

# Learning and Skills for a Global Economy

Research

**LSIS** LEARNING AND SKILLS IMPROVEMENT SERVICE

The logo graphic for LSIS consists of several overlapping, flowing lines in shades of orange and red, creating a sense of movement and energy.

**The response of further education college and training providers to the challenges of globalisation**

## Preface

Commissioned by LSIS in March 2010 from the Institute of Education, University of London

This research report has been commissioned by Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) and its purpose is to address the extent to which further education and training providers are addressing the impact of globalisation and the changing learning and skills needs within their programmes, courses and general support for the learners.

The report builds on previous work we have undertaken for LSIS on global skills and should also be seen as a document that takes forward some of the key themes addressed in the DIUS report on Globalisation (2008).

As with all reports of this type it can only scratch the surface as to what is happening within further education and training in responding to a rapidly changing world and skills needs.

The authors of this report are all employed by the Institute of Education, University of London. We are all involved in the Development Education Research Centre, which has as its primary focus undertaking research on how learners interpret and make sense of living in a globalised world.

Dr. Douglas Bourn  
Director  
Development Education Research Centre  
Institute of Education  
University of London

Authors:

Nicole Blum: [n.blum@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:n.blum@ioe.ac.uk)  
Clare Bentall: [c.bentall@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:c.bentall@ioe.ac.uk)  
Doug Bourn: [d.bourn@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:d.bourn@ioe.ac.uk)

# FE Colleges must think beyond the ‘local community’ box and become the ‘world’s local college

Dick Palmer, Principal, City College, Norwich  
(The Guardian, 24.2.09)

## Contents

- 04 Introduction
- 05 Context
- 07 Aims of the research
- 08 Methodology
- 10 Overview of current engagement and support for the global and international agenda
- 13 The global dimension within the colleges and other training providers
- 16 Impact of global forces on the current economic situation and activities of the providers
- 18 The globally minded provider
- 20 Skills for a global economy
- 22 Personal, social and cultural development of the learner
- 25 The college and the community
- 26 Courses and qualifications
- 28 Leadership within the college or training provider
- 29 Staff professional development
- 30 Taking forward the globalisation theme within policy priorities
- 32 Recommendations to providers
- 33 Conclusion
- 34 References
- 35 Acknowledgements

## Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how further education (FE) and training providers are responding to the challenges of globalisation through the teaching and learning opportunities they provide.

Although it is clear that many education institutions have had to adapt to an increasingly global market place (for example, facing significant pressure to enrol more international students), such economic issues are not the direct focus of this study. Rather, the emphasis here is on how and in what ways colleges and other training providers are equipping learners to live and work in a global economy and global society. This tension between being an 'international institution' (i.e. which has a diverse international student body) and a 'globally minded institution' (i.e. which prepares learners for life in a global society and work in a global economy) is key to activities in this area. In all sectors of education terms such as 'international', 'global' and 'globalisation' are used but often meaning different things. A considerable number of FE and training providers do a combination of securing international students, working overseas and addressing curriculum needs in terms of skills for a global society, but it is this last area that is the specific focus of this study.

The research on which this paper is based showed that there are some excellent examples of practice from FE and training providers who are addressing the need to encourage a more 'global outlook and mindset' from their learners. However, it is also clear that these activities need to be given greater recognition and be seen as an important part of mainstream provision. The research also notes that a major challenge remains to be the lack of understanding and relatively low level of priority given to the global agenda by policy makers, and by examination and awarding bodies.

## Context

The impact of global forces can be seen in all aspects of UK society, through changing economic patterns, access to instant global communications and the increasingly culturally diverse nature of communities.

Indeed, the forces of globalisation permeate all aspects of social, cultural and economic life today. Whilst there are many different views about what globalisation is and how it is interpreted around the world (see Friedman 2006; Stromquist and Monkman 2000), there are a number of common themes. The first is economic in terms of the relatively borderless nature of the production and marketing of goods. The second is the declining role of the nation state as the principal site of identity construction. The third is the nature of global communications and that, resources permitting, people have instant access to knowledge, information and dialogue around the world.

There has been recognition within a number of areas of education that as a result of globalisation, learning in all settings and at all levels – be it in a school, college or university – needs to be more international in its outlook. However, there is also an awareness that globalisation raises a number of new issues for education. These include: the impacts of instant global access to information and knowledge; increased social mobility; contact and dialogue with people from a wide range of cultural backgrounds; the impact of events elsewhere in the world on what and how people learn in a specific locality; and above all the diverse cultural and social influences on the development of an individual's identity.

Regardless of the different theoretical views regarding the value and impacts of globalisation, it seems obvious that nation-states can no longer ignore learning about other cultures, societies and political systems in the development of their educational programmes. In particular, people will need to understand and engage with different viewpoints and perspectives for both economic and social reasons. However, globalisation will require more than simply the development of dialogue between cultures, because it will also likely result in increased hybridity and a more complex and fluid world. Living in a globalised world therefore does not only create homogeneity and polarisation, but can create an eclectic mix of identities and perspectives (Ray 2007), and can also lead to the increased individualisation of societies, the disembedding of traditions and the emergence of uncertainty and fluidity (France 2007).

Thus, if globalisation is seen as more than just the creation of borderless economies and increased competition, but also as a source of social and cultural change, then education's responses – including that of colleges and other training providers – have to address more than the economic dimension of globalisation.

## The international mobility of talent delivers diversity of viewpoint... our business, all business needs different viewpoints

This suggests that simply adding ‘international’ content to teaching programmes or increasing numbers of international students (i.e. being an ‘international institution’) is not sufficient. Rather, further education providers need to recognise that learning and living in a global society has a direct impact not only on **what** you teach, but **how** you teach. This will require providers to re-think not only the kinds of knowledge and skills that learners need to live and work in a global society and economy, but also how they address the global dimension of learning as well as the personal, social and cultural development of learners.

This perspective is supported in Bourn (2008) through the comments of a number of global employers. KPMG (2008) for example published a major piece of research on *The Global Skills Convergence* which recognised that globalisation is posing major challenges for any company that has an international workforce. It identified particularly the need for understanding of local cultures, ways of working in particular countries and different perspectives

‘The international mobility of talent delivers diversity of viewpoint... our business, all business needs different viewpoints’ (Brian Ambrose, Global Mobility, quoted in KPMG, 2008,.4)

The global perspective is also seen by these large companies as not just about working and operating overseas but the complex social, cultural and economic factors that influence workforce needs at a local level.

‘Technology and globalisation has changed the nature of our workforce....we have to be flexible to ensure we attract and retain talent with a global perspective’ (Rodney Scaife, AOL, quoted in KPMG 2008.37).

In taking forward these arguments and points, this research has taken the impact of globalisation to be as much about the local as it is about the global. In other words, globalisation requires us to look at the *inter-connections* between local and global forces, rather than simply the impacts of the global on the local or vice versa. It is in this context that the research explored the changing global forces and influences on the activities of colleges and training providers and especially how learning is responding to these challenges.

## Aims of the Research

As noted above, globalisation is ever present within UK society and economy. There have also been noticeable changes in UK government policies and programmes with regard to skills and training.

From a perspective in the 1990s that emphasises disadvantage in the labour market, the focus as outlined in the 2009 Skills for Growth strategy is on linking skills needs to changing economic needs and flexible labour markets. This includes increased emphasis and support to apprenticeships and vocational routes into higher education and the professions (DBIS 2009). Central to this strategy is the ambition of training more people to advanced vocational skills. Examples of new priorities were skills in life sciences, digital media and technology, advanced manufacturing, engineering construction and low carbon energy. It also recognises and encourages the promotion of skills that can be transferred from job to job.

A primary aim of this research is to identify how colleges and other training providers have responded to the challenges of globalisation and what have been the specific features of changes of priorities in terms of provision and courses.

Linked to this, the research had a secondary aim to look at how the providers are equipping both staff and learners to respond to the challenges of globalisation and more specifically the recent economic downturn. This has meant looking at whether there have been any changes of focus in terms of staff development and new approaches towards learning.

Thirdly the research has looked at how as a result of globalisation and increased tensions within communities, providers are making links between the influence of global forces and relationships and community cohesion.

Finally, as a result of identifying the evidence of the impact of globalisation on colleges and training providers, this research indicates ways in which providers are implementing strategies that equip learners with the skills, knowledge and values to actively engage in the global society and economy of which they are a part.

It concludes by posing some recommendations and suggestions for priorities that need to be addressed by both policy-makers and practitioners.

## Methodology

This research has not attempted to be a comprehensive overview as to how further education and training providers are responding to globalisation but to look primarily at examples of known engagement in the global agenda.

The rationale for this is that there is a need for the sector as a whole to give time, consideration and resources to equipping their learners to understand what globalisation means and how it relates to their employment and societal needs. Focusing on those areas of known engagement will give some evidence and material that could be perhaps replicated elsewhere. It will also tell us more about what impact there has been in giving more resources and learning to the global agenda in terms of the personal development of the learner and the broader quality of provision within the college or training provider.

The main focus has therefore been on a series of telephone interviews and face-to-face meetings with key providers known to be actively engaged in the global agenda. They were identified from previous research commissioned by LSIS (Bourn 2008), bodies actively engaged in and supporting the work of LSIS or who directly contacted the research team following hearing about its aims.

These telephone interviews and face-to-face meetings were complemented by a series of focus group and seminar discussions and inputs into key events organised by LSIS and Association of Colleges (AoC).

Further desk research on current academic and policy initiatives related to globalisation and further education were also undertaken to contextualise the research within broader debates around globalisation and education.

It is worth adding here that all of the colleges and providers interviewed had robust policies on diversity. There were excellent examples of strategies and programmes that move beyond recognising cultural diversity to including an understanding of the roots and changing nature of communities. It was also noted by several colleges that the cultural diversity agenda was equally important to its international students as it was to its UK students. The diversity agenda is also more than just around race but includes gender, sexual orientation, class and religion. In an increasingly culturally diverse learning environment, colleges and training providers have already had to recognise and understand the different views and perspectives on these areas.

**Our aim is that all  
students will be more  
globally aware as a result  
of being at the College**

**Hilary Anson, Principal,  
King George V College, Southport**

## Overview of Current Engagement and Support for the Global and International Agenda

Since the 1990s there have been, as indicated, major changes in priorities in terms of government programmes and policies on further education and training.

Whilst there have been references to globalisation in all of these programmes even the Leitch Review on Skills in referring to ‘world class skills’ made no reference to understanding the world. Therefore underlying this research has been a constant concern for the lack of attention been given by policy-makers and leaders in the sector to ensure that the skills needed to live and work in a global economy are not just more of the same, but require not only new and transferable skills but an understanding of changing forces in the world and their impact upon the individual learner. The rationale and possible framework for global skills is outlined in Bourn (2008) and is supported in the DIUS (2008) Globalisation strategy paper.

This means that when the research team began the process of dialogue with colleges and other training providers apart from the material produced by LSIS and the DIUS Globalisation strategy and the work of Association of Colleges, there were few reference points to start from. A key challenge has therefore been to identify relevant starting points to discussing globalisation and to encourage providers to see the issues being addressed in this research are much more than about international partnerships or recruiting international students.

As a result when a college or other training provider is asked:

“What are you doing to equip your learners to have the skills and knowledge to live and work in a global economy?”

the responses were often heavily influenced by personal understandings and experiences of globalisation, international work and global skills. For some, the priorities were providing key skills, ensuring employability and providing for local needs. Others, particularly those with a very diverse student intake, may be more focused on ensuring that their institution has the knowledge and skills to respond to diverse social and cultural needs. In both cases, it is the global forces and influences that impact on these priorities that need to be discussed. For those who prioritise skills for employability, for example, key discussions need to centre on the global forces that influence employment, both in terms of particular industries and the specific skill sets which employees require. The question as to which providers should prioritise is one that can only be decided at a local level.

For most providers the initial conversation about how to address globalisation starts from what they have been doing with regard to ‘international activities’, such as partnerships and international students. This link is so strong that in some instances colleges or providers who do not identify international partnerships or having international students as a priority could not initially see the value and point of our research.

This suggests that there is still a major problem with perceptions about the global agenda and its relationship to international links. While a considerable number of providers engage in ‘international’ work, this was often seen as being driven by a primarily economic agenda (e.g. through recruitment of international students) rather than being part of an approach to teaching and learning. There is also some evidence to suggest that there is a perception that the ‘international’ is not central to the role of further education colleges or training providers. More than one principal of a college who was interviewed said that they did not give priority to international work. One principal commented that whilst his institution had partnership programmes with colleges and other providers elsewhere in the world, it was based on supporting good learning opportunities and the motivations and enthusiasm of particular staff rather than any prescribed strategy.

Another area where some colleges and training providers saw the ‘global’ was in relation to language provision, both in terms of offering courses in a range of foreign languages and as providers of teaching English as a second language (ESOL). Whilst references will be made in this report to the role of ESOL in relation to responding to local community needs, for a number of providers the central educational response to globalisation is the promotion of ‘global English’. However, as the Ostravista (2009) report on *Professional Development for Non-native Speakers of English* states, globalisation is having a major impact on English language teaching, and this suggests that more of the same kind of provision is not enough. A key theme to emerge from this important research is that whatever perceptions there may be about ‘international activities’, there is evidence that for both staff and students some form of dialogue, experience and mutual learning with colleagues from elsewhere in the world can not only broaden horizons, but can encourage recognition of different perspectives and approaches and, above all, better equip learners to work within different cultural and social settings in the future.

However, it also emerged from the dialogue with the providers that there is a tendency for exciting international or global initiatives to emerge and then disappear. This is because such initiatives are often dependant on short-term funding and so all too often remain on the margins of college’s or provider’s core activities. This suggests that more thinking needs to be done about how these opportunities could be better integrated into the mainstream work of further education providers.

Furthermore, a number of providers said that they saw the global element as an implicit rather than an explicit aspect of their teaching and learning strategies, for example, through the use of phrases such as ‘skills for employability’, ‘fit for purpose’ and the ‘needs of today’. This was in contrast to the use of terms such as ‘global’ or ‘wider world’, which were rarely used. This highlights the idea, supported by our previous research and experience in this area (Bourn 2008), that key aspects of good practice in terms of providing a ‘global dimension’ in further education run parallel to and compliment other existing teaching and learning agendas.

For instance, there is significant evidence of potential linkages between the international/global agenda and that of race equality and diversity, as well as of community cohesion. This can take on different emphases depending on the characteristics, including the composition of the student body, of individual institutions. For Lewisham College in London, for instance as one senior staff member stated;

**‘the world comes through our doors every day’**

Colleges with diverse student populations reported that they were more likely to encourage and support initiatives, such as Black History Month or Refugee Week, that promote positive images of minority communities. Some providers also noted that issues of racism and discrimination in their local area had led them to look at encouraging activities that promoted greater cultural understanding.

## We will help and support our students to become active and responsible citizens at home and in the world...

On the other hand, providers with more rural or more white, monocultural student populations recognised the need to address racism and cultural understanding through international experiences or partnerships with communities and training providers with similar skills needs.

One of the other key drivers of this research was the impact of the recent global economic downturn and a need to explore the extent to which the providers were re-thinking what they provide for their learners. The research suggests that while there is certainly evidence of increased pressure on colleges as a result of changing economic circumstances, this is usually in terms of the need to increase student numbers or to offer different types of provision. There is little direct evidence of specific changes in curriculum content to take account of recent economic events.

Finally, where providers recognised some or all of the issues discussed above, and have attempted to develop a global perspective and to have it recognised as mainstream within their institution, it was most often due to the influence and vision of senior management. For example, senior management leadership at colleges such as Greenwich, City and Islington and King George V have developed strategies and programmes that make a direct connection between a global agenda and a range of institutional initiatives.

This leadership bears a strong relationship to the extent to which individual providers are recognising the impact of the rapidly changing world on employment and skills needs. Greenwich Community College's development plan, for example, states that: 'the future represents a radical change in our operating environment and the implications of this change cannot be underestimated'<sup>1</sup>. Their International Strategy is seen as one of the main vehicles for addressing these challenges. Similarly, City and Islington College's Strategic Plan for 2008-2011 places 'addressing the global context' as their first objective. Under the heading 'Improve the Learning Experience of Students in a Global Society', the Plan states:

*We want our students to play their roles as global citizens, to compete, interact and progress in a changing world... We will help and support our students to become active and responsible citizens at home and in the world... We celebrate and learn from the rich diversity of our students and this same diversity prepares them for life in a global society and work in a global economy.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Greenwich Community College (2008) Embracing our Future-Development Plan 2008-2012.

<sup>2</sup> City and Islington College (2008) Strategic Plan 2008-2011 Workbook.

## The Global Dimension within the Colleges and other Training Providers

Throughout the further education and training sector there is recognition that global economic, social and cultural forces have influenced the nature and form of learning and training over the past decade.

All of the providers interviewed agreed with this. However, the impact of global forces has varied considerably from college to college. In some, the impact has been much more in terms of economic factors, such as the decline in traditional industries in West Nottinghamshire, whilst in others, such as those based in London, the impacts have been largely social and cultural, including working with students from an increasing variety of cultural backgrounds.

These observations suggest that what 'global' means and how it is played out is very different from Lewisham to West Nottinghamshire or Norwich to Southend. The inter-relationships between 'local' and 'global' in particular places therefore need to be recognised and understood. This understanding is, however, quite distinct from the traditional ways in which colleges have seen international work.

This variety between providers means that what the global dimension looks like within different colleges can vary widely and, as noted above, may not be explicitly called global at all. Instead, the emphasis may be on equality, cultural diversity or employability skills.

There were also notable differences between different types of further education providers, for instance between colleges and other types of providers. There were also some differences between those dealing with young people in earlier stages of their careers and more mature adults having to re-train. However, it is evident from all of the colleges contacted that they feel that they are often at the cutting edge of any changes taking place in the community as a result of globalisation. For example, if there is an influx of students from communities newly settled in the local area, it is often the local college that is the first body to deal with any impacts. This might include, for example, the need to establish appropriate language and support programmes for new migrants. One college specifically noted that it makes sure relevant academic staff have appropriate training and understanding of the backgrounds of new migrant community members.

For colleges and other providers, globalisation is seen as linked to the changing nature of local economies and resulting skills needs and working practices. For example, the skills needs for employers in the communities around places such as Grimsby, Southend, St. Helens or Nottinghamshire are now very different to what they were even just a decade ago.

In many areas, communities have also become fragmented as a result of globalisation and if there was one grouping that was perceived as a major problem it was white working class boys. Asha Khemka from West Nottinghamshire particularly noted:

“When we look at the Neet group [teenagers not in education, employment or training], we find significant numbers of white working-class young people who don’t really have a strong family infrastructure behind them. We find they are from three or four generations of worklessness and a poverty of aspiration. There are high levels of teenage pregnancy and low levels of progression to higher education.<sup>3</sup>”

The traditional career patterns that many of the parents of these boys would have had are now gone and several people interviewed stated that there was a need to not only give them a sense of positive self-image but to experience different social and economic environments. City and Islington’s partnership programme with Raleigh International and visit to India is one example of this.

Finally there were a range of views in regards to securing cohorts of international students. Some providers saw this as important not just in economic terms but as a way of enriching college life. Partnerships with particular countries, most notably China and India, were seen as helping the college community. However, a number of colleges noted that many of their international students were having problems securing visas to study in the UK. These problems were also having a wider impact on community-college links.

For a number of adult education providers, of course, learning about global and international issues is nothing new. Organisations such as the Workers’ Educational Association (WEA) and those with links to the labour movement, such as Ruskin, Northern College, Co-operative College or Fircroft, have a tradition of running courses on issues and themes that have an international development or global focus.

Much of this work came from a tradition of international solidarity and links with liberation movements, notably the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, and solidarity movements concerned with Nicaragua or Palestine. More recently, these linkages and learning programmes have become more explicitly linked to themes such as globalisation, global poverty, fair trade, sustainability, climate change, HIV/AIDS or gender. An example of this is a programme of residential courses being run for community groups at the Northern College from December 2009 to September 2010. Themes covered include ‘Human Rights, Human Wrongs’, ‘What Is Fair Trade?’, ‘Women of the World’, ‘The Global Environment’ and ‘Exploring Globalisation’<sup>4</sup>.

Initiatives like these have been helped considerably by funding from the Department for International Development which, through a range of funding programmes and partnership agreements, since 1997 have enabled bodies such as the WEA, Co-operative College, the Trades Union Congress (TUC), and a number of trade unions to develop training programmes and projects on building awareness and understanding of international development.

Whilst this study did not look in any depth at training provided by employers or trade unions, it is also worth noting that there is evidence from bodies such as the Co-operative College and TUC of greater recognition of the need for more strategic engagement in the global agenda. The TUC, for example, plays a strategic role in this area at three levels:

- producing a series of fact files and regular information on international development;
- managing an International Development Learning Fund for affiliate unions or TUC regions;
- running courses on global and international development issues; in 2010 this includes a course entitled ‘Going Global’ which is seen as an introduction to the role working people can play in development.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2009/jan/20/interview-asha-khemka-education>

<sup>4</sup> See [www.northern.ac.uk/aboutus/project](http://www.northern.ac.uk/aboutus/project)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.unionlearn.org.uk/education/learn-2326-f0.cfm>

## For colleges and other providers, globalisation is seen as linked to the changing nature of local economies and resulting skills needs and working practices.

Examples of projects supported by DFID since 2007 include:

- Co-operative College – a three year project on ‘Food and Development’ aimed at co-operative members and staff
- Transport and General Workers Union – three projects on how to incorporate international development within their core learning activities
- Workers Educational Association – a three year project entitled ‘Out of Africa’ with the aim of delivering a series of ‘performance-based one day development education sessions for trade unionists and disadvantaged adults in the West Midlands
- Age Concern – a three year project on ‘Engaging Older People in the Development Debate’
- National Federation of Women’s Institutes – a three year project on changing perceptions within its membership on global interconnectedness
- Prospect trade union – training courses on development awareness with six unionised employers.

Adult education providers have also made links to global themes through engagement with the areas of citizenship and sustainable development. The WEA in South Yorkshire, for example, recently ran an ‘Active Citizenship’ project which included a wide range of courses including one entitled ‘Food, Fashion, Famine and Fear’. Also within a number of local authorities, notably Enfield and Chesterfield, often as a result of some of partnership programme, learning about global and international issues has increased. The whole area of community partnerships is outside of the scope of this research but in light of new funding for this area from DFID<sup>6</sup>, it is potentially an important entry point for learning about globalisation.

<sup>6</sup> See [www.dfid.gov.uk/communitylinks](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/communitylinks)

## Impact of Global Forces and the Current Economic Situation on the Activities of Providers

As already suggested, colleges and training providers have responded differently to the impact of recent global trends and the downturn in the economy.

There is evidence across all of the colleges of increased demand for courses and re-training, and a corresponding need to adapt to changing local circumstances. Some of the colleges have been actively involved in providing specific re-training and support to redundant workers. An unusual example of this was from City and Islington College, which encountered demand from more middle class professionals who needed re-training as a result of losing their jobs in the city.

Indeed, the financial services sector has seen some significant changes both in terms of employer demand and also in terms of student involvement. The City College, Norwich's programme with India is one example of adapting to changing needs. The initiative received funding from the UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI). Due to the city's very large financial services employment base, the College saw a joint programme of training and exchanging expertise with Indian institutions as important not only in developing transferable skills but also in promoting inter-cultural understanding.

Alongside India, China is being seen by many in the sector as a key country with which to develop partnership programmes. This is perceived not only as important in terms of increased income to providers, but also as a way of equipping students with the skills to work much more closely with Chinese businesses in the future. We found examples of programmes and initiatives with training providers in the form of a joint television station in Grimsby, and both follow up to the Beijing Olympics and preparations for the 2012 Games in London at Greenwich.

In response to queries about running fewer engineering courses, Lancaster and Morecambe College noted that this was in response to the fact that there are now very few engineering jobs in the area. Whilst the College recognised that engineering is a national and indeed a global profession, they also felt that without local role models, there would be little demand for courses. This has meant that in an area like Lancaster and Morecambe – which has a 96% white working class student intake – the main courses and learning opportunities are in the service industries, particularly education, health and social care.

## Alongside India, China is being seen by many in the sector as a key country with which to develop partnership programmes.

Around England numerous examples could be found that demonstrate the changing focus of colleges in relation to courses and local employment provision. For example at Lancaster and Morecambe College, the director of Learning stated that whilst her college was responding to the challenges of globalisation through changes to courses and the needs of learners, it was not something that had been thought about strategically. It had just happened.

At Grimsby, 10% of the local food manufacturing industry has gone in a single year due to a combination of commodity and utility prices. But as the Executive Director for Projects, Policy and Local Enterprise and Growth Initiative at the College commented, these changes should be seen as a wake up call for further education. Colleges, he said, need to 'bring forward skills programmes on innovation, technology transfer and productivity improvement and re-define (themselves) as vital part of regeneration... and invest and support human capital'.

## The ‘Globally Minded’ Provider

Whilst many colleges and other providers recognise the importance of global forces and the need to equip their students to work in the global economy, the words ‘global’, ‘international’ or ‘wider world’ are rarely used.

A number of providers said that they see the global dimension as being implicit within phrases such as ‘skills for employability’, ‘fit for purpose’ and the ‘needs of today’. These were the terms most often used within colleges. This suggests that in most institutions the global element was seen as being an implicit rather than explicit aspect of their strategies. Furthermore, more than one college suggested that the phrases like ‘global’ or ‘students as global citizens’ were not popular with either students or employers, and so were rarely mentioned.

The exceptions to this were City and Islington and Greenwich colleges. City and Islington include the global dimension as the first theme within its current strategic plan. It begins by saying:

‘we want our students to play their roles as global citizens, to compete, interact and progress in a changing world...’

and ends with:

‘we celebrate and learn from the rich diversity of our students and this same diversity prepares them for life in a global society and work in a global economy’.

Greenwich’s new Globalisation Strategy for 2009-2012 (formerly known as an Internationalisation Strategy) asks each head of department to devise their own strategy to ensure that:

‘their students are equipped with the skills and knowledge to take advantage of the opportunities that the global economy has to offer’.

All providers interviewed recognised the need to do more to promote the global dimension and often referred to the need to be a more ‘globally minded college’. Several colleges said they felt they were recognising the need to equip their students to have the skills to live and work in a global economy by making linkages to areas such as cultural understanding, being able to deal with complex problems and situations, and having excellent IT skills.

One way in which a number of Colleges particularly have addressed these challenges is to organize activities that have a particular global theme. An example is the United Nations Project on the Model UN Assembly involving large numbers of learners involved in role-playing countries around the world discussing global issues. This activity is particularly popular where there is a sixth form intake. Colleges known to be active in this area are King George V in Southport, Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College in Birmingham and City of Bristol.

<sup>7</sup> I am grateful to Emma Cockburn from People and Planet for information on Croydon College’s activities

Another example of promoting learning about global issues is through Citizenship. At Croydon College, 'Citizenship Learning' is a key focus of their Enrichment programme.<sup>7</sup> This is done through the organisation of regular conferences on Global Issues. The conferences are planned in collaboration with curriculum teams, linking the citizenship focus with the curriculum units as applicable.

This encourages students to apply knowledge gained from their curriculum units whilst being involved in a 'live' project that will bring about meaningful change. One group of students at the College when questioned about their most valuable learning experience cited the Citizenship Conferences as being really relevant and supportive of the curriculum unit they were studying.

The aims of these conferences are:

- To equip learners with the knowledge & skills to identify a sustainable development project through active citizenship.
- To investigate and identify a project idea that brings about a change and makes a positive difference in the college, the local and/or wider community.
- To present proposals to peers and staff, justifying the reasons for decisions made.

In a given overarching framework of Global Awareness, students are given input from a range of external groups such as People & Planet in the form of short workshops. Students are encouraged to propose projects that are 'outcome' focused and examples have included exhibitions of work by Art & Design students in the main entrance the refectory and on the college intranet promoting sustainable shelters.

This linkage between global issues and sustainable development can be seen within a number of institutions. This area is now a priority for UK government and there is evidence of increased support from key policy makers at national level for this area (LSC, 2010) Whilst it is outside the scope of this research is to look at sustainable development in any detail, colleges which are engaging in

international and global questions tend also to have a commitment to sustainability.

For example, Lancaster and Morecambe College states that 'we believe that understanding and managing the impact our actions have on people and on the environment is essential part of being an ethical and socially responsible college.'<sup>8</sup> Liverpool Community College for example states that it 'promotes sustainability throughout its curriculum'.<sup>9</sup>

City and Islington college through their Student Union and Learner Sustainability Group organised a one day conference for students on Our Planet, Your Choice. Held in February 2010 it was an opportunity for students to learn more about the worldwide environmental and humanitarian problems and how they can make a positive difference at home and abroad.

However, a challenge that many of the colleges have in promoting the concept of the global is that for large numbers of students, even the nearest town is another world away. In many areas, such as the North East, there is little movement of individuals out of the region. For example, research at City of Sunderland College found that 72% of A level students stayed in the North East and 50% stayed in the city itself.<sup>10</sup> This reflected a general comment that a considerable number of young people do not currently have the skills and confidence to participate in the 'global labour market'. There is also the observation made by several providers from the North West and the North East is that even if they did have the skills, the opportunities within the local economy may well be very limited.

The complex nature of globalisation in terms of the local – global relationships has been noted by Grimsby College. Although the local environment around the college is influenced by the largest port complex in the UK, their immediate economy has a predominantly a local focus. 78% of their local trade activity is confined to the immediate surrounding area. The College recognised the dangers of limited horizons and put resources, curriculum and training into equality and diversity programmes.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.lmc.ac.uk/home/sustain/index.php>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.liv-coll.ac.uk/AboutTheCollege/Sustainability/Curriculum/>

<sup>10</sup> Comment raised at seminar in Gateshead by providers from Sunderland

## Skills for a Global Economy

Most colleges and other providers were aware of the LSIS publication Global Skills.

Some were aware of the DIUS<sup>11</sup> strategy, but there was a general recognition that this whole area of work needs to have a higher profile and to become more closely linked to strategies and programmes related to areas such as skills for employability and raising standards.

Examples were cited in areas such as hotel and catering, tourism, and health related courses of the need for skills to deal with people from a range of cultural backgrounds and to understand some basic issues around sustainable development. It was also recognised by some colleges, such as Lewisham, that some of these skills needs could often best be met by visits and exchanges with students from other countries.

Numerous examples can be found of international partnerships between colleges that are seen as being part of building global skills. This area has been led by the British Council's Skills for Employability programme that addresses 'the demands for skills in a global economy', in order that national educational and training systems are better able to respond to labour market demands and learner needs.<sup>12</sup>

Other international partnership programmes that have had a global skills component have been the Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education (PMI2) which although it has a strong international student marketing agenda, has resulted in some innovative projects between colleges and partner institutions in countries such as Ghana, Vietnam Thailand, Sri Lanka and India.<sup>13</sup>

The third programme is the UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI).<sup>14</sup> This programme through the promotion of partnership programmes with India has shown how globalisation brings communities, employers and learners closer together. An example of this programme with Norwich is outlined elsewhere in this report in the area of financial services. However there have been other examples in areas such as textile and design with Blackburn College and South Delhi Polytechnic and film between Bradford and Whistling Woods International in India. The key aim of the former was the joint development and piloting of an International Design Module (level 3-4) with dual (UK and India) accreditation. The partners also produced a 'global employability skills' module to be piloted with economically inactive Asian women in Blackburn, in order to help improve their job opportunities within the Textile or Fashion industry (Ostravista 2010). The latter project, "From Bradford to Bollywood" also included the development of new curriculum modules.

<sup>11</sup> Formerly DIUS, now BIS.

<sup>12</sup> [www.britishcouncil.org/learning-skills-for-employability](http://www.britishcouncil.org/learning-skills-for-employability)

<sup>13</sup> [www.britishcouncil.org/learning-pmi2-connect](http://www.britishcouncil.org/learning-pmi2-connect)

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.ukieri.org>

## Numerous examples can be found of international partnerships between colleges that are seen as being part of building global skills.

As mentioned earlier language skills are potentially a key component of global skills. One of the few projects in this area that explicitly made connections with the global agenda in colleges is the Lancashire Global Education Centre's project on "Global Skills: Understanding the World Through English" – a teaching pack for Skills for Life classes which had funding from DFID.<sup>15</sup>

In Training, which is a private training provider, has recently developed some ground-breaking work with Yorkshire Forward that looks at equipping employers to re-think the skills needs for their workforce in the light of globalisation. They have developed a model that outlines the need to develop a way of thinking and learning that moves to a more open and organic style of work. This includes seeing work as an activity-time, recognising that structures today are complex networks and that the emphasis should be on moving away from a focus on export to one of global collaboration:

'Today's organisations exist in a global marketplace, as a result of which experience new threats. We believe that organisations need to ACT NOW in order to secure our future prosperity. We have to recognise these unprecedented times and start to challenge the way we talk about, see and do business.'<sup>16</sup>

In Training have already secured the support of a number of businesses in the Yorkshire region for their leadership development and innovation programme.

<sup>15</sup> <http://lgec.org.uk/globalskills/>

<sup>16</sup> See [www.nhli.co.uk](http://www.nhli.co.uk).

## Personal, Social and Cultural Development of the Learner

Virtually all of the colleges talked about their wider support programmes with students as a key area for promoting the global dimension. This can and does take several forms.

Perhaps the most obvious and direct role colleges play in this area is through their enhancement programmes and personalised learning strategies. This not only relates to the skills needs of the individual in terms of their social and cultural background; it can also address questions of what are very often complex personal identities. Linked to this area for many students is the fact that English is not their first language. Several college lecturers spoke about the need to ensure learners have the necessary language skills to secure employment and to play an effective role in the community. The language skills element was also seen as an entry route to local communities.

Several colleges discussed the importance of broadening learners' personal, social and cultural experience. The Raleigh International project with India at City and Islington was mentioned as a transformative experience for many students. City College, Norwich<sup>17</sup> in a report on the success of their India partnership programme stated that 'the eyes of some of the UK students who visited India were so opened to other world cultures that, as a direct consequence, they applied – and one was accepted – for the UK government sponsored China study programme'.

South Nottingham College have two major international projects, one with South Africa on sports development, entitled Balls to Poverty<sup>18</sup> and one with Gambia on tourism and travel entitled Building Tomorrow Today.<sup>19</sup> Since 2000 the College's Travel & Tourism team have taken their Level 3 students on a final year residential to Gambia in West Africa. The teaching team had identified that taking learners out of their comfort zone to a completely different culture would have many potential benefits for students wishing to forge a career in the tourism sector.

The results were that for a number of learners undertaking these visits was a transformative experience. For two students involved with the Gambia project, for example, the experience encouraged them to go into higher education and teaching.

The engagement in the South Africa project has also led to major changes in the outlook on life of many learners, and given increased confidence and a purpose to their lives.

<sup>17</sup> UK-India Education and Research Initiative- Financial Services – Final Project Report – for British Council (unpublished report)

<sup>18</sup> See [www.ballstopoverty.net](http://www.ballstopoverty.net)

<sup>19</sup> See [www.ittog.org](http://www.ittog.org)

## For two students involved with the Gambia project, for example, the experience encouraged them to go into higher education and teaching.

For example one mother of a learner involved with the project stated:

“I’m particularly impressed because of the balance between curriculum and non-curricular activity, Lee knows he has to do the work in class. I’ve seen him mature so quickly because the project covers the value of global citizenship and creates inter generational opportunities. He’s been coaching young children from his own neighbourhood, something that would never have happened without this project. His self confidence and how he carries himself is totally different, now he’ll look you in the eye and I also like his understanding of where he sits in society and what he can contribute.”<sup>20</sup>

One student stated:

“Before this I was doing nothing, not listening in school, getting low grades and hanging on corners causing trouble. Now I regret everything I have done to myself and everyone I’ve hurt. Now I listen, get on with myself, help others, even getting better grades. I’ve achieved more in 1 year at college than all 5 at school.”<sup>21</sup>

A learner involved with the Gambia project stated:

“I now have lovely Gambian friends that I have made through Institute of Travel and Tourism of Gambia (ITTOG) whom keep in touch via face book. The Gambia project has had a huge impact on my life and has encouraged me to go into Higher Education and eventually teach. I am going to undertake voluntary work at ITTOG next winter which will help improve my confidence and skills.”<sup>22</sup>

These initiatives could only have happened with the commitment and vision of particular staff members. Several colleges noted that it was a major challenge to just encourage learners to have a learning experience beyond their locality. Linked to this was often a lack of funding and possibly family support to encourage any form of international experience.

The third area that links an element of a student’s developmental needs with the context of globalisation are the initiatives, events, celebrations and exhibitions that are linked to global issues such as Refugee Week, International Women’s Day, World AIDS day, Fairtrade Fortnight or the Anne Frank Exhibition. Examples of these types of activities were seen in several colleges, although they tended to be seen as one-off activities and were not always connected to the mainstream work of the college. This was perhaps because the leadership for these activities had come from students rather than staff.

<sup>20</sup> Comment supplied by South Nottinghamshire College

<sup>21</sup> Comment supplied by South Nottinghamshire College

<sup>22</sup> [www.ittog.org](http://www.ittog.org)

**Everyone is becoming more complex – being a young person is more complex. They need to understand this complexity which can help them make sense of their place in the world.**

**Kirsty Webb-Wood, Director of Learner Engagement, City and Islington College**

## The College and the Community

All of the colleges interviewed and visited had strong, but often very different, relationships with their local communities. In some cases, these local links were strongly related to employer needs and in others with community and cultural needs.

A number of colleges, for example, have put considerable resources into their ESOL programme in terms of ensuring it links directly to broader community needs. This is particularly a feature of Southend's community cohesion strategy. Colleges such as Lewisham have strongly cultivated links with local faith communities to the extent that they are now investigating, through dialogue with staff and learners, what a person of faith brings to a secular college in terms of different perspectives, values base and outlook on the world.

Decisions about connections to broader global issues and questions were often made as a result of more in-direct reasons. A college with strong links with a local football team with many players from West Africa, for example, might be motivated to make a related global connection. This could, and in some cases did, provide a good opportunity for promoting positive role models and also for making links and connections with communities elsewhere in the world. Interestingly, however, colleges such as North East London, which is located in a culturally diverse area, have consciously decided to make international partnerships with parts of the world where they have no direct community links.

An example of a positive and pro-active decision to build greater understanding of different cultures within a college are resources produced by the Grimsby Institute for Further and Higher Education on the theme of 'Cultural Diversity – Life in the Different Communities'. With government funding, the college produced a resource pack and accompanying DVD that looks at a range of cultures and summarises key facts and information that staff and learners need to know regarding areas such as food, costume and festivals. The rationale for this initiative as outlined in the Foreword to the publication was that:

*'It is the aim of Grimsby Institute that staff and learners work together in a harmonious and friendly manner, respecting and understanding the cultural traditions of the various ethnic groups within our society.'*

The accompanying DVD outlines both history and culture of particular cultures such as Islam, Hinduism or Judaism and includes a case study of a local person from that particular background.

The 2012 Olympics has also provided a major opportunity for links between colleges in London, the local community and other colleges and communities elsewhere in the world. The strong links two of the London colleges now have with Beijing are a direct result of connections made via the Olympics.

## Courses and Qualifications

A key area that the interviews and dialogue touched upon was that of courses and qualifications. This is, however, a vast subject and needs to be explored more thoroughly by research.

Building on major changes within the school curriculum in England over the past decade where the global dimension and sustainability are today cross-curricular themes, global issues, understanding globalisations, international development and sustainability are included within a range of A and A/S level courses. Most notably the Welsh Board has developed a syllabus for A/S (from Summer 09) and A Level (from Summer 10) World Development exploring issues including development, resources, global citizenship and poverty and inequality. This has been taken up by colleges such as City of Bristol in their menu of qualifications. Global themes also occur more overtly in A Levels such as Geography and Citizenship. Many colleges and sixth forms are also providing opportunities for the Extended Project Qualification which is a compulsory part of the Advanced Diploma but is an option for anyone including A level students to independently plan and present a topic of their choice. Regent College, Leicester uses this qualification to frame citizenship projects with global elements and there is the potential for both greater understanding of global issues and active participation through the Extended Project. Some of the new diplomas are also likely to give some recognition to these trends.

Globalisation and skills for working in a global economy should be a component of vocational courses and qualifications. This was an observation raised by many senior managers from within the Colleges. In courses on areas such as travel and tourism, construction, health and social care, land based management and beauty care there might be references to areas such as inter-cultural understanding, the changing nature of industries due to global changes, or areas such as sustainability. However, from the discussions with staff from several colleges many felt that the qualifications are not seriously addressing globalisation and global skills and that it is left to the Colleges to either interpret these themes as best they can or to introduce new courses. However a comment by more than one senior manager from a college was that whilst you might get a sympathetic lecturer who would develop their own programme, most would not engage unless it was explicitly required within the qualifications and course programmes.

Several of the Colleges interviewed for the research stated that they were giving a much higher prominence to areas such as global issues and sustainable development than they were five years ago. This was particularly the case in tourism, health, engineering and construction.

Grimsby, for example, has a manufacturing logistics course that has been specifically designed to meet the needs of manufacturing in the global context. South Nottingham has also built on their international partnerships to develop qualifications that incorporated a strong global dimension. For example, they have developed a Level 2 Sports Development diploma, accredited by City and Guilds, that includes involvement in their Balls to Poverty programme, and their travel and tourism courses include global dimension sessions. This is an area the College wishes to expand upon, as they recognise that learning about global and international issues must be an integral component of any travel and tourism accredited course.

The travel and tourism area is one that a number of colleges have referred to as an obvious area that could and perhaps should include more references to globalisation and global issues. Lancaster and Morecambe and St. Helen's Colleges for example, with the support of Lancashire Global Education Centre, are developing projects and new modules in these subjects that include global and sustainable development themes.<sup>23</sup>

City College, Norwich have taken forward their partnership with India through a range of courses and programmes, perhaps most notably through 20 credit modules on International Business and International Financial Services in their Business Management and Foundation degree in Financial Services. The courses ask the student to consider and contrast the socio-cultural effect of outsourcing non-customer facing roles outside the UK.

A considerable number of Colleges have European-funded programmes that include exchanges of staff and students and joint curriculum projects. A theme of several of these programmes was intercultural competencies and recognition of the need to understand approaches towards learning and skills needs in different cultural settings. An example of this is St. Helens College's Leonardo da Vinci funded programme on 'Want 2 Learn and Want to B'. This project is within six EU countries and recognises the need to locate vocational training in the context of changing social, cultural and economic needs.<sup>24</sup>

An increasing number are also engaged with links with China that include staff and student visits. King George V College has been sending staff and students to visit Sinoland College, Beijing for three weeks of intensive Chinese language study. Sinoland is a private college specialising in speaking and listening, with a max of 4 students per class. Study is supported by afternoon and weekend trips to sites in and around Beijing in order to practice the spoken language.

A common comment from the Colleges was that the awarding and examination bodies are not up to speed with the changes taking place in society or even the interests and skills of learners. One college gave the example that some of the equipment now being used within certain engineering companies has no related qualification because the accreditation system is still five years behind.

The growth in support for the International Baccalaureate (IB) was perhaps one of the most striking examples of a conscious decision by a college to look at a new way of equipping students for living and working in a global society. King George V College in Southport is an example of this, and City and Islington are planning to start in 2010. King George V state that students should study the IB diploma as it enables them to 'debate real-world issues from an international perspective and to provide leadership and support in the local and global community'.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.lgec.org.uk/main/current\\_projects/sustainable\\_skills\\_project/](http://www.lgec.org.uk/main/current_projects/sustainable_skills_project/)

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.sthelens.ac.uk/home/european-projects.asp>

<sup>25</sup> see <http://www.kgv.ac.uk/areas/courses/ib.php>

## Leadership within the College or Training Provider

Key to any support and any engagement with the global agenda within a college or by a training provider is the role and support of senior management.

There were two main reasons why the providers interviewed for this research were supportive of the global dimension, one was the leadership given by either the principal or equivalent senior manager and secondly the enthusiasm and expertise of champions within specific areas of learning. If a college or provider had someone with an international brief for example, the extent to which that person recognised the connections between the learning needs of the UK student, global issues and existing international work was key. All too often the person with an international brief is located within areas such as marketing, income generation and not within curriculum or learner development.

It is evident from Colleges such as Southend, Grimsby, City and Islington, North East London, Greenwich and Norwich that the commitment and leadership given by the principals and other senior staff has been an important factor in the institutions giving consideration to recognising the global and the international more overtly within their courses and wider provision. Lancaster and Morecambe, for example, have been major champions of sustainability within their institution and a key factor in this is the enthusiasm and commitment of the principal. The College has a policy, strategy and action plan which includes attention to issues such as recycling and fair trade, and also has a Sustainability Forum that meets every term.<sup>26</sup>

Leadership is also important in terms of recognising and supporting quality learning and teaching within an institution. The Principal of South Nottingham, for example, stated that he saw his role as facilitating, encouraging and supporting initiatives that were creative and innovative. These at present included, he said, some ground-breaking international programmes. This recognition and support for champions of the global dimension could also be seen in places like City and Islington through a range of projects they support, in Norwich and their work on financial services, and in Southend and their work with local communities.

A senior staff member at Grimsby College commented that a key success factor for a college is the extent to which its leadership embraces the need for innovation within the context of a global economy.

In our earlier research for LSIS (Bourn 2008) we identified that a key leadership need was for providers to recognise the interconnectedness of area such as international partnerships, globalisation, sustainability, cultural diversity and community cohesion. These linkages need perhaps to be explained in more depth through training programmes for senior managers. Whilst many senior managers interviewed recognised these points, the ways in which they could be brought together could possibly be given greater consideration.

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.lmc.ac.uk/home/sustain/index.php/>

## Staff Professional Development

Another area explored with all of the colleges was the extent to which the senior management team felt their academic staff were equipped to deal with the skills needs for a global economy and global society.

Some, such as Grimsby, had specifically invested in leadership development programmes that relate to this area ([http://www.isixsigma.com/sixsigma/six\\_sigma.asp](http://www.isixsigma.com/sixsigma/six_sigma.asp)). Lewisham has deliberately invested in language and cultural awareness training to support the changing nature of cultural groups within the college.

Lancaster and Morecambe College have valued a partnership they are developing with the Lancashire Global Education Centre that has expertise and experience in the global skills agenda.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, within a number of colleges people who emerged as champions and supporters of the global dimension were often those who had experience with organisations such as VSO, had been involved in specific partnerships with colleges and other institutions elsewhere in the world or from a personal visit to a country, and had become inspired to introduce global and international themes within their institution.

Within the broader training area, similar observations can be found particularly in areas such as adult and trade union education and private sector provision. Where staff development courses and programmes were run it was often as a result of some form of personal experience in an international project or in some cases the result of a new funding opportunity.

However, there were few examples of Colleges or other providers specifically stating that they were going to address the global skills agenda directly through any professional development programme. One exception was City of Bristol college which is looking at this area through an internal working group.

This suggests that the whole area of staff professional development needs to be explored further and it could be potentially linked to plans for training linked to the AoC International Charter, courses run by LSIS and other providers. It was clear that most providers were unaware of the initiatives that are taking place in this area. There was also a lack of understanding that this area had been well supported by DFID through their development awareness programme. People who were developing new resources instead tended to rely on their own personal expertise and knowledge. Although there is a wealth of resources and experience around the UK, some of it from other sectors, such as schools, higher education and informal community education, this expertise was in many cases not known about or promoted within the sector.

<sup>27</sup> [http://www.lgec.org.uk/main/current\\_projects/sustainable\\_skills\\_project/](http://www.lgec.org.uk/main/current_projects/sustainable_skills_project/)

## Taking Forward the Global Theme within Policy Priorities

The following policy priority areas are those currently outlined by LSIS. This section outlines some suggestions as to potential areas for movement within each of these priority areas.

### 14-19 Reforms

With major changes underway in the curriculum for 14–19 year olds there are potentially significant opportunities for making connections with the global agenda. DFID and DCSF have recently agreed a new joint strategy for global learning within schools. Part of the lobbying around the development of this strategy has been the need to recognise the importance of examinations, the diplomas and the IB as important vehicles for developing greater understanding of globalisation and global issues.

There is evidence from this research that a number of colleges and other providers have increased engagement with the IB. It is suggested here that the key qualification bodies should be brought together to identify the most effective ways of ensuring qualifications and examinations incorporate learning and skills for a global society and global economy.

### Apprenticeships

The changing nature of the workforce in terms of skills needs and sectors of employment means not only looking at different skills areas, but also equipping apprentices with a broader understanding of what globalisation means for their employment and career paths. Consideration needs to be given by appropriate bodies to making reference to these areas.

### Adult Skills

Similarly to apprenticeships, there is a need for providers to recognise that re-training and development of new skills should be seen within the context of the impacts of globalisation. The concept of global skills for adults needs to be brought into the discussions about provision for this group. As outlined in this research, there is evidence of a number of bodies responding to these agendas on their terms, but there is a need for a more strategic approach that recognises and identifies key needs across the sector.

**Integration of employment and skills**

Work with unemployed groups in society needs to take account of the impacts of globalisation. Firstly, trainers and providers need to be aware of the social, cultural and economic impacts of globalisation. Secondly, employability and skills need to be understood in a way that makes connections to ‘global skills’.

**Informal adult and community learning**

There is evidence from the informal learning taking place in communities all around the UK that global and international themes are ever-present, be they within culturally based communities, the activities of the WEA, or faith-based adult education. However, these practices are on the whole not shared, effectively funded or recognised as an important component of preparing learners for living and working in a global society and global economy.

**Social cohesion, mobility, equality and well-being**

There is considerable evidence from the research that the global agenda can play a major contribution to promoting social cohesion, equality and diversity agendas and well-being. However, this is not always understood by policy-makers and it is suggested here that perhaps consideration needs to be given specifically in policy and training programmes to the linkages between globalisation and cultural diversity.

## Recommendations to Providers

In taking forward the themes raised in this report, the following were identified as key areas that need to be addressed:

- i) All providers to be encouraged to have a strategic discussion on the impacts of globalisation and global forces in terms of the type and nature of provision they offer.
- ii) UK government and other relevant policy-makers to encourage and support all further education and training providers to make clear statements on where and how they are addressing and considering the changing skills needs in light of globalisation.
- iii) In the way that health and safety and equality and diversity have become part of the mainstream provision of providers, inspection and funding bodies need to encourage providers to demonstrate ways in which they are addressing the skills needs for a global economy.
- iv) Qualifications and awarding bodies to undertake audits of where and how they are and could be overtly addressing the global agenda.
- v) National bodies that support professionals in the sector to consider ways in which they could provide staff development support to address global agenda and needs.
- vi) Need for more research and gathering of evidence as to the value and impact on the learner of the global agenda being part of their curriculum and possibly personal experience.
- vii) The sector needs a resource to help them address the global dimension in terms of professional advice, access to expertise, curriculum development support and training. This could be a consortium of bodies but there needs to be one place where people can go in the first instance.

## Conclusion

The research has identified a wealth of practice taking place within colleges and other training providers that is addressing what learners need to live and work in a global society and global economy.

However, this is often seen as just part of what these providers do, and is not necessarily that high on the agenda in terms of their profile and programmes.

This highlights the need for LSIS and other bodies interested in promoting international strategies within colleges and showing closer linkages with agendas such as globalisation to explore the best ways of demonstrating these connections. There is perhaps a need to look at the terminology and themes that promote skills for a global economy and how best the global dimension can enrich the learning process.

The impact of the recent economic downturn on colleges has varied, depending on the location and student base of the institution. All providers have reported increases in provision as a result of the crisis, but the extent to which this has resulted in a re-focussing of priorities is less evident.

There is also evidence of a number of linkages being made to agendas such as community cohesion and cultural diversity, but more research needs to be undertaken to assess the depth of these connections.

A concern was raised by a number of staff about the existing qualifications and curriculum programmes. A number of examples were given where awarding bodies could and should be making more references to global skills. The growth in interest in the IB programme should be monitored closely as this could provide a model that broadens and deepens learners' understandings of the wider world.

The research team raised the issue of professional development with the colleges. However, there was not a demand from most providers for courses or training on global skills. The providers noted that there were problems about a general lack of time for such training, but also that more work would be needed to demonstrate global connections to existing priorities and core professional development needs.

Overall, everyone interviewed stated that they thought the research was important and hoped that it would raise the profile and need for more resources and support for equipping colleges to respond to the challenges of globalisation.

## References

Bourn, D. (2008) *Global Skills*. London: LSIS.

DBIS (2008) *Skills for Growth*. London: The Stationery Office.

Friedman, T.L. (2006) *The World Is Flat: The Globalized World in the Twenty-First Century*. London: Penguin.

France, A. (2007) *Understanding Youth in Late Modernity*. Maidenhead: McGraw Hill/OUP.

KPMG (2008) *The Global Skills Convergence*.

Learning and Skills Council (LSC) (2010) *Review of the Learning and Skills Council Strategy for Sustainable Development 2005-2010*, Coventry, Learning and Skills Council.

Ostravista (2009) *Professional Development for Non-Native Speakers of English*. London: English UK.

Ostravista (2010) *Background Evidence on Partnerships Between Further Education Colleges in the UK with Similar Institutions in Developing Countries*, Unpublished paper for Development Education Research Centre, Institute of Education.

Ray, L. (2007) *Globalisation and Everyday Life*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Stromquist, N.P. and Monkman, K. (2000) *Globalization and Education: Integration and Contestation Across Cultures*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the staff of the following colleges and other training providers for their help and support in compiling this paper and for commenting on its drafts:

City and Islington College, College of North East London, Greenwich Community College, Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education, King George V College Southport, In Training, Lewisham College, Mike Long Associates; Lancaster and Morecambe College, City College, Norwich, St. Helens College, Southend Adult Education College, South Nottingham College and West Nottinghamshire College.

We would also like to thank staff from the following bodies for their assistance in gathering the material in this report: British Council, WEA, NIACE, the Learning and Skills Network, CILT, Lancashire Global Education Centre and People and Planet

In addition, we would like to thank the following individuals for their advice and comments on the drafts and for making available key documentation: Diane Mullen, Sally Issler and Juliet Edgar and to colleagues within the Development Education Research Centre, particularly Hannah Li Ting Chung, with their help in compiling the material.

Finally we would like to note our thanks to Jo Clough who guided us through the process of drafting and completing this report.

Friars House, Manor House Drive  
Coventry CV1 2TE  
t 024 7662 7900  
e enquiries@lsis.org.uk

[www.lsis.org.uk](http://www.lsis.org.uk)

LSIS237