS students to develop skills in niche industries include an annual week long placement on board the ORBIS flying eye hospital. Shadowing specialist eye surgeons, doctors and nurses, students have the opportunity to gain an awareness of the difference in living conditions and access to medical care available worldwide, developing compassion for others, open-mindedness, and the ability to reflect on the impact of actions on others.

Combined with the broad IB DP curriculum, which requires all students to study six subjects, choosing from the arts, sciences, maths, humanities and languages, CAS gives students the chance

to develop a broader range of skills than more specialised programmes. As one alumni in our recent survey on how they found the experience of studying the IB commented: "I am studying medicine and I appreciate the non-scientific knowledge I was able to gain, as it helps me to understand people's perspectives, cultures and beliefs better."

Other elements of CAS, such as participating in Model United Nations (MUN) events, encourage IB students to develop as principled global thinkers and communicators in a real life, international situation.

Another compulsory element of the IB that helps students compete internationally is their foreign language skills, with students learning an additional language from age seven in the IB PYP, continuing right through to IB Diploma level. Spanish and Chinese have long overtaken English as the most-widely spoken languages worldwide, and with the emergence of new markets in South America and Asia, more and more companies need multilingual employees, who can demonstrate good language skills as well as an understanding of different cultures and global issues.

Encouraging students to broaden their horizons, be articulate and principled thinkers, and appreciate different cultures, the IB helps develop job applicants with the skills to compete in a global workforce. And in an increasingly globalised, CSR conscious world, these skills are only going to become more sought after.



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