

The IB community theme in the Primary Years Programme

The transdisciplinary nature of the Primary Years Programme (PYP), as described in the themes that frame a school's programme of inquiry, is well suited to producing student work to illustrate the IB community theme, *sharing our humanity*.

Participating in the IB community theme project involves IB World Schools offering the PYP sharing with others the teaching and learning that would be undertaken as a matter of course in the context of the PYP. It may provide the opportunity for some schools to consider engaging in a unit of inquiry that could be developed collectively, thereby providing the opportunity for broadening the range of perspectives.

The IB community theme should not be undertaken in addition to a school's existing programme, as the opportunity already exists within the PYP to explore issues of human commonality that resonate with the theme.

Primary Years Programme-specific ideas and suggestions

Within the existing PYP transdisciplinary themes that frame a school's programme of inquiry, the definitions of the following themes lend themselves readily to the theme *sharing our humanity*.

- **Who we are**—an inquiry into what it means to be human, beliefs and values, rights and responsibilities, and communities and cultures. This theme provides a broad, holistic interpretation of the IB community theme. For example, a central idea for 7–8 year olds related to this theme is: “Relationships are enhanced by learning about other people’s perspectives and communicating our own”.
- **How the world works**—an inquiry into the interaction between the natural world and human societies, and the impact of scientific and technological advances on society. This theme provides a platform for inquiry into issues pertaining to global infectious diseases. For example, a central idea for 9–10 year olds related to this theme is: “Children worldwide face a variety of challenges and risks”.
- **How we organize ourselves**—an inquiry into the interconnectedness of human-made systems and communities, societal decision-making and economic activities. This theme provides the context for consideration of the digital divide. For example, a central idea for 4–5 year olds related to this theme is: “People use a variety of skills and strategies that contribute to their role in a community of learners”. A relevant central idea for 10–11 year olds is: “Government systems and decisions can promote or deny equal opportunities and social justice”.
- **Sharing the planet**—an inquiry into the struggle to share finite resources, access to equal opportunities, and peace and conflict resolution. This theme provides ample opportunities for students to engage with and reflect upon the concepts of global poverty, education for all, peace keeping and conflict prevention. For example, a central idea for 8–9 year olds related to this theme is: “Water is essential to life, and is a limited resource for many people”. A relevant central idea for 11–12 year olds is: “Finding peaceful solutions to conflict leads to a better quality of human life”.

The central ideas listed above will be included in the *Sample programme of inquiry* to be published in January 2008.

