

UNIT 1:

Global Youth Work:

Understanding Globalisation



OVERVIEW OF MODULE

This module is designed to develop the capacity of those involved in youth work to bring a Global Youth Work dimension to their work within their own specific contexts. Global Youth Work is a practice that supports young people to explore and act on issues of justice and solidarity in our interconnected world.

The Global Youth Work module is designed to support and enhance your understanding of Global Youth Work and global issues that influence your life and the lives of the young people with whom you work. These issues include poverty, inequality, hunger, injustice, fair trade and climate justice. As youth workers, we will explore global issues through a non-formal educational approach to critical consciousness raising.

This is a powerful way to support learning because it helps young people to develop a deeper understanding of what is happening in the world – locally and globally – and to develop the knowledge, skill and attitudes to play an active role as empowered global citizens.

This module identifies the benefits of exploring the role young people have in their local community as well as their connection to the broader, globalised world. In the process, we recognise that globalisation increasingly influences young people's lives and environments, creating new opportunities, challenges, and concerns.

It considers the distinctiveness of a youth work approach to supporting young people with these issues, and how critical consciousness raising is explicitly engaged when embedding a global youth work approach. Finally, it explores how youth workers can orient themselves in their current work to embed the transformative practice of a global youth work approach. The module consists of three units:

- 1. Global Youth Work: Understanding Globalisation**
- 2. Global Youth Work: Principles and Practice**
- 3. Global Youth Work: A transformative youth work practice model**

Please watch the Unit 1 Video before proceeding further.

Global Youth Work: Understanding Globalisation

In this unit you will learn about:

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YouthWorkAndYou.org

UNIT 1: Global Youth Work: Understanding Globalisation

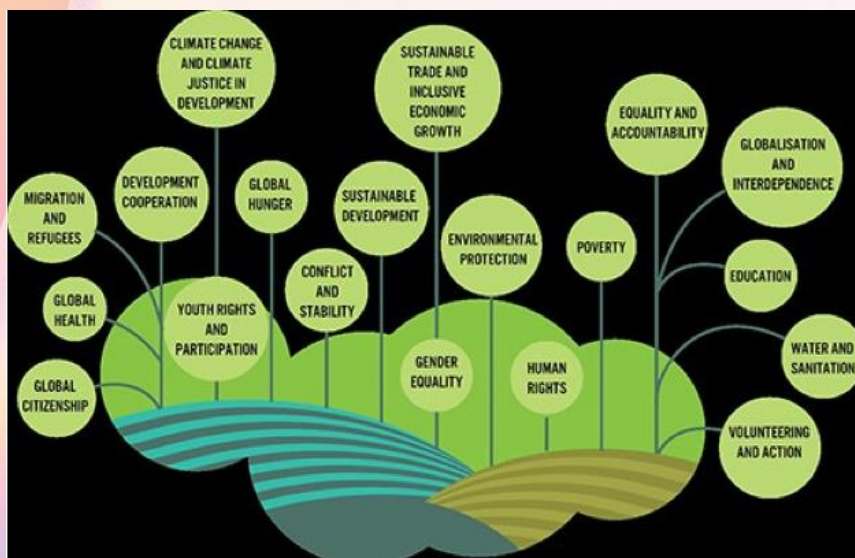
Introducing Global Youth Work

Global youth work aims to empower young people to develop the knowledge and skills to tackle global issues and explore their own values, beliefs, and connections with the wider world. Young people are supported to see themselves as agents of change, empowered to be active global citizens.

Global youth work (in some contexts called development education or global citizenship education) supports greater knowledge and understanding of the rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world in which we live. It supports young people and the youth sector to critically explore how global justice issues interlink with their everyday lives.

Global youth work begins with an understanding of a young person's reality. This happens through an engaged youth work practice and relationship building, which creates opportunity for insight into the personal world and experiences of the young person. Global youth work works with these insights on a journey of change and consciousness raising using the tools of development education. It is based on the principles of non-formal education and it is about provoking consciousness, so that a young person can relate to their lived reality, and engage with the world and with others.

Global youth work works with the UN Sustainable Development Goals framework to question the logic of the global system currently in place. A global youth work practice helps us to disrupt our understanding of global systems and to look afresh at our personal, local, national, and global relationship with these.



Global youth work approach can be used to explore many issues with young people

UNIT 1: Global Youth Work: Understanding Globalisation

Ten Key Principles of Global Youth Work

1. Starts from young people's experiences and encourages their personal, social, emotional, and political development.
2. Works to non-formal education principles and offers opportunities that are educational, participative, empowering and designed to promote equality of opportunity.
3. Is based on an agenda that has been negotiated with young people.
4. Engages young people in critical analysis of local and global influences on their own lives and communities.
5. Encourages an understanding of the world based on the historical process of globalisation.
6. Recognises that relationships between, and within, developing and developed countries (*'global north'* and *'global south'*) are characterised by inequalities caused by globalisation.
7. Promotes the values of justice and equity in personal, local, national, and global relationships.
8. Encourages an understanding of, appreciation for, diversity, locally and globally.
9. Sees the people and organisations of all countries (developing and developed; *'global north'* and *'global south'*) as equal partners for change in a shared and interdependent world.
10. Encourages action that builds alliances to bring about change.

– (Development Education Association, 2004)

UNIT 1: Global Youth Work: Understanding Globalisation

Introducing Globalisation

Global youth work practice emerged in the context of young people and their communities experiencing the impacts of globalization. The term 'globalisation' is commonly used to describe a variety of economic, social, cultural, and political trends that shape our world, connecting and interconnecting us across vast distances. There are different perspectives on when these trends began. Some suggest that globalisation was sparked initially by European exploration and empire building from 1450. Those empires extracted raw materials and human slaves from colonies and traded them globally to accumulate vast wealth. Others point to the rise of industrialisation and telecommunications in the 19th century which further extended the power of European empires across the globe.

Whenever it began, there is consensus that the effects of globalisation started to accelerate around the world by the mid-20th century. By the 1960s, electricity, telephones, television, jet airplanes and the beginning of satellite communications meant that the world was becoming a 'global village'. People, goods, money, and ideas are now able to move around the world faster and cheaper than ever before.

The accelerating pace of globalisation has a profound effect on life in rich and poor countries alike, although the benefits and the burdens of these trends is often unfairly distributed – both within and between countries. Young people, as we will explore, are impacted by the processes of globalisation in a variety of ways.

Yet, globalisation is not an all-consuming process either, and places and cultures, including youth culture and identity, continue to have their own local 'flavour'. It is more important than ever to recognise the value and interdependence of people all over the world.

Defining Globalisation

When discussing globalisation, people often focus on its association with economic issues such as the borderless trade of goods and services or the outsourcing of production into so-called low-wage countries. This is no surprise, as it is perhaps the most visible side of globalisation. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines globalisation as:

An increasing internationalisation of markets for goods and services, the means of production, financial system, competition, corporations... which gives rise to increased mobility of capital, fast propagation of technological innovations and an increase interdependency and uniformity of national market.

UNIT 1: Global Youth Work: Understanding Globalisation

Globalisation of the economy was driven in the 1980s and 90s by governments deregulating their banking systems and opening their stock markets. This was encouraged globally by institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, who were criticized for how they forced new financial policies on states in the global South in particular. This financial deregulation has led to the growth of '*global cities*', like London, Tokyo and New York whose stock markets are the centre of the **globalised economy** (Sassen, 2005). In this context, Global Justice Now (2018) found that 69 of the 100 richest entities on the planet are now corporations not countries.

The wealth of corporations and influence of global financial markets means they exert enormous political impact. Financial globalisation therefore contributes to the '**detritorialisation of decision-making power**' from democratic states and from communities (Giddens, 2002). Yet the ways in which globalisation has affected politics is not black and white. Our global interconnectedness has facilitated the spread of many social movements in recent years, from Occupy and the Arab Spring, to #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo.

The global spread of social movements is an example of how globalisation supports the sharing of global culture. It has led to a '**global cultural flow**' (Appadurai, 1996) of ideas, images, products, technologies and practices. Traditionally, these flows have been greatest from the Western '*core*' (Hollywood, Silicon Valley etc) to places on the '*periphery*' (Countries and regions beyond the centres of Western power). Today, that is shifting. For example, Chinese social media giant TikTok is facilitating young pro-democracy protestors in South-East Asia to share their messages with European audiences (Jali, 2021). Immediate interaction between people and nations is now possible. The space in which people interact is no longer limited to their local or national boundaries. We can now exchange ideas, spread cultural norms, expand global markets, and influence each other's political views at the touch of a button.

In the accompanying video for this unit, you will hear a range of speakers share what globalisation means for them, what it means to be and think '*global*'.



Youth 2030 Global Youth Work Learners Network 2022

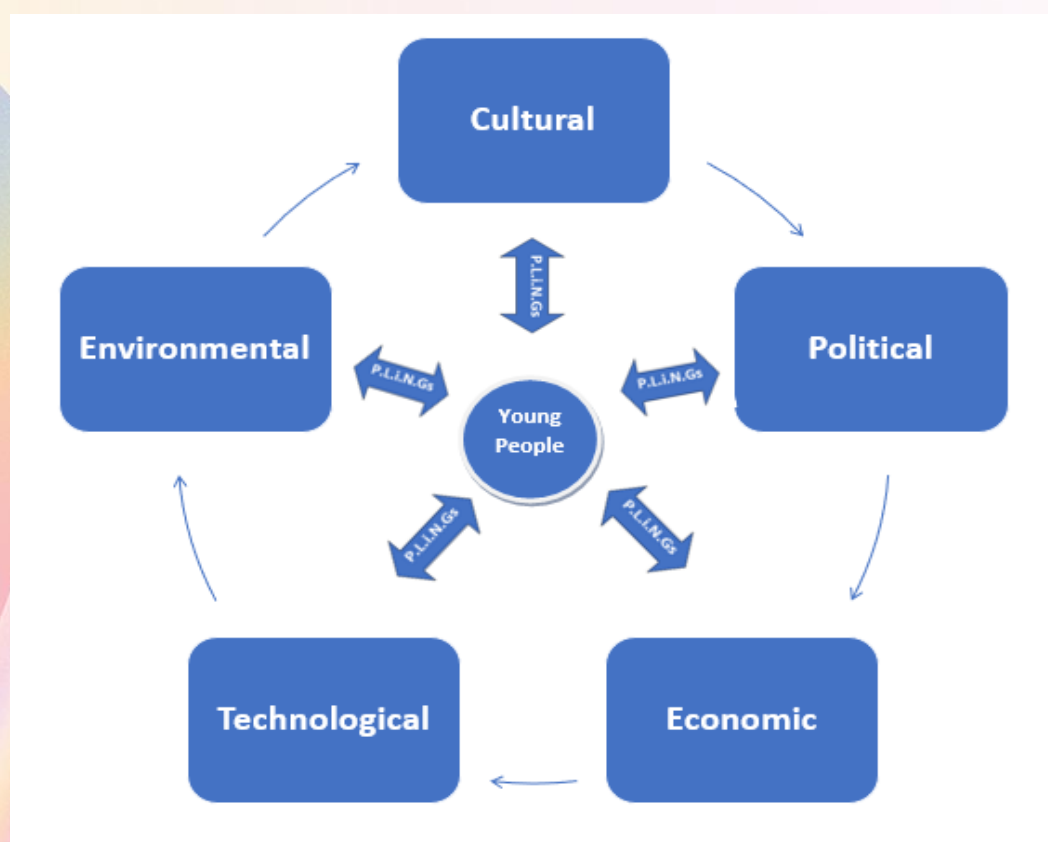
UNIT 1: Global Youth Work: Understanding Globalisation

Sallah's Five Faces of Globalisation

Youth worker and global youth work scholar Professor Momodou Sallah (2014) offers a framework which supports young people and youth workers to map out the ways in which globalisation impacts on their lives. His work summarises the elements of globalisation discussed in the introduction under five 'faces': Cultural, Political, Economic, Technological and Environmental.

Sallah highlights how each of these faces have impacts which are felt at different levels: *Personally* for the young person, *Locally* in their community, *Nationally* in their country and *Globally*. Sallah calls these different levels the 'P.L.i.N.G.s'. It can be helpful to consider each of these different levels in order to fully consider the impacts of globalisation for young people.

Five Faces of Globalisation and the P.L.i.N.G.s



P.L.i.N.G.s: Personal, Local, National and Global levels of interactions

UNIT 1: Global Youth Work: Understanding Globalisation

The five faces of Globalisation are:

1. ECONOMIC

This is the financial dimension that deals with the trading of goods and services across nations. Think about why Google's headquarters moved to Ireland; how you can have avocados available all year long; or multinationals such as Coca Cola taking over markets in other parts of the world – to the detriment of local industries.

2. CULTURAL

This face is about how people's way of life can be disseminated from a particular perspective as more or less important. Think about how the straight-edged nose is perceived as '*the perfect nose*' even though, it is not the most common shape; how food delivery apps create opportunities to eat from a global menu; and how hip hop is associated with violence and gangster culture and is embraced and interpreted by people globally.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL

The current climate crisis is a good illustration of this face. The increased consumption of goods, rising mobility of people, use of dirty sources of energy, and lack of action especially in the western world has led to the destruction of our environment for ourselves and future generations. Think about bush fires in Australia; drought in South Africa; hurricanes in the Bahamas; and melting ice threatening the Sámi's habitat in Northern regions.

4. POLITICAL

Nowadays, a lot of political fields can't be treated at the national level. Transnational corporations (TNC) and multilateral agreements have gained importance in the last decades. Some TNCs, lacking regulatory controls in global markets, are free to exert their influence with limited checks and balances e.g., Amazon. While with the establishment of international organisations such as the United Nations, world leaders have attempted to define and establish principles such as human rights. Think about the recovery plan for Covid19 and the controversy over vaccine patents; the ideology of war (e.g. The Cold War period); and how humanitarian actions have complex motivations.

5. TECHNOLOGICAL

The technological face of globalisation embodies all forms of communication that have brought the world closer together and created instant connection for people living so far from each other. Think about your social media platforms, internet connectivity, and the many new routine choices we make on a daily basis through technology at our fingertips. Think also of those people who don't have access to the tools of technology and how this informs the concept digital poverty.

UNIT 1: Global Youth Work: Understanding Globalisation

Assessing globalisation

Globalisation has brought much good to human beings. It has enabled people to better themselves through jobs creation, enriched people's perspectives by bringing different cultures together, helped social movements bring about change and boosted scientific and technological innovation. Some have even found love because of globalisation (King-O'Rian, n.d.) Nevertheless, the benefits of globalisation have been unevenly distributed. Marginalised and disadvantaged groups nationally and globally have experienced hardship due to globalisation. Economic globalisation has posed challenges for human rights, workers' rights and the environment. Whether we talk about the existential crisis we call climate change or the widening gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots', globalisation has generated huge social cost to our societies. One important issue of justice in globalisation is human migration. For many different reasons, economic migrants and refugees are moving around the globe. Often, people from the global South have movements restricted and criminalized, even as states remove barriers for the movement of goods and capital which enables greater flows of wealth to the richest countries. This has brought a real divide between rich and poor, rural versus urban, the North versus the South.



NYCI Climate Youth Summit, Dublin 2019

UNIT 1: Global Youth Work: Understanding Globalisation

The impact of globalisation on young people

Globalisation affects the lives of young people in many ways, from the food and clothing they consume, the media, music and culture they engage with and the technology which they use. The spread of technology and social media amongst young people facilitates the free flowing of youth cultures to the point where some sociologists argue that a single global youth culture is emerging (Thorpe and Inglis, 2019). Others point out that globalisation does not affect everyone equally, nor does it make every place homogenous. Instead, the faces of globalisation will interact with young people according to other identities they have, distributing opportunities and risks unevenly (Nayak, 2003). Those other identities include a young person's class or economic background, their gender and sexuality and their 'race' or ethnicity. Additionally, globalisation has led to profound changes in the global economy and labour market which has often made young people more precariously employed and with less labour rights than previous generations (Oyeleye, 2014).

Local youth cultures may be influenced by globalization but remain distinct and unique. For example, rap and hip hop culture has been very influential amongst young people across the globe but youth have created distinctly local mash-ups of these global genres – from Denise Chaila articulating a Black Irish identity rooted in Limerick city, Ireland to the anti-globalisation songs of Argentinian-French rapper Keny Arkana in Marseille, France.

Denise Chaila:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnwMTjvG6bg>

Keny Arkana:

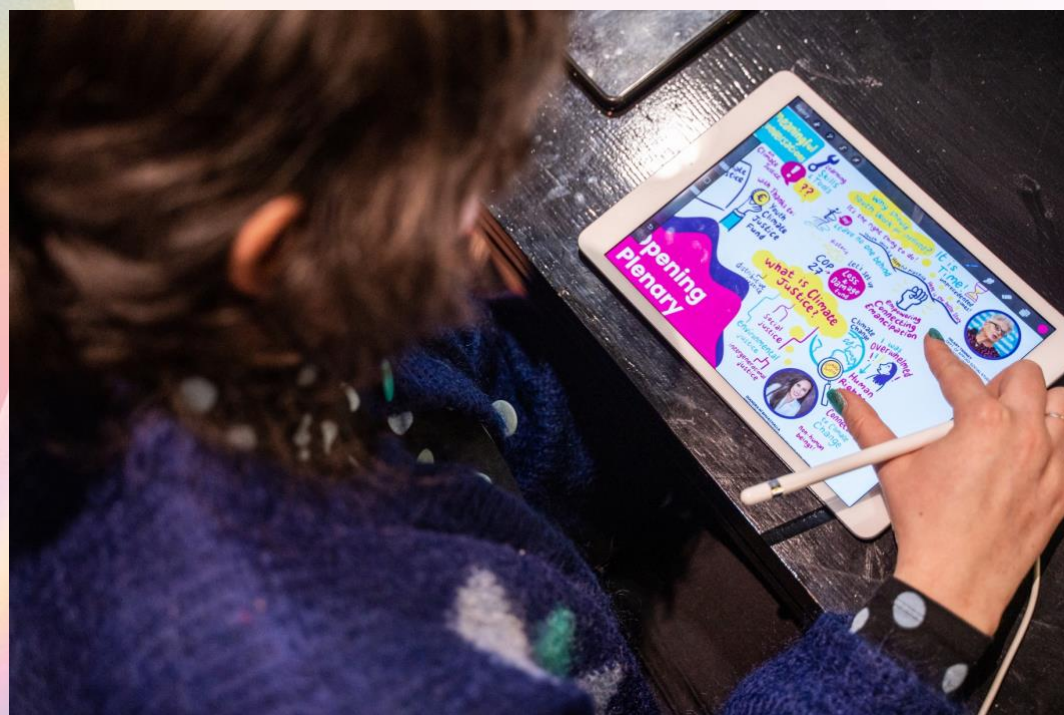
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQwxh68kKYc>

UNIT 1: Global Youth Work: Understanding Globalisation

Globalisation, technology and youth

Young people today are growing up in a time of unprecedented technological change. Social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, combined with the latest smartphone technology, mean that youth culture spreads quickly and evolves rapidly online. The easy ability to generate images has led to a thriving online meme culture, while social media platforms are increasingly focused on viral video content. Social media influencers play a huge role in promoting products, trends and online subcultures. In this context also it is important to be critically aware of how social media companies exploit our data for financial gain and how marketing companies use social media to shape new markets of young people (Zuboff, 2019).

At the same time, the internet and technology has also opened up new possibilities for youth in a variety of ways. Young people who feel stuck or out of place in society find refuge in online gaming communities and platforms such as Reddit (Zhou, 2023) as with the '*lying flat movement*' in China or '*house hatching*' youth in Dublin, Ireland. Young people also use the digital realm to engage in politics. Young activists such as the climate strikers have made use of social media to co-ordinate global waves of climate strikes (Gorman, 2021). Youth are using the internet and social media for political commentary, satire and more radical actions such as Distributed Denial of Service actions, the digital equivalent of a sit-in, where thousands of users flood a website with traffic in order to crash it (Bessant, 2021).



National Climate Justice Conference 2022

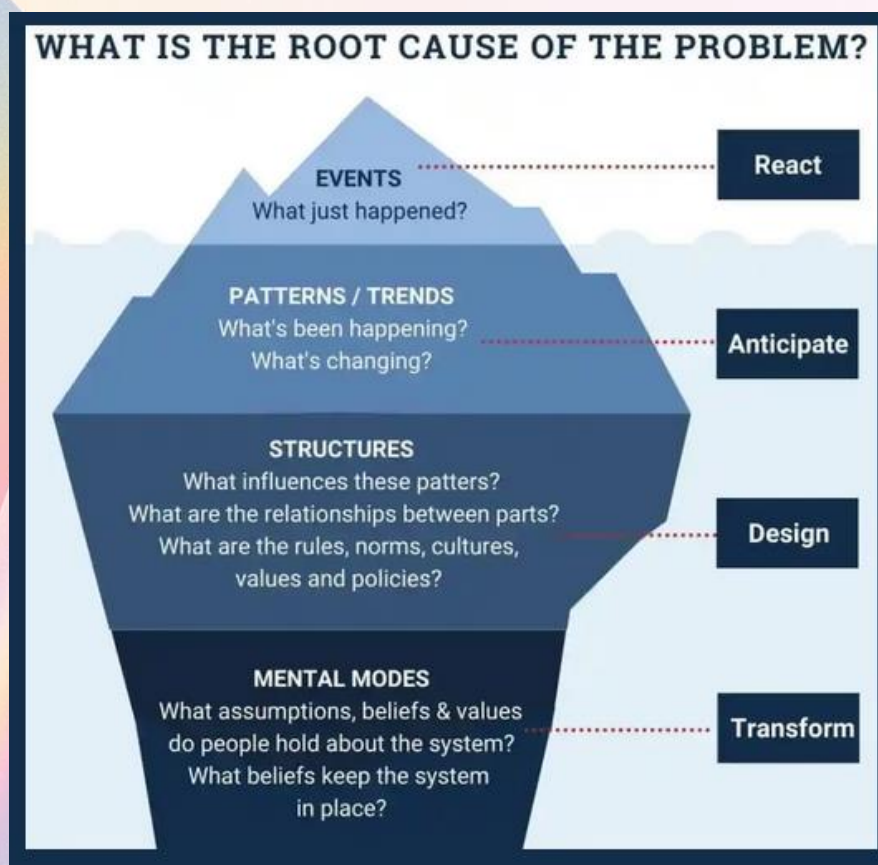
UNIT 1: Global Youth Work: Understanding Globalisation

Global youth work and reflective practice

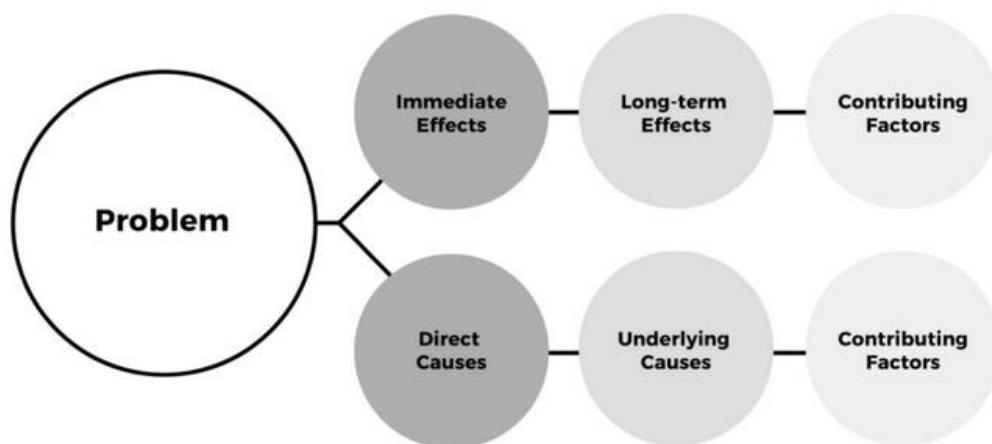
As we have seen, globalization has many profound impacts on young peoples' lives. Within this context, a global youth work approach aims to empower young people to develop the knowledge, skills and attributes to be active participants responding to the process of globalisation. As such, global youth work is rooted in the pedagogic tradition of Paulo Freire (1972) who argued that the role of education is to catalyse critical consciousness and then support those affected by issues to take collective action. Freire called this process of reflection on a situation and then action in the world '*praxis*'. He believed that through praxis we overcome our alienation and disempowerment to become fully human in the world. Critical reflection is therefore an important element of global youth work.

Reflection with young people

An important element of reflection in global youth work is to work with and alongside young people to name and analyse the issues they/we experience as a result of globalisation and global inequality/injustice. Tools which can support this include '*the problem tree*' and the '*problem diagram*'.



UNIT 1: Global Youth Work: Understanding Globalisation



The problem diagram (Mobilisation Lab, 2021)

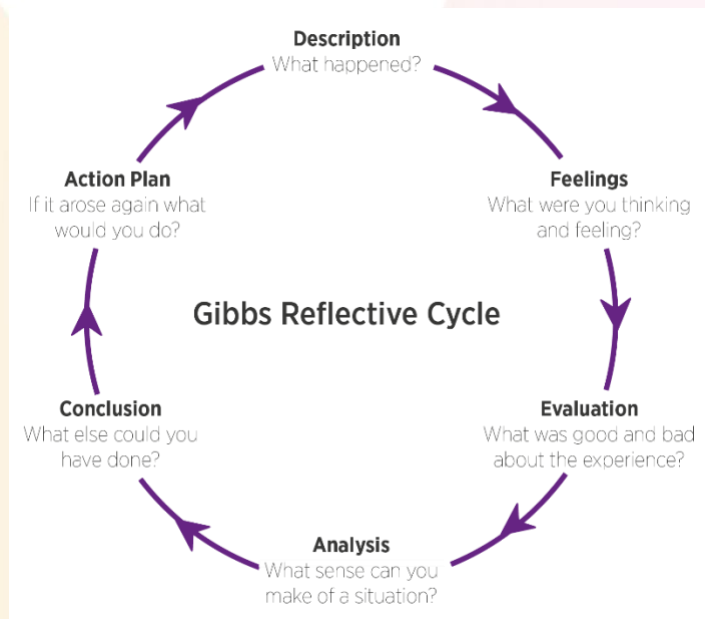
Reflection as global youth work practitioners

A second important area to apply a reflective approach is with our own practice as global youth workers. Critical reflection on our practice is an important tool to support us to learn, improve and respond to emerging issues.

Reflective practice is particularly important in global youth work because it requires us to reflect on our own unique position in the global world and identify the ways in which we may benefit or be disadvantaged by globalisation, as well as the ways that our actions (particularly in the global North) may contribute to global inequality and injustice. In the accompanying video for this unit, you will hear speakers reflect on these issues.

Thompson and Thompson (2018) suggest that critical reflective practice is made up of two elements. Critical depth is about looking beneath the surface and considering the roots of an issue. Critical breath involves looking beyond narrow, individualistic understandings to reflect on the structural and political factors that shape an issue.

UNIT 1: Global Youth Work: Understanding Globalisation



Gibbs reflective cycle (1998)

How do we engage in reflective practice?

Practitioners use a variety of methods and models to support reflective practice. Keeping a reflective practice journal and using a reflection framework such as Gibb's (1998) Reflective Cycle can help us to go beyond description to analysis in our reflection. Supervision meetings and peer-to-peer sharing can also enable our praxis.

To support reflective practice, it can be helpful to connect with other global youth work practitioners, attend trainings, watch webinars, engage with resources and articles and reflect on events and trends in the world.

UNIT 1: Global Youth Work: Understanding Globalisation

References and Resources

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UNIT 1: Global Youth Work: Understanding Globalisation

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UNIT 1: Global Youth Work: Understanding Globalisation

Websites and Resources

Youth 2030 Global Youth Work Programme – NYCI

<https://www.youth.ie/programmes/global-youth-work-and-development-education/>

DevelopmentEducation.ie is an online resource focused on the unequal and unjust shape of the world today

www.developmenteducation.ie

Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review

<https://www.developmenteducationreview.com/>

Financial Justice Ireland – a global financial justice organisation

[Financial Justice Ireland | Home Page](#)

CorpWatch – holding Corporations Accountable

www.corpwatch.org

Clean Clothes Campaign – amplifying workers voices in the garment and sportswear industry

www.cleanclothes.org

Fair Trade Ireland

www.fairtrade.ie

Dates for your Diary

- **2nd Saturday of May:** World Fair Trade Day
- **16th October:** World Food Day
- **17th October:** International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
- **10th December:** Human Rights Day

UNIT 1: Global Youth Work: Understanding Globalisation

Summary

This unit has explored global youth work as an approach to working with young people to explore issues of global justice and solidarity in the context of globalisation. It has introduced globalisation as a significant issue which impacts on every aspect of our lives and considered some of the ways in which globalisation affects young people. Finally, the unit has considered the importance of reflective practice for good global youth work practice and offered some tools for this.

Citation

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Available at: <https://www.youthworkandyou.org/ywelp-module-seven/>

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Youth 2030 – Global Youth Work Programme

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