



How digital stories increase kids' intercultural competence

New York, USA – November 12th, 2017 – *New research shows that digital stories can transform how children perceive and interact with the diverse world around them. With support of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, researchers from the University of Kent found how the innovative One Globe Kids program increases intercultural competence in the primary years. The program uses technology and storytelling to help students see similarities and make friends outside their bubbles.*

From December 2016 to March 2017, 203 primary school students in 4 schools in the United Kingdom worked with the One Globe Kids program: an award-winning digital library of global friends. Researchers found this new global education technology to increase intercultural competence and perception of similarities in participating students. Intercultural competence is an essential building block for positive cross-group interactions and a means of helping young people resist prejudice and stereotyping.

The project was led by Dr. Lindsey Cameron, Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Kent. Dr. Cameron's research focuses on the roots of prejudice and its consequences in childhood.

“Unfortunately, children aren't always able to cross the geographic, linguistic and other borders that divide them. That's where our research into imagined contact and simulated contact, which is where One Globe Kids works, is extremely valuable.” – Dr. Lindsey Cameron, University of Kent

Over the course of three weeks, students visited three virtual One Globe Kids friends, one new friend per week. They experience friendship with Jenissa in Burundi, Valdo in Haiti and Larasati in Indonesia through a variety of activities, all structured around the real stories of those children. Educators used the One Globe Kids 'Friend Guides' to guide students through all of the activities, which included online and offline exercises.

This is the first time academics evaluated the impact of this form of indirect intergroup contact through technology. The results of the research will help Globe Smart Kids, the non-profit organization behind One Globe Kids, to refine their apps and online platform.

“Programmes such as One Globe Kids provide an excellent starting point for further interventions to help children resist prejudice and stereotyping, such as providing children with more opportunity to form friendships with children who are different to them, explicit anti-bias lessons and social justice education curricula.” – Equality and Human Rights Commission, November 2017

The results were first presented at the IAIE conference in France in June and were also presented at the Royal Geographical Society conference in September in London. The official EHRC publication 'One Globe Kids in Action: Evaluating an Online Platform for changing social attitudes in young children' is available online - <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/one-globe-kids-action-evaluating-anti-prejudice-projects>.

About the Equality and Human Rights Commission

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (www.equalityhumanrights.com) is Great Britain's national equality body and has been awarded an 'A' status as a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) by the United Nations. Their job is to help make Britain fairer. They do this by safeguarding and enforcing the laws that protect people's rights to fairness, dignity and respect.

About the University of Kent

Established in 1965, the University of Kent (www.kent.ac.uk) – the UK's European university – now has almost 20,000 students across campuses or study centres at Canterbury, Medway, Tonbridge, Brussels, Paris, Athens and Rome. Kent is ranked 17th in the UK for research intensity (REF 2014). It has world-leading research in all subjects and 97% of its research is deemed by the REF to be of international quality.

About Globe Smart Kids

Globe Smart Kids (www.globesmartkids.org) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and the maker of the One Globe Kids program (www.oneglobekids.com), which was created to make the foreign feel familiar by letting young children explore the world from the safety and comfort of their living/class room. With new technology, One Globe Kids helps children 4-10 years old move beyond prejudice towards openness, mutual liking and friendship with those from outside their daily bubble, both near and far.

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