

## How This Began

Throughout this report the word *us* used is instead of *I*, because many people have played a significant part in formulating this approach to student leadership. The majority of the work in the United States was done collaboratively with Jan Drum. At the time of the program's inception (1985), we had been working for many years in the field of global education. This work regularly reminded us that a central problem facing our nation and many other peoples is the fact that humans don't get along very well with one another. As we worked with students and teachers it was clear that they felt pretty powerless to do anything about this problem.

**We would try to persuade teachers to try new techniques and approaches, only to be told again and again, 'Well, that's a good idea, but it won't work'. Finally we decided to create Global Realities and the Youth Leadership Challenge to bring students and teachers together in a setting where we could try out some of our ideas. At least then, after they had experienced them, teachers could no longer say the ideas wouldn't work.**



## **This is for those people in the community who understand that:**

The world has changed. Growing up has changed. The nature of leadership has changed. This approach should be of interest to anyone who wants to empower young people and inspire them to lead the world into a more humane and just future.

- Youth leadership is critical for community survival.
- The challenges of living in a global society are quite different than they were in the late 20th century.
- Solutions to our problems lie in working together with youth as equal partners.
- Leadership in today's world must draw on the internal capacities of every individual.
- Leadership is a discipline and must be practised. It is not something to prepare for at some time in the future.
- Relationships between youth and adults must be developed beyond the confines of school goals and structures.
- It is important to engage youth in decision-making and problem-solving for issues they feel are critical.

Therefore, the ideas presented in this guide seek to teach about leadership in a unique way that sees leadership as grounded in vision. Our challenge is to support young people in finding that vision.

The program is based on the assumption that leadership is a process which employs the fullness of one's humanity – hearts and spirits as well as minds. We believe that great leaders are guided by careful thinking, deep loving, and profound respect for the great unknowns of life.



## Mission and Objectives

The mission of Global Realities and the Youth Leadership Challenge is to inspire and enliven young leaders by unlocking their vision and encouraging their hope for a better future. The goal is to give young people the tools and skills to understand their world and to transform it.

### **The program objectives are:**

- to increase the number of positive leadership options available to students;
- to increase students' sense of responsibility for the impact of each one's behaviour locally and globally;
- to increase students' knowledge of and information about the state of the world;
- to decrease students' fear of other cultures and ethnicities;
- to increase students' problem-solving skills;
- to increase the number of community activities in which students participate.

### **As a result of participating young people will:**

- see themselves as responsible for what they learn and do;
- see themselves as active participants in the life of the planet;
- become more open, accepting and tolerant;
- like themselves and see the significance of their lives;
- recognise their own values and allow others theirs;
- know how to make change.

Global Realities and the Youth Leadership Challenge can be presented in one-day workshops, or expanded to three or five day residential programs. Regardless of the amount



of time spent with students, any program should provide opportunities for youth and adults to:

- find a valued place in a constructive group;
- learn how to form close, durable human relationships;
- develop a sense of worth as a person;
- achieve a reliable basis for making informed choices;
- express constructive curiosity and exploratory behaviour;
- find ways of being useful to others;
- believe in a promising future with real opportunities;
- cultivate the inquiring and problem-solving habits of the mind necessary for lifelong learning and adaptability;
- learn to respect democratic values and responsible citizenship;
- build a healthy lifestyle.

We have come to understand these kinds of experiences as a new way to approach our mutual learning together. It's all about the quality of relationships we live within. RelationalLearning™ (Hawker Brownlow Education) is the pedagogical framework for the activities, ideas and programs detailed in this guide.



## History

Global Realities and the Youth Leadership Challenge began as a five-day residential program held at the Mabel Dodge Luhan House in Taos, New Mexico. The program was initiated in 1986 as a joint project of the Stanley Foundation of Muscatine, Iowa, and Las Palomas de Taos, the multicultural learning centre founded in 1977. George Otero and Jan Drum were the program originators.

- 800 students
- 90 teachers
- 52 schools
- 18 U.S. states and Canada

### **Between 1986 and 1996 24 programs were conducted.**

The program has involved 30 to 45 students and teachers from schools across the nation. Teams generally consist of one teacher and five or six students. Efforts are made to be sure that each program includes as wide a diversity of economic, cultural and geographic representation as possible. However, even when the diversity is not apparent to the eye, it emerges quickly in the context of the program.

Most recently 14 one-day programs have been conducted in Victoria and South Australia. These programs have involved teams of students and teachers from various schools and representation of students from years 6-10. A program usually serves 80 to 125 students and teachers.

