Alison McGregor talks to Anne Wise

Global Action Plan

A unique organisation that believes that people will make small changes to their daily lifestyles to help protect the environment.

Could you provide a background to the work of Global Action Plan?

We are a National Charity started in 1993 with the aim of encouraging people to take action to reduce their impact on the environment and to improve their quality of life. The main areas of practical interest are energy, water, waste, transport and greener purchasing (e.g. organic, recycling, and low energy). Our philosophy is that everyone can do something and we try and work with people at home, at school and in the workplace.

To deliver these aims Global Action Plan (GAP) runs a number of specific programmes which are very practical and measurable. However, we don’t usually produce a lot of materials and information packs, but focus on enabling and training people to take action. We work with people through training workshops and through action teams which are about practical, simple steps which are very action based.

How many people are involved?

Trevor Restorick is the Director and there are 17 paid full-time staff plus many other volunteer workers, and we are growing rapidly across the country. GAP employs locally-based agents to help deliver the programmes for specific schools or businesses. People are trained so they have the skills to deliver our programmes.

Could you give an example of the programmes GAP runs?

There is a number of programmes, for example, ‘Action at Home,’ ‘Action at Work’ and ‘Action at School’. There is also a programme called ‘Action in the Community’, and ‘Environmental Champions’, which is specifically for smaller-medium enterprises across the country. We invite employees of the smaller-medium enterprises and of larger businesses to the ‘Action at Work’ scheme to join the ‘Action at Home’ scheme. Similarly with the schools programme we invite the parents of the students to join the ‘Action at Home’ scheme, so that the programmes are community based.

What is your role at GAP?

I was employed as the first Devon worker and it was the first time the charity had moved out of the London area. It is working well, having someone on the ground, so it is now being replicated in other parts of the country.

I now have the title of Regional Development Manager, as the programmes have become wider than just Devon, and I am also responsible for managing the office and dealing to the strategic side (together with the Regional Manager).

For details of Alison’s work with ‘Action at School’ see page 67.

Further details about the work of Global Action Plan are available from:

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TravelWise

In 1997, Anne had been involved in a TravelWise survey (see page 65) which was funded by Devon County Council and supported by the Schools Health Education Unit.

Using the ‘Action at School on Transport’ module, the school is working to reduce car use, develop a Green Travel Plan and integrate travel and green issues across the curriculum.

Anne Wise

‘Action at School’ at Exmouth Community College

The main aim is to reduce the amount of cars used by staff and students in 2000 by 10%.

Exmouth Community College is the first school in the country to take on the Global Action Plan (GAP) module Action at School on Transport. Their major aim is to reduce the amount of cars used by staff and students in 2000 by 10%, through the implementation offered by the framework within the GAP ‘Action on Transport’ module.

Aim

Exmouth’s long term aim is three-pronged:

- To achieve a reduction in car use
- To assimilate their work into a Green Travel Plan
- To integrate travel and green issues across the school curriculum.

For many years Anne Gough, Head of Year 8, had been involved in running the cycle-safety courses at the College’s feeder primary schools. These had taken place during the summer-term evenings with Year 6 students. Due to size of this task, it often meant that this training extended into the new school year as the children arrived as Year 7 students. Thus the opportunity to incorporate both road-safety and greener transport into the curriculum, was perfectly timed.

TravelWise

In 1997, Anne had been involved in a TravelWise survey (see page 65) which was funded by Devon County Council and supported by the Schools Health Education Unit.

Unbeknownst at this stage, the data from the survey went to prove a key feature in Action at School On Transport launched by GAP’s Regional Development Manager for the South West, Alison McGregor in 1999. Whilst setting up the early structure of the project, Ben Findel-Hawkins, Deputy-Head of Year 8, also became involved. Ben is a PE teacher who provided a natural link with the health aspect of modal change. Ben is now the lead teacher for the Action at School on Transport module and juggles the responsibilities of this role with his other year group and teaching commitments.

Step 1

The GAP project at Exmouth CC commenced during the month of May, 1999. GAP recommended a number of steps (www.globalactionplan.org.uk/achschool.htm) for Exmouth CC to follow, as outlined below:
Ben Findel-Hawkins was very grateful to key people within the College whose support was vital. These include: Vyv Game, Deputy Head/teacher; Ann Gough, (then Head of Year 7); and Moira McDonald, Facilities Manager.

At this early stage of the project a written agreement was shared between GAP and the College, outlining how the two groups were going to work together, what GAP would do and what the College could do.

This formal approach served as a clear starting point and focused at an early stage the thoughts of the various groups of people involved.

Step 2

During the summer term, 1999 the Action Team took part in a training day. This team had been appointed during the spring term 1999 and consisted of 25-30 children drawn from National Curriculum groups 7-11.

The main issue on the training day was the reduction in car use. This was achieved by a variety of activities, such as role play, games, simulation and videos:

"lots of good work, very lively and exhausting but all great... it is a crucial day because it really is the start of the programme in full..."

The approach taken was to train the team about the transport issue globally, thus recognising from a wider perspective why their task locally was so important.

The next step was to think about the local transport issues for the school, and what they perceived as the pertinent needs and issues. What became very apparent was the clear opinions held by them, specific to travel and safety issues.

Many of the activities during the day aimed to get the team thinking about how they could communicate the message of reducing car travel, how to improve the use of buses and public transport, and ways of communicating their findings to others.

The day concluded with the team designing their own campaign, with input from GAP about what would and wouldn't work, and to really listen to each others ideas of how they should reach their peers. Some of the day was also taken up with training the team how to carry out an audit.

Step 3

Having been trained as members of the Action Team, a key feature of the summer term's work was to carry out a travel audit, consisting of counting students and staff at the school gates.

The results of this first audit are shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transport</th>
<th>Average over a month</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>1244</td>
<td>79.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1583</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This audit data was further substantiated by the data collected from the Devon County Council TravelWise 1999 survey, developed by the Schools Health Education Unit (see page 43).

The next step was to look at ways of improving the transport facilities for the College, which was done through the district councils and planning authorities after the GAP audit and TravelWise 1999 survey.

Parents were also involved in the review of transport to school, through the GAP Action at Home scheme, parents evening and letters home outlining car-sharing information from Devon TravelWise.

Step 4

The College organised a launch day during November of the Autumn term. This well-planned day proved both enjoyable and successful.

It commenced with the 'cutting of the green ribbon' by the Manager of Exeter Football Club, the Action Team and a local councillor. Activities and displays consisted of:

- Bar the Car Multi Challenge
- Students arrived in multifit if they had walked, cycled, busied or caught the train to school or if they had car-shared.

- Exhibition
- Displays of students' work and their audit results. Devon CC, East Devon District Council, GAP, local bike shops and Stagecoach all contributed to this exhibition. This included an opportunity for staff and students to pledge to travel less by car.

Next steps

Exmouth CC are now well placed to achieve their long-term goals as outlined at the start of this article. The next steps important to the successful culmination of this project for the College are:

- To encourage greater cycle use by the students, the College is seeking to acquire funding from local businesses for sophisticated cycle 'sheds'.

- Further development of the planned local safe cycle routes, in which the College forms the hub to the network.

- The repeat of the audit to review one year on, the forms of transportation used to get to Exmouth CC.

- To 'spiral' the use of curriculum materials into Key Stage 4.

-wide long vinyl print to be displayed on four buses that operate in the College area.

- Opinion polling

At break and lunchtimes, students were interviewed to discover their opinions on the use of local roads by heavy lorries, position of school bike lockers, traffic calming and making walking to school safer. As an outcome of all the activities and initiatives, a select group from the Exmouth CC Action Team were invited to December 1999 to talk about their work at a House of Commons reception.

Step 5

As part of the multi-faceted approach to the project, the curriculum input has proved significant in terms of drawing the various approaches together. Within the College this has mainly been achieved through their personal development lessons, but has also included other subjects such as maths, English, geography, GNVQ Health and Social Care, drama and Art.

Although GAP don't provide their own curriculum materials, support is provided in the project pack in the form of a summary of ideas which are relevant to the national curriculum and other relevant organisations.

Future developmental work is envisaged within the area of citizenship. Strong links already exist as the GAP Action on Transport module encourages the students to have a voice. This is achieved by talking to local authorities and by taking on the responsibility of an action-based project with the intricacies of communication and team-work.