

SERVICE AS ACTION



Bloomfield.org

Action (learning by doing and experiencing) is a key component in constructivist models of education, including the kind of teaching and learning common to all IB programmes. Service, as a subset of action, has always been a shared value of the IB community. IB learners strive to be caring members of the community who demonstrate a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment. IB World Schools value service with others as an important way to engage in principled action across a range of overlapping local and global communities. Through responsible action, tightly connected with sustained inquiry and critical reflection, young people and adults can develop the kinds of attributes described by the learner profile that are essential for success in future academic pursuits and for adult life

The MYP aims to help students develop their personal understanding, their emerging sense of self and their developmentally appropriate responsibility in their community. In the IB continuum, this continues with the service component of the DP's community, action, service (CAS) requirements, in which students continue to increase their awareness of their own strengths and areas for growth, undertake new challenges, plan and initiate activities, work collaboratively with others, show perseverance and commitment, engage with locally and globally significant challenges and consider the ethical implications of their actions.

As students become more aware and acquire a better understanding of the context, and of their responsibilities, they become empowered to make choices about how to take thoughtful and positive action. This action will be different from student to student and from context to context. The action may involve students in:

- feeling empathy towards others
- making small-scale changes to their behaviour
- undertaking larger and more significant projects
- acting on their own
- acting collaboratively
- taking physical action
- suggesting modifications to an existing system to the benefit of all involved
- lobbying people in more influential positions to act.

Service requires that students are able to build authentic connections between what they learn in the classroom and what they encounter in the community. When connected to classroom learning, the experience of service offers opportunities to apply concepts, both skills and knowledge, as students explore the community in its complexity, gain personal insight, develop existing and new skills, and grow in confidence and responsibility as they become “actors” in the “real world” beyond school.

By reflecting on their service experience, students may gain a greater awareness of the community and world they live in, and their role and responsibility in improving the lives of themselves and others.

Service for and with others Service activities should evolve beyond doing for others to engaging with others in a shared commitment towards the common good. Meaningful service requires understanding of an underlying issue such as poverty, literacy or pollution, and authenticating the need for this service. Meaningful service includes interaction, such as building links with individuals or groups in the community. To align with the general principle that the rights, dignity and autonomy of all those involved in service are respected means that identification of needs towards which a service activity will be directed has to involve prior communication and full consultation with the community or individual concerned. This approach, based on a collaborative exchange, maximizes the potential benefits for all the people involved, including learning opportunities for students as they develop and strengthen communication abilities.

With appropriate guidance and support, MYP students should, through their engagement with service as action:

- become more aware of their own strengths and areas for growth
- undertake challenges that develop new skills
- discuss, evaluate and plan student-initiated activities
- persevere in action
- work collaboratively with others
- develop international-mindedness through global engagement, multilingualism and intercultural understanding
- consider the ethical implications of their actions.

These learning outcomes identify the substance of students’ self-reflection on service as action. All of these learning outcomes are closely associated with IB learner profile attributes and ATL skills. Through their participation in service, students can become more confident, self-regulated learners.

The considerations and choices about what community issues to address can extend directly from the curriculum. Classes can discuss how what they are learning is reflected in the world around them, and investigate related needs. As issues and needs present, students can determine where and how to apply their skills and talents in service that makes a contribution, improves a situation or otherwise has impact. Local service allows students an experience that can more easily extend over time to build continuity, allows for the development of relationships, and provides a vantage point to observe and participate in sustained change, challenge and collaboration. From the local, students can consider the

global implications of their actions, and extend their thinking and knowledge to global awareness and understanding.

If students are planning a service experience with global emphasis, it is highly recommended they consider ways to include and integrate local action. Students can also consider extending local actions to global impact through partnerships with students in other cities and towns, countries and continents. Technology affords myriad opportunities for networking, sharing of initiatives, partnerships and impact.

MYP: From principles into practice, 2014