

Expanding Horizons: Global Learning in Afterschool Self-Assessment Tool

Introduction

The Global Learning in Afterschool Self-Assessment Tool is a resource created by Asia Society's Partnership for Global Learning, in collaboration with afterschool partners, to assess and improve programs' capacity to help build the global competence of youth. The term *global competence* has emerged as a way to articulate the knowledge and capacities youth need for success in the interconnected world of the 21st century. Global competence represents a crucial shift in our understanding of the purpose of education in a changing world. Simply put, globally competent youth can successfully investigate the world of their immediate environment and beyond; recognize their own and others' perspectives; communicate ideas to diverse audiences; and take action to make a difference both locally and globally. Young people everywhere – from all backgrounds – deserve the opportunity to access global learning opportunities that help them succeed in the global economy and contribute as global citizens.

Why Global Learning After School?

Global learning is both an appropriate and relevant goal for the afterschool field. Afterschool, before-school, and summer programs in schools, community- and faith-based organizations, and other settings, are appropriate places to look at learning and communities in new ways. Moreover, afterschool professionals bring a wealth of experience in developing understanding and appreciation of diverse people and cultures. Global learning is most effective when it builds on the connections that we all have to others in our communities and to the world around us; however, global learning implies much more than exposing young people to the cultures in their communities. It requires an intentional approach to expanding horizons for youth, so as to increase the critical global knowledge and skills required for future success.

Afterschool programs are powerful resources for global learning, and as such they can:

- Expose young people to in-depth content about global issues as well as cultures, countries, and languages.
- Enable social and emotional development critical to cross-cultural understanding, communication, and collaboration.
- Provide youth with opportunities to develop and use media literacy and technology skills to conduct research on global topics and communicate effectively with peers around the world.
- Develop leadership and civic participation by empowering young people to take action on issues of both local and global relevance.
- Engage youth in learning about international possibilities they can pursue in college and in their careers.

For more information about global competence and to find more resources to help afterschool programs integrate global learning, please visit www.asiasociety.org/afterschool

Using Self-Assessment to Build High-Quality Programs that Support Global Competence

Many programs that use self-assessment to reflect upon their practice report making quality improvements as a result. Self-assessment helps programs to build a collective vision among a range of stakeholders and to engage partners in their work. It also helps programs understand the components necessary for a high-quality program and make an action plan to achieve them over time.

Although this tool focuses explicitly on global learning in afterschool, it can and should be used by all types of out-of-school time programs regardless of whether they consider themselves to be globally focused programs or not. Afterschool programs are not required or expected to excel in each of the indicators, but this framework can serve as a guide for programs that wish to bolster their program design, environment, activities, and policies to build global competence in youth. This self-assessment tool can be used as a framework for guiding preliminary discussions on global learning in afterschool as much as it can be used as a measurement on progress to date.

The Global Learning in Afterschool Self-Assessment Tool is not meant to replace any afterschool quality self-assessment tools you may already be using. Rather, it can be used in conjunction with other tools to help you create the conditions necessary for successful global learning within the context of a high-quality program.

Using the Global Learning in Afterschool Self-Assessment Tool

Structure: This self-assessment tool builds upon the experience, knowledge, and research of Asia Society's Partnership for Global Learning and afterschool practitioners. The tool is separated into eight domains, each of which has a related list of quality indicators. The domains are:

- Vision, Mission, Culture, and Environment
- Organizations and Management
- Program Planning
- Program Delivery
- Youth Development and Outcomes
- Professional Development
- Families, Communities, and Partnerships
- Program Evaluation

Process: For each indicator, self-assessment participants will reflect upon the program and select a performance level rating. All stakeholders will then meet to review and discuss their findings for each domain, and subsequently create an action plan for improvement. It is recommended that programs use this tool at regular intervals to continually assess and advance their progress made toward meeting their global learning goals.

Performance Level Ratings: Programs can assess their level of mastery for each indicator using the performance level rating system below:

- 4 Exemplary**
The program has exceeded the standard and is prepared to help others in this area.
- 3 Proficient**
The program has met the standard but would likely need help to work with others in this area.
- 2 Emerging / Progressing**
The program is approaching the standard but could use additional focused assistance in this area.
- 1 Beginning / Have not Addressed**
The program has not addressed or is just beginning to address this area, and may need support to reach the standard.

Programs that find themselves at a level 1 can use the self-assessment to plan for improvements

and enhancements to meet their global learning goals. In fact, many programs will start at a level 1 in many or most of the indicators. Remember that self-assessment is a low stakes process, which has no negative consequences on the program. Instead, findings from a self-assessment are used for program improvement purposes.

It is important to note that this performance level rating scale is meant to be used by each stakeholder to assess the program, and does not result in a score or average rating for the program. The scale supports each stakeholder as they reflect upon the program.

In Appendix I, all of the quality indicators are defined at performance levels 1 – 4. These definitions can be used as a guide both for rating your program and for learning more about what a level 4 might look like in practice for each quality indicator.

Timing: You may choose to introduce the tool prior to program start-up in order to build consensus around a global learning vision and goals. However, using the tool in the middle of the year can be useful because it provides a means for taking stock of where the program is, while allowing time to make changes and improvements before the year is over. Alternatively, you may use this tool at the end of the year to plan for the following year. Programs may review one domain at a time over several weeks or months, or review all domains together. These decisions should be made based on your program's schedule and culture.

Participants: It is important to involve a variety of stakeholders in the self-assessment process. Participants may include program and site directors, staff members, youth participants, family members, teachers, school administrators, or other stakeholders.

Facilitation: A strong facilitator is critical to having a successful self-assessment. In collaboration with staff and stakeholders, the self-assessment facilitator coordinates who will be engaged in the process, how and when it will take place, and how data and findings will be compiled and shared. The facilitator must also ensure the self-assessment process ends with a plan for program improvement. Often, site directors or supervisors take the on the role of facilitator. However, program staff, school personnel, volunteers, and parents can also possess the qualities needed to serve as a facilitator.

Below are key questions facilitators to consider as they plan the self-assessment process.

- What is the collective future that the program wants to create?
- How can we encourage everyone to actively share their thoughts and ideas?
- How can we help others embrace change as an opportunity for growth?
- How can we help others see gains and celebrate progress?

Program Planning and Improvement: Use of this self-assessment tool directly links with creating an action plan for program changes and improvement. After completing a self-assessment, it is time to develop an action plan based on your team's findings. This tool encourages users to indicate priorities and determine the appropriate timeframe for different types of improvements using the following categories:

Right Now: Area will be addressed immediately after the self-assessment is complete. These are small changes that you can use to get started right away.

This Year: Area will be addressed during the current program year. These longer-term projects require some planning time to develop and might require collaboration among program staff and partners.

Next Year: Planning in this area will take place in the current year, for implementation in the following year. These target areas require a planning process and collaboration between program stakeholders. It might be necessary to re-evaluate your plans for this area prior to the start of the next program year.

The **Taking Action** sections under each domain will assist your program to determine the types of action steps you might take if you find your program operating at a level 1 or 2. Taking Action is meant to be a guiding example using one sample indicator in each domain. Program stakeholders should ultimately determine the best course of action for their program.

Prepare, Facilitate, and Follow-Up! No matter how you choose to conduct the self-assessment, there are three main steps to follow: Prepare, Facilitate, and Follow-up. Here are some things to consider during each stage of the process:

1. Prepare

- Create a message so stakeholders understand why the program is using this tool. Understanding why global learning is important, the outcomes it can yield for youth, and the specific need for global competence in your community will help you craft your message! For help making the case for global learning, visit the Asia Society's website at www.asiasociety.org/education, and especially the *Expanding Horizons* video, available free online here: www.asiasociety.org/afterschool/video
- Work with program leaders to align and/or integrate this global learning self-assessment process and its results with a general quality self-assessment process the program may already be using. Consider how working with two tools in conjunction may be an opportunity to reinforce key concepts and/or dive deeply into specific areas.
- Work with program leaders to determine how outcomes of the self-assessment process will be turned into global learning enhancements.
- Send out a formal invitation that lets everyone know what to expect of the self-assessment and what their role will be in their process.

2. Facilitate

- Refresh the group's understanding of global learning and key terminology used in the tool. Be sure to make connections explicit between concepts that may be familiar to your group but which may be referred to differently in this tool. Again, Asia Society's website can help.
- Remind the group of their roles in the process.
- Ask participants to brainstorm ground rules for working successfully as a group.
- Be sure to record all feedback and suggestions, and create a formal action plan.

3. Follow-Up

- Ask the group to share lessons learned and all recommendations for infusing global learning into the program.
- Acknowledge everyone's contributions and recognize the impact that these program enhancements will have on young people.
- Follow up on immediate action steps as soon as possible while momentum around global learning is fresh and strong.
- Communicate all improvements and changes made to the program to all stakeholders.
- Contact Asia Society for more resources, including the *Expanding Horizons* professional development program designed especially for afterschool trainers and frontline staff, at 212-327-9307 or pql@asiasociety.org.