



## Active Participation in Geography at KS3

It is probably fair to say that there have never been so many opportunities for pupils to play an active rather than a passive part in Geography at KS3 and beyond. The benefits of active participation are obvious in the sense that it leads to greater engagement in lessons, improved learning and more enjoyment of the subject. If geography at KS3 is to be real, relevant and topical, then active participation is one of the ways to achieve this vital aim. For those geography departments looking to work with colleagues in other departments in a meaningful way, then many of the active participation projects provide the ideal vehicle for successful cross-curricular work.

It is probably also fair to say that many teachers remain blissfully unaware of the plethora of opportunities that exist for active participation and before such activities can be tied in with schemes of work, lunchtime/after school clubs, etc., a little research will need to be done. The following section outlines some ideas, in no particular order, that you may find useful as you start along this path.

### Connecting Classrooms

Link: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/learning-connecting-classrooms.htm>

*“Connecting Classrooms builds lasting partnerships between schools in the UK and others around the world. Through these partnerships, the programme develops trust and understanding between young people in different societies, creating a safer and more connected world for the future.”*



### Who Do We Think We Are?

Link: <http://www.wdwtwa.org.uk>

*“The **Who Do We Think We Are?** educational programme engages primary and secondary school teachers in the exploration of identity, diversity and citizenship with children and young people - in their schools, local communities and nationally.”*



### International Schools Award

Link: <http://www.globalgateway.org.uk>



*“The **International Schools Award** is an accreditation scheme for curriculum-based international work in schools. It is open to all UK schools and is free of charge. The international dimension in education is an*

*increasingly important part of agendas such as Every Child Matters and Community Cohesion in how it supports the cultural heritage of teachers and learners and positive learning across schools. The ISA now features in Part One of the 2007-8 SEF for schools in England as a 'significant award' that contributes to giving the school a 'distinctive character'. The ISA is also featured in the new curriculum guidance from QCA, particularly with regard to the Global Dimension.”*

## BBC News School Report

Link: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/school\\_report/default.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/school_report/default.stm)

*“The main aim of **BBC News School Report** is to interest young people in news of all sorts, and the world around them, by giving them the chance to make their own news. It is also an opportunity for students to inform a real audience, via BBC programmes and web pages, about the stories which are important to them.”*



## BBC World Class

Link: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldclass/about/>



*“**BBC World Class** is an initiative bringing the benefits of international school linking to schools across the UK. On the website we have created a central resource of our partner organisations which facilitate and support school linking. We organise themed events in which twinned schools can participate and we publish a monthly email newsletter which highlights the latest developments in international school linking.”*

## Engaging Places

Link: <http://www.engagingplaces.org.uk/home>

*“This new initiative will help every school exploit 'the world's biggest teaching resource'. Developed by CAFE and English Heritage, **Engaging Places** will champion teaching and learning through the whole built environment and aims to become the most comprehensive guide ever created to help schools teach by using the buildings and places around them.”*



## Eco-schools Award

Link: <http://www.eco-schools.org.uk/about/>



*“Joining the Eco-Schools programme is free and it makes tackling sustainable issues manageable and easy for all schools. Once registered, schools follow a simple seven-step process which helps them to address a variety of environmental themes, ranging from litter and waste to healthy living and biodiversity. Children are the driving force behind Eco-Schools – they lead the eco-committee and help carry out an audit to assess the environmental performance of their school.*

*Through consultation with the rest of the school and the wider community it is the pupils that decide which environmental themes they want to address and how they are going to do it. Measuring and monitoring is an integral part of the Eco-Schools programme, providing schools with all the evidence they need to really shout about their environmental success.”*

## Fairtrade Award

Link: <http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/schools/>

*“The **Fairtrade Award** provides opportunities to enhance many areas of the curriculum and explore citizenship from a global perspective. It gives pupils an opportunity to participate and take responsibility for their decisions, encourages critical thinking and offers opportunities for challenge and confidence building. A Fairtrade schools is a school that is committed to Fairtrade. This means it helps young people understand about how trade works and how to make global trade fairer. It sells and uses Fairtrade products as far as possible, and takes action for Fairtrade in the school and local community.”*



## Jubilee Schools Programme

Link: <http://www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk/Jubilee%20Schools%20Take%20Action+3377.twl>



*“Joining the **Jubilee Schools** programme is a simple yet powerful way for school communities to become more informed and active in the fight to save lives and restore hope for the millions of people affected by the debt crisis. It provides an opportunity for students to help bring about social change nationally and internationally, as well as to understand more about global interdependence and responsibility.”*

## Worldwise Challenge

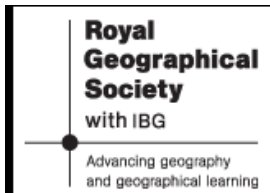
Link: <http://worldwise.geography.org.uk/>

*“The **Worldwise Challenge**, organised by the Geographical Association, encompasses a wide range of student activities which are designed to get students interested and involved in Geography – the activities include the Worldwise quiz, the Geography Awareness Week and the My Places Project.”*



## Young Geographer of the Year

Link: <http://www.rgs.org/OurWork/Schools/Young+Geographer.htm>



*“Run in conjunction with Geographical magazine, **Young Geographer of the Year** began in 2000 and has become a regular feature in many schools' calendars. The competition title is announced in January, with entries to be sent by the end of March each year. Prizes are awarded at the end of May in a ceremony at the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) in London. Your entry can take whatever form you think is most appropriate – be it a written report, a short video film, a photographic essay, an audio file or a mix of all of these.”*

## Other Useful Links and Ideas:

**Global Matters** celebrates some of the exciting examples of global learning going on around the country in schools. The case studies show active and participatory approaches that engage learners and encourage critical thinking about a range of important topics, including global trade, environmental sustainability, race, child labour and refugees.

[http://www.dea.org.uk/uploads/4453d22a64a184b4f76a113996448fcf/Global\\_Matters.pdf](http://www.dea.org.uk/uploads/4453d22a64a184b4f76a113996448fcf/Global_Matters.pdf)

## The Prince's Rainforests Project Photo Competition for Schools

There are four categories for entry: the beauty of the rainforests, rainforests in your daily life, what climate change means to you and what trees mean to you.

<http://princescharities.org/events-campaigns/2009/1/13/the-princes-rainforests-project-photo-competition-schools>

## Eden Project

Schools in the UK are being given the chance to have their grounds redesigned by the **Eden Project** and up to £8,000 towards making it happen. This great prize is part of a campaign launched by Eden and The Netherlands Flower Bulb Information Centre, "Kids Go Green". The campaign aims to get children outside to learn about their natural environment and to encourage schools to regenerate and enhance their own surroundings.

<http://blog.edenproject.com/scrapbook/2008/09/schools-could-win-chance-to-have-their.html>



### **Who wants to be a billionaire?**

A fresh approach to uneven development.

This teaching module takes a different approach to the issue of development but raises many of the same questions that can be used as a stimulus for pupils to become actively involved via the range of projects outlined above. Questions such as:

*“Are global inequalities of wealth are getting worse?” and “Can uneven development be addressed by trickle down of wealth or tackled more proactively?”*

Pupils following this module of work will begin to understand that life in countries across the world is complex, that inequalities exist everywhere and that as all our lives are linked, they themselves are in a position to potentially make a difference to the lives of people less fortunate than themselves. The quality of both knowledge and understanding can be greatly enriched when schools partner with schools in other parts of the world. Pupils may not always have the opportunity to visit these other areas but by communicating with fellow pupils through writing, through e-mails and through video links, they can begin to build a context for their thoughts and opinions based on reality rather than common misconceptions. Pupils need to understand first-hand about the positive aspects of life in other countries (happiness, friendship, strong family ties, etc) in order to counter the all too often stream of negative imagery that comes their way.

Participation in Fairtrade projects allows pupils to develop a better understanding of complex trade patterns and how our daily purchases might impact on the lives of people in other countries that supply many of the goods that we need. Pupils taking an active involvement in the Fairtrade movement can see that the quality of life and the distribution of wealth in many poorer countries is as much related to our decisions and our way of life as it is to the decisions and way of life of the people living in these other countries.



### **Who do we think we are?**

Exploring citizenship from a geographical perspective

This teaching module has obvious connections to the *Who Do We Think We Are?* educational programme mentioned above but also provides opportunities to link in with other projects that give pupils a greater insight through active participation, into the lives of people in other countries. The **Connecting Classrooms** project, the **International Schools Award** and the **BBC World Class** project are all designed to get pupils interacting and involved in each others lives. In doing so, pupils will not only begin to better understand the lives of people in distant countries but will also begin to have a better understanding of who they are and how their lives connect to others. The sharing of daily diaries, of ideas and opinions on issues that affect children across the world and of the hopes and aspirations of individuals are valuable processes in answering the question ‘who do we think we are?’.



### **The Geography of Conflict**

Introduces students to the topical and hard to teach issue of conflict

Although few of the long-term schools projects outlined above directly link to the theme of conflict, there is an opportunity within this teaching module for pupils to look at the work of the

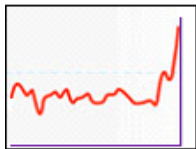
organisations, mainly NGOs, working in conflict areas and the ways in which they, their schools and their families might support the work that they do.

As well as the work of the larger, well-known organisations such as the Red Cross, Oxfam, etc., there are many smaller organisations that pupils could look at to understand the crucial role that these organisations play in regions of conflict. Two such examples are:

***War Child** works with children affected by war in Iraq, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. We work with children who have been hit hardest by the joint forces of poverty, conflict and social exclusion. Our groundbreaking work with former child soldiers, street children and children in prison has supported and helped thousands who would otherwise not have been able to reintegrate with their community, gain access to education or enjoy sustainable livelihood support.*

***Action for Children in Conflict (AfCiC)** works to assist and transform the lives of children affected by various forms of conflict or crisis be it war, extreme poverty, hunger, illness, persecution, or neglect.*

Pupils could choose one of these smaller conflict-related organisations to support in their community action projects within the school. This would help to counter the fact that most fund-raising and support goes to the larger aid organisations that can afford to constantly advertise themselves.



### **Changing Climates**

Discussing the facts about climate change and the predictions for the future

The **Changing Climates** teaching module has a particular emphasis on climate change and its causes but also provides a useful link to the concerns of many pupils about the environment in general and how our lives can have both positive and negative impacts. The **Eco-Schools** programme is a very broad-based initiative that requires pupils and their schools to take a detailed look at how the school organisation deals with issues of energy, pupil transport, waste disposal and school grounds and buildings.

The Government in England wants every school to be a sustainable school by 2020 and one of the key advantages of the Eco-schools initiative is that it has a clear emphasis on active pupil participation. It requires schools that register to form a pupil action team, to carry out an environmental review, to develop an action plan and Eco-Code, and most importantly, to involve the whole school and wider community. Schools that have applied for the award agreed that it had acted as a motivation tool for the pupils and as recognition of all the hard work they did with regard to environmental sustainability .

