

Global Politics: Engagement Activity suggestions

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In the following article, Christian Bryan and William Tolley provide 10 suggestions for the Engagement Activity in the IB Global Politics Diploma course. The Engagement Activity (EA) is a compulsory element of the course whereby the students are required to engage in some form of political activity and then write a 2000 word report to explain their experiences and insights.

Students and teachers often find it difficult to formulate EA titles that are both appropriate and specific enough for student investigation. This article provides clear titles, suggested activities and then identifies the key concepts and political issues connected with the title. More suggestions are provided for each title than you may need, and students should not feel that they have to cover all bullet points. It is suggested that at least 3 activities are addressed from each list.

Students are reminded to avoid upsetting political, cultural or religious sensitivities. We especially advise students to respect:

- local laws relating to campaigning in a political context
- local customs.

Students will need careful guidance regarding local laws and customs. Laws and customs are not always apparent until they are transgressed and this can be a particular problem for international communities who may not be as fully versed on local sensitivities as they otherwise might. Students should always seek guidance from an experienced adult from their school who is knowledgeable about the local legal scene. Furthermore, they should never embark on any engagement without first submitting a full proposal to their teacher. Students and teachers should consult the IB ethical guidelines in the Global Politics Guide for further information.

1. Title: 'How does the nature of democracy impact on the nature of women's participation in government?'

Engagement activities:

- Interview local female politicians about their experiences.
- Attend political or campaign group meetings where the issues are discussed.
- Observe the formulation and/or implementation of a campaign designed to encourage women to enter politics.
- Attend a debate where quotas for women in politics are discussed. Both sides of the argument should be represented.
- Campaign for the empowerment of local women (students are reminded to understand and respect local laws relating to campaigning in a political context).

Identification of the political issue and key concepts:

Power, Justice, Equality, Inequality.

2. Title: 'How can the competing demands of land users be reconciled?'

Engagement activities:

- Preparation and participation in a mock trial where a local land activist is prosecuted and defended for a violation of a laws regulating land use and activism.
- Observation of a trial where a local land activist is prosecuted and defended for a violation of a laws regulating land use and activism.
- Interview with local administrators who manage land use.
- Observe local political meetings where land use is discussed.
- Campaign for a particular side in a land use debate (students are reminded to understand and respect local laws relating to campaigning in a political context).
- Observe a local initiative that has highlighted awareness of land use issues and interview community members who have been affected by the issues.
- Attend political or campaign group meetings where the issues are discussed and criticism is heard.

Identification of the political issue and key concepts:

Globalization, Power, Justice, Legitimacy, Development, Peace, Conflict, Sustainability

3. Title: 'How do cultural norms inhibit impact on AIDS awareness campaigns?'

Engagement activities:

- Interview with local religious leaders about AIDS awareness.
- Interview with administrators (such as politicians or civil servants) who manage health awareness campaigns.
- Observe practices in local health clinics where AIDS is treated and interview local health volunteers and/or professionals.
- Campaign for greater AIDS awareness (students are reminded to understand and respect local laws relating to campaigning in a political context).
- Observe a local initiative that has highlighted awareness of AIDS and interview community members who have been affected.
- Attend political or campaign group meetings where the issues are discussed and diverse viewpoints are heard.

Identification of the political issue and key concepts:

Globalization, Justice, Human rights, Development, Inequality, Equality

4. Title: 'To what extent are local business or local business practices working towards sustainable development?'

Engagement activities:

- Interview with local business leaders where environmental sustainability has been discussed and may have been an issue.
- Interview with administrators (such as politicians or civil servants) who manage environmental sustainability.
- Campaign for greater environmental awareness (students are reminded to understand and respect local laws relating to campaigning in a political context).
- Observe a local initiative that has highlighted environmental sustainability and interview community members and business leaders who have been affected.
- Attend a group meeting where resistance and criticism is heard about proposed plans.
- Attend political or campaign group meetings where the issues are discussed.
- Participate in a group discussion with business leaders and environmental campaigners*.
- Preparation and performance of street theatre to emphasize environmental sustainability issues on a local level*.

**students are reminded to understand and respect local laws relating to street performances*

Identification of the political issue and key concepts:

Sustainability, Development, Globalization, Interdependence

5. Title: 'Discuss the effectiveness of local recycling promotional strategies for a specific issue (e.g. plastic water bottles).'

Engagement activities:

- Interview with local business leaders where recycling promotional strategies have been discussed and implemented.
- Interview with administrators (such as politicians or civil servants) who manage local recycling promotional strategies.
- Campaign for greater recycling awareness (students are reminded to understand and respect local laws relating to campaigning in a political context).
- Observe a local initiative that has highlighted recycling promotional strategies and interview community members and business leaders who have been affected.
- Attend political or campaign group meetings where recycling promotional strategies are discussed.
- Participate in a group discussion with business leaders and environmental campaigners and recycling promotional strategies.
- Attend a group meeting where resistance and criticism is heard about proposed plans.
- Preparation and performance of street theatre to emphasize recycling promotional strategies issues on a local level (students are reminded to understand and respect local laws relating to street performances).

Identification of the political issue and key concepts:

Sustainability, Development, Globalization, Interdependence

6. Title: 'How can the challenges facing women in a changing economic climate be addressed by local charitable organizations? A comparison of two local solutions.'

Engagement activities:

- Interview with leaders of charities which address challenges facing women in the local environment.
- Interview with administrators (such as politicians or civil servants) who manage employment regulation in female dominated industries.
- Campaign for greater awareness for issues facing local women (students are reminded to understand and respect local laws relating to campaigning in a political context).
- Observe two local initiatives that have addressed issues facing women.
- Attend political or campaign group meetings where women's issues are discussed.

Identification of the political issue and key concepts:

Globalization, Interdependence, Equality, Inequality, Human rights, Liberty, Development.

7. Title: 'How should the use of nannies be regulated in an international setting?'

Engagement activities:

- Interview with local charity leaders or self-help groups which address challenges facing nannies in the local environment.
- Interview with agencies who manage the employment and recruitment of nannies.
- Interviewing local female politicians about their experiences and assumptions regarding the issue.
- Interview with administrators (such as politicians or civil servants) who manage employment regulation in child care industries.
- Campaign for greater awareness for issues facing local nannies including local laws and rights regarding nannies (students are reminded to understand and respect local laws relating to campaigning in a political context).
- Observe local initiatives that have addressed issues facing nannies.
- Organise interviews or group discussions with nannies who face challenges in an international setting.
- Organise interviews or group discussions with families who use nannies
- Observations of nannies working in an international environment.

Identification of the political issue and key concepts:

Globalization, Interdependence, Equality, Inequality, Human rights, Liberty, Development.

8. Title: 'To what extent do local populations base their vote on global political issues?'

Engagement activities:

- Conduct an exit poll of voters at a local, regional or national election
- Volunteer to assist in the election process (students are reminded to understand and respect local laws relating to work connected to electoral processes).
- Volunteer to work for a local, regional or national candidate
- Research local population and voter district data to analyze voter turnout and key issues
- Live-vlog the experience as it unfolds and share on Youtube

Identification of the political issue and key concepts:

Power, Sovereignty, Legitimacy, Interdependence, Human Rights, Justice, Liberty, Equality, Development, Globalization, Inequality, Sustainability, Peace, Conflict, Violence, Non-violence.

9. Title: 'How aware are investors of how, where and why their money is invested?'

Engagement activities:

- Interview your family members: do they have a retirement plan? Stocks? National pension plan?
- Interview your friends or family: do they know where their money is being invested? Who else benefits? Do they invest in their host nation? Which multi-national organizations benefit, if any?
- Repeat the data-collection with other volunteers from the community—teachers, administrators, neighbours, etc.
- Pursue an investment trail to identify the final destination of the funds. Draw conclusions about the destinations in relation to political issues and key concepts.
- Prepare a presentation and share your findings with your community. Use metaphors and comparisons to drive your point home eg 'our school community provides enough investment funds to Exxon Mobil to purchase each CEO a sports car...'

Identification of the political issue and key concepts:

Power, Sovereignty, Legitimacy, Interdependence, Human Rights, Justice, Liberty, Equality, Development, Globalization, Inequality, Sustainability, Peace, Conflict, Violence, Non-violence

10. Title: (Context specific)

Engagement activities: will depend on the student's current context

This is a reminder to always encourage students to take advantage of the opportunities their day to day lives offer. No matter how many stock suggestions we provide, nothing will replace the learning opportunities given to the student living in New York City in 2011 during the Occupy Movement, or the student in Greece during the current refugee crisis. Above all, these opportunities convey directly and with deep impact that Global Political issues are not abstract and obscure, but are directly connected to and shape the individual student's world and daily life.

Identification of the political issue and key concepts:

any of Power, Sovereignty, Legitimacy, Interdependence, Human Rights, Justice, Liberty, Equality, Development, Globalization, Inequality, Sustainability, Peace, Conflict, Violence, Non-violence.

In the future, we will be adding more titles. In the meantime, best of luck with your activities.