

# GLOBAL BITS

ISSUE 1  
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Promoting increased Global Awareness Amongst Youth Workers:  
Working towards creating a Socially Just World

Kia Ora

Welcome to our first newsletter for youth workers. We thought that this would be a good way to keep you updated on aspects of Global Youth Work practice and what Dev-Zone's Community-Youth Education team is offering and doing. Also this can be a forum to highlight what it is YOU are doing in your work.

We recognise that the issues young men and women face are different; thus we will be paying attention to this reality as well in the newsletter and information we attach.

We look forward to your suggestions and to seeing you at the next workshop in October.

Best regards,

Gino, Yadana and Jody  
Dev-Zone's Global Education Team

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## Watch this Space

From the suggestions of several youth workers, we are investigating producing a resource on 'exploring global issues through Hip-Hop music.' It has been received enthusiastically by many youth workers. We are currently conducting background research to find out what a resource might actually look like.

On the next page, there is a proposed outline for the resource. Please take some time to look through it and give us any feedback you think might help to make it relevant to the work you are currently doing with young people.

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## What is Global Youth Work?

- Starts from young people's everyday experiences.
- Engages them in a critical analysis of the links between the personal, the local and the global and those influences on their everyday lives and that of their communities.
- Raises awareness of our globalised world, our history, and the rich diversity of its peoples, particularly in terms of issues of equity and justice.
- Encourages an exploration of the relationships and links between the personal, local and global.
- Seeks the active participation of young people in actions, which builds alliances
- Seeks positive change locally and globally.

## Updates for Youth Workers

Earlier this year the Community-Youth Education team at Dev-Zone began running a series of workshops on 'Engaging young people in social change.' The aim of these workshops is to provide youth workers with a forum where they can explore contemporary issues facing young people from a broader global perspective.

In essence the focus of Dev-Zone's training is to deepen youth workers understanding of 'traditional youth work practice' and the role that it can have as a catalyst for broader social change.

Many of you in the community may be thinking, 'sure, knowing about the wider world is OK, but how does it change the situation of the young people we work with?'

If you are thinking this, it's a good question. In a world increasingly defined by consumerism, competition for jobs, decreasing government funding, individualism and global marketing, it is hard for many young people to value the positive aspects of being part of the human race.

Part of what we aim to do at Dev-Zone is to create an environment, through dialogue and sharing where youth workers and young people can begin to explore the question "what does being part of the human race mean", and thus begin to find solutions to issues facing themselves and their communities.

# Translate This

Nairobi's hip hop scene asserts its African identity in the face of the bland imports of the global music industry.

Kenya's demand for music and television can't be met by under-funded local industries, so a flow of pop culture from the West, a culture of brands and products, fills the gap. It isn't a lack of talent that stops broadcasters from going home-grown: it's simply cheaper for broadcasters to buy the entrails of television from the West than it is to commission indigenous programme-makers or encourage a self-sustained music industry. Radio is judged for the speed it serves the latest Eminem, Will Smith or Britney Spears, not for introducing new, local artists. Record shops, magazine stalls and nightclubs are no different, their fodder shaped by the idea that current means playing catch-up with the West. Wayua Muli, a young Nairobi journalist says: 'We're not quite sure where we belong, so our greatest influence right now is from the States and from Britain. That's what teaches who we should be.' At the core of this cultural crossfire, Nairobi's blossoming hip hop scene is the most visible example of how young urbanites are latching on to the styles, symbols and language of imported music, television and film. Its genesis, during weekend jam sessions and talent contests in Nairobi's clubs, was simple mimicry: rappers were hailed for their skill as a parrot, not their ability to invent new rhymes and sounds. You had to look and act the part too: baggy jeans, sports shoes, baseball cap and an imitation American accent.

In response, a group of journalists, musicians and television producers in Nairobi is searching for ways to counter the biased flow of pop culture into Kenya.

'What we're trying to do is encourage the young people to maintain the culture and morality that Africa has,' says Jimmi Gathu, a television producer who has turned the spotlight on local talent through a string of music shows. This self-conscious attempt to create local icons for young Kenyans to identify with is paralleled by the recent launch of East Africa's first youth culture magazine PHAT! The title is an acronym of Pamoja Hip Afrika Tunawakilisha, Swahili for 'Together we represent hip Africa'.

'There's never

been a Kenyan musician on the cover of any magazine in the world,' says Blaze, assistant editor of PHAT! 'Talent in Kenya doesn't get a chance to be seen.' It hasn't proved easy for the likes of Jimmi Gathu and Blaze to convince financiers, venues and broadcasters to focus on new groups and music made in Kenya. 'You'd literally have to pay DJs to play your records,' recalls Gathu from his own musician days. Not until 1995, when artist Poxi Presha released a single Total Bala (Total Chaos) in Luo, one of Kenya's 44 ethnic dialects, did people realize the potential of rapping and singing in local languages. Total Bala 'just hit the country like bushfire', says Bruce Odhiambo, the record's producer. 'It crossed all language barriers and people realized they could do it in their mother tongue.' A realization that struck a chord with rappers from Nairobi's Eastlands slum estates, who formed the Mau Mau collective – named after Kenya's freedom fighters from the 1950s.

Mau Mau group Kalamashaka's song Tafisiri Hii – which means 'translate this!' – evoked life in the Nairobi slums and became a major hit. Another Luo act, Gidi Gidi Maji Maji, released their debut album earlier this year, Ismarwa (It's Ours).

Gidi Gidi Maji Maji researched the album by returning to their home province on the Kenyan shores of Lake Victoria, where they collected Luo myths and sayings, instruments and sounds that defined what Tedd Josiah, the producer of Ismarwa, says was a re-statement of identity: 'If you're an African there are certain cultures, certain traditions that you've grown up with – our language, our musical styles – and we have to actually go back to those things.'

The seeds that a new generation have scattered to define and encourage Kenyan culture are a direct response to the saturation of Western pop culture. Umbia, another track on a new compilation of Kenya's rising stars quotes the words of the late President Jomo Kenyatta: 'Flare up as the flames of a fire. Consume the nation with your passion. Let the Kenyan culture sing loud and clear, echoing over the hills and ridges.'

Writer and filmmaker Adrian Cooper is currently working on a music festival with the Gallmann Memorial Foundation to raise awareness of East African music and culture.

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## Current Projects

### Proposed Youth Worker Resource:

Contained below is an initial outline for a project Dev-Zone will be seeking funding for in the near future. Initially Dev-Zone will be exploring potential avenues for funding.

### **HIP HOP MUSIC & GLOBAL YOUTH WORK**

#### Background to project:

The idea for a Hip Hop resource originally came out of conversations with Youth Workers. Many youth workers are concerned about the Americanisation of music in Aotearoa, particularly in terms of violence, racism, "gang banging", drugs etc, and the impact that this is having on groups of young people. This common misinterpretation of a legitimate place for Hip Hop music within Aotearoa New Zealand culture raises issues about the lack of understanding that many adults and young people have about the genre, and of the positive contribution that hip hop music has and is making to the lives of young people and their communities both locally and globally.

Hip Hop music in Aotearoa New Zealand has transcended the mass replication of Black American cultural identification, and has been increasingly been replaced by strong examples of indigenous and Pacific cultures. The strong emergence of a uniquely Tangata Pacifica Hip Hop scene, which blends traditional Maori and Pacific culture with the global hip hop phenomenon, provides an appropriate medium for exploring young peoples role within the wider global community.

The case in New Zealand is similar to many other countries where reclamation of young people's identity of has been achieved through the genre.

#### Purpose of the HIP HOP project:

1. To investigate the potential for exploring global issues through music, namely HIP HOP.
2. To identify the different forms and elements within the genre, which increase awareness about global issues, that impact on young peoples lives both locally and globally.
3. To identify the elements within the genre that, promote "positive development" approaches to dealing with issues impacting on young people and their communities, particularly in developing countries.
4. To provide Youth Workers and Educators with a critique and overview for exploring development issues through a medium defined by young people, particularly more marginalised groups.

#### Outcomes:

1. A resource is developed which provides youth workers and educators with a 'youth' friendly format for exploring global issues through music.
2. A critique is developed which identifies, through examples, how HIP HOP music;
  - Empowers young people locally and globally
  - Influences social change locally and globally
  - Creates, preserves, forms and reforms cultural identity (including youth identities- how does HIP HOP redefine culture to accommodate the effects of globalisation?)
  - Can create conflict and promote peace
  - Address issues associated with human rights, refugee and migrants, globalisation, racism, gender, media, advertising, social justice
3. A sample of local and 'global' artists (particularly from developing countries), which highlights identified themes.

## Useful Resources

Global Issues ~ Many of you have already received the first two publications of Global Issues. Global Issues was initially intended for use in Schools, however it has become apparent that it has relevance to the informal education sector. For anybody looking at broadening young peoples perspectives on issues, this is an interesting, 'glocal' tool to check out! Next edition: Hip Hop

The Invisible Table: Perspectives on Youth and Youthwork in New Zealand, by Lloyd Martin ~ This book outlines the risk and resiliency factors in the worlds of young people in Aotearoa: neighbourhood, family, educational and culture. It discusses the participation of youth in peer groups and global sub-cultures and the role of youth work alongside other professional services.

Money for Nothing ~ An excellent video on corporate control of the music industry and its effects on local culture.

## Upcoming Events & Workshops

- \* Mark 9 October on your calendars. Yadana and Jody are developing another workshop for you. Details will be sent out closer to the date.
- \* Workshops can be arranged for your young people by contacting Yadana on 472 9549 and for your organisation's staff members by contacting Jody on 496 9593.
- \* Monthly discussion sessions! Many of you who've attended our Global Youth Work workshops have expressed interest in coming to a monthly discussion session on particular global issues affecting young people. So . . . How about Wed, 18 Sept, 4-5 PM? There will be a video and discussion (snacks provided) and will last about

## About Dev-Zone (not Death-Zone!)

Dev-Zone (Development Resource Centre) is a specialist education and information centre in Aotearoa New Zealand. We inform and educate to empower people to take action for a just world.

Our Global Ed (Community-Youth and Schools) team provides a global perspective in its education to the community and schools sectors by:

- offering a free library service – including books, teaching kits, videos and journals.  
Website address: [www.dev-zone.org](http://www.dev-zone.org)
- providing, producing and distributing innovative resources on global issues for schools and the community
- running workshops, school activity sessions and training seminars for teachers, students and community and youth groups
- producing a quarterly magazine ~ Global Issues for the community and secondary school sectors

## Our Values

Dev-Zone believes that:

1. Knowledge empowers people by providing alternative sources of information, increasing choices, in particular, to enable vulnerable people to make their voices heard, and promoting justice, peace and equality.
2. Development must be people centred and recognise that all cultures, including indigenous ones, offer valid solutions to social development problems.
3. The Treaty of Waitangi principles must be an integral part of the way we operate.
4. A holistic approach to development is essential and social, political, economic, environmental and human rights aspects must always be taken into account.
5. The general public must be involved in global development problems and the DRC has a vital role in enhancing the understanding of these, including recognition of New Zealand's changing regional and global roles.

## Community-Youth Ed Team

Gino Maresca (Youth Programme Co-ordinator).

Gino has been working in the field of youth development for the last 10 years. He has designed and run NZ Conservation Corps programs, various life skills programs, leadership development and Youth Health Support services.

Jody Gorse (Community & Schools Education Officer)

Jody has enjoyed work with various cultures and youth over the past decade. She has co-ordinated & tutored in languages, life skills and employment programmes with refugee/migrant youth and young male offenders in New Zealand and various inner city and rural communities overseas.

Yadana Saw (Youth Advocate)

Yadana has been actively involved in projects run by young people and youth networks in the Wellington and international arenas. At present she spends her 'free time' (yeah, right!) tutoring in Anthropology at Victoria University and working in a local café.

## Contact Us!

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