



Supporting your work for Justice and Peace with young people

Introduction

Welcome to the fourth edition of the imaginatively titled 'BOVA'd?'. This newsletter is produced by Bosco Volunteer Action, the Salesians of Don Bosco's overseas volunteering organisation in the UK. It aims to encourage and support instances of development education within youth work; raising awareness of problems confronting developing countries and presenting actions which can be taken. Sent out 6 times per year and then available from www.boscovolunteeraction.co.uk, 'BOVA'd' brings together information, links and resources relevant to justice and peace issues from a large number of charities and campaign groups. In time it is hoped that it will also include materials sent in by those on the mailing list.

An explanation of the format:

Section	Explanation	In this edition
Hints and tips	Suggestions of best practice in development education	Taking action or understanding issues first?
Focus	Drawing your attention to useful resources available on the web	Climate change
Odds and ends	Other resources, events and links	LiveSimply Community Challenges

Our aim is to support you in your work, so please contact bova@salesianyouthministry.com with any feedback, suggestions or items for inclusion.

Best wishes

James

Hints and tips

The chicken or the egg; understanding the issues or taking action first?

Previous hints and tips (available from <http://boscovolunteeraction.co.uk/bovad.aspx>) have looked at:

- The 3 barriers to action:
 - “I don’t know about the issue”
 - “It’s nothing to do with me”
 - “There’s nothing we can do”
- How we use images of developing countries (and the danger of only telling the ‘horror stories’)
- The causes and consequences of poverty (using the ‘pover-tree’).

This ‘Hints and Tips’ looks at the role of action in educating young people about global issues and is largely inspired by an article by Temple and Laycock (Temple, G. and Laycock, A. L. (2008), ‘Education for Global Citizenship: towards a clearer agenda for change.’ In D. Bourn and A. Leonard (eds), *Development education: debates and dialogue* (pp. viii, 127). London: Institute of Education University of London).

It is clearly good practice to attempt to start from where young people are, utilising their talents and interests to involve them thinking about others and possible responses to injustice. Temple and Laycock go further, arguing that young people should be given more power to choose the direction of the education/action; *“we can only achieve lasting change in young people’s attitudes and actions through an educational process which respects young people and enables them to make their own decisions”*.

My style of development education up to this point has been to give a very strong ‘steer’ as to where I want the education/action to end up. I saw the action as a response to the learning, which therefore should follow it; I was quite judgemental of actions I considered ill-formed. Temple and Laycock challenge this perception, suggesting that

*“taking action is often the **first way** young people begin to engage with global issues, at an early stage on their global citizenship journey. We may feel that their desire to take action is not motivated by a sophisticated understanding of the issues and may come from beliefs or motives we do not fully endorse, but the wish to do something is significant. It is an expression of caring about the issues, and can be the first step from inertia to movement on a young person’s journey.”*

They go onto suggest that

“If we criticize young people’s motives rather than encourage their caring, or insist that action can only come after fully informed, critical thinking, we risk being a barrier, rather than an enabler, for the young person’s development. If we dishearten or deter young people from taking well-meaning action, it is likely that they will simply disengage with us.”

So there is no catch-all answer to the question ‘should young people understand the issues or take action first?’. Action can lead to understanding and vice versa. They are both important and as youth leaders and educators we must attempt to do both, starting from where the young people are and moving forward with them.

Focus on climate change

Remembering the 3 barriers to action introduced previously (don't know about it, nothing to do with me, nothing I can do), any session on climate change needs to help your young people:

- Understand why climate change is a poverty issue
- Be aware of the links between our lives in the UK and climate change
- Find ways in which we can take action

The resources and links below should help you to do this. There are many more available, but I've sifted through and chosen those which I feel are best.

Climate change is a poverty issue:

- 'Wake Up, Freak Out - then Get a Grip' is a short, animated film about climate change by Leo Murray. It's easy to watch, easy to understand and comes highly recommended. You can view or download it (for free!) from <http://www.wakeupfreakout.org/>
- Oxfam has some excellent videos of women around the world dealing with and responding to climate change at http://www.oxfam.org.uk/get_involved/campaign/climate_change/sisters/index.html (or download using from youtube using the downloader).
- Google 'news climate change and poverty' and get some upto date news stories to discuss.

We're linked to the problem

- http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/climate_chaos/day_two/files/morning2_who_is_responsible.pdf is nice. It compares carbon emissions from around the world.
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfpXULqYV7w&NR=1> is funny and thought-provoking, looking at motivations for driving big cars.
- <http://www.coalfinger.com/> is a fabulous Bond spoof from Greenpeace. Enjoy!

We can do something:

- The Oxfam video 'What's your ethical rhythm?' is a fun short cartoon looking suitable for all ages, giving alternatives to consumerism. It's available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9k9gNUG5k9k>.
- There are some excellent resources covering taking action and the above sections at http://learn.christianaid.org.uk/TeachersResources/primary/crazyclimate_resource.aspx With younger children (primary aged) I particularly recommend the downloadable PowerPoint presentation and the 'Crazy Climate fact cards'.

You think you're too small to make a difference? Then you've obviously never slept in the same room as a mosquito.

- African Proverb

Odds and ends

LiveSimply Community Challenges – highly recommended!

These are fantastic – and many of them are youth friendly and well resourced.

Examples include:

- Making a peace garden
- Finding out about poverty in your local area
- Putting on a play

Find out more at

http://www.progressio.org.uk/livesimply/AssociatesInternal/96806/community_challenges/