



# **From Growth to Access**

## **Developing an IBO access strategy**

Version 1  
21 September 2006

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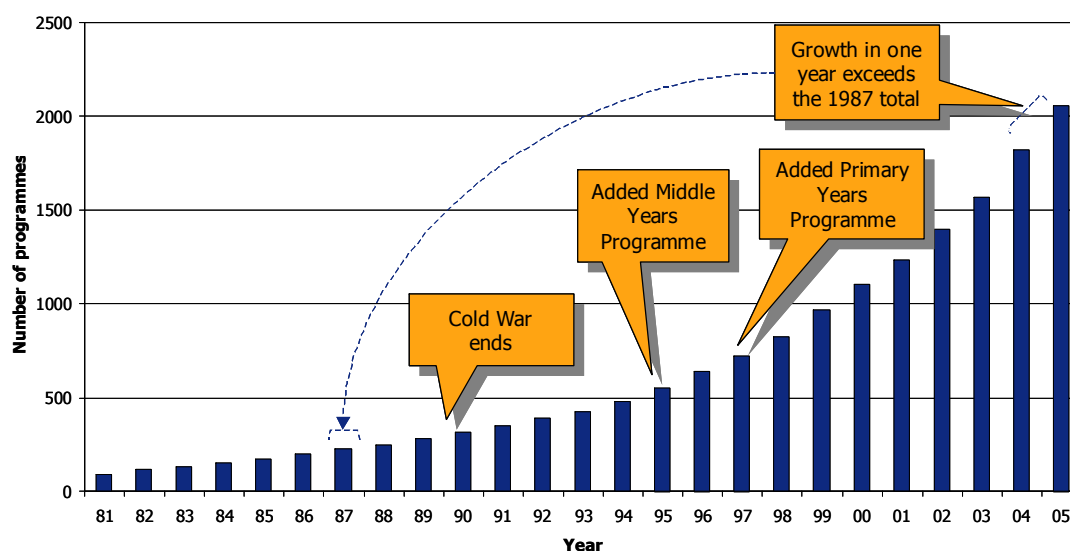
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This report is based on a Council of Foundation retreat held near London in July 2006. The Council spent 1½ days considering the strategic goal of access and developing a clearer definition and direction for the organizations' future work in this area. This document is designed to help the organization understand the context in which the Council reached its conclusions.

## 1. Introduction

The IBO has a challenging mission – “to create a better and more peaceful world”. It is our belief that our high quality programmes of international education can help develop active and engaged citizens who will tackle the most serious and pressing problems that face the world as it rushes towards globalization. Today, over 1/2 million students from all continents have graduated from our Diploma Programme but it is obvious that our goal requires millions of people worldwide to benefit from an international education.

Rapid growth is nothing new to the International Baccalaureate Organization. From a base in a small number of international schools nearly 40 years ago, the organization has grown by an average of almost 18% each year to its current size. Today, we offer three programmes, operate in over 120 countries and reach nearly half a million students.



This unprecedented growth brings opportunities, challenges and responsibilities.

- The **opportunities** come from the extra resources and experience that can be put into enhancing the quality of our programmes and services.
- The **challenges** are those of managing the risk associated with growth, in such a way that the organizational infrastructure and capacity is capable of supporting ever-increasing numbers, retaining school support, and handling increased cases of school failure.
- The **responsibilities** are those that sit on the shoulder of any not-for-profit organization that is taking an influential place on the world stage – to ensure that our work is truly driven by our mission and for the common good.

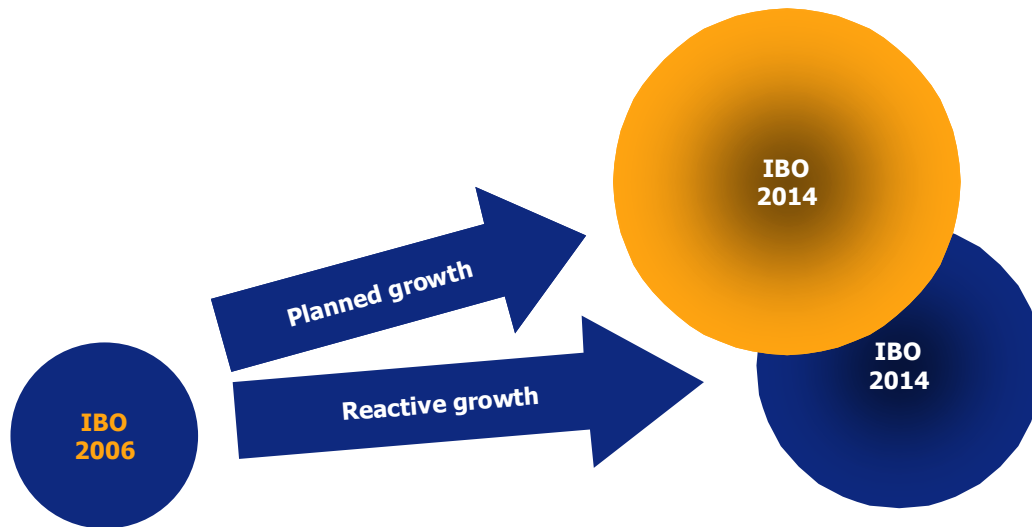
Quality, infrastructure and access are the three pillars of the IBO’s strategic plan<sup>1</sup> – bound together by the overall theme of planning growth.

By planning our growth, it is possible for us to decide how we want the IBO to look in 2014 – not as the consequence of a major change in direction, but rather by taking deliberate

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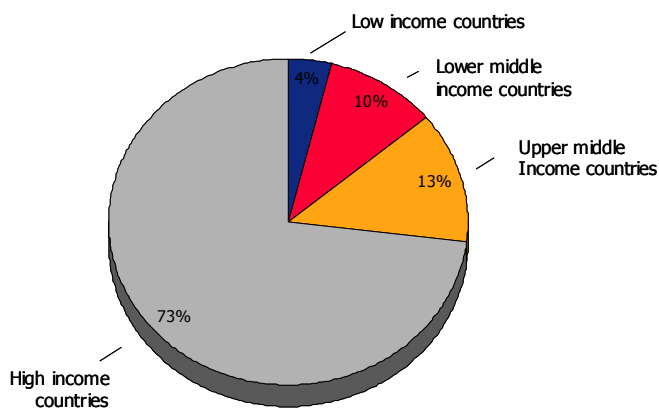
<sup>1</sup> April 2004.

decisions over how we best sustain quality, broaden access and build a world-class infrastructure to provide services and support to schools.



In particular, a strategy of planned growth allows us to respond to the reality that the IBO operates in a less than fair world. Despite our best intentions, our growth is not distributed evenly ... indeed; there is good evidence to show that our growth is mainly benefiting the economically advantaged. Even in high-income countries, we know that the majority of students come from better socio/economic backgrounds.

**Schools by country type\***

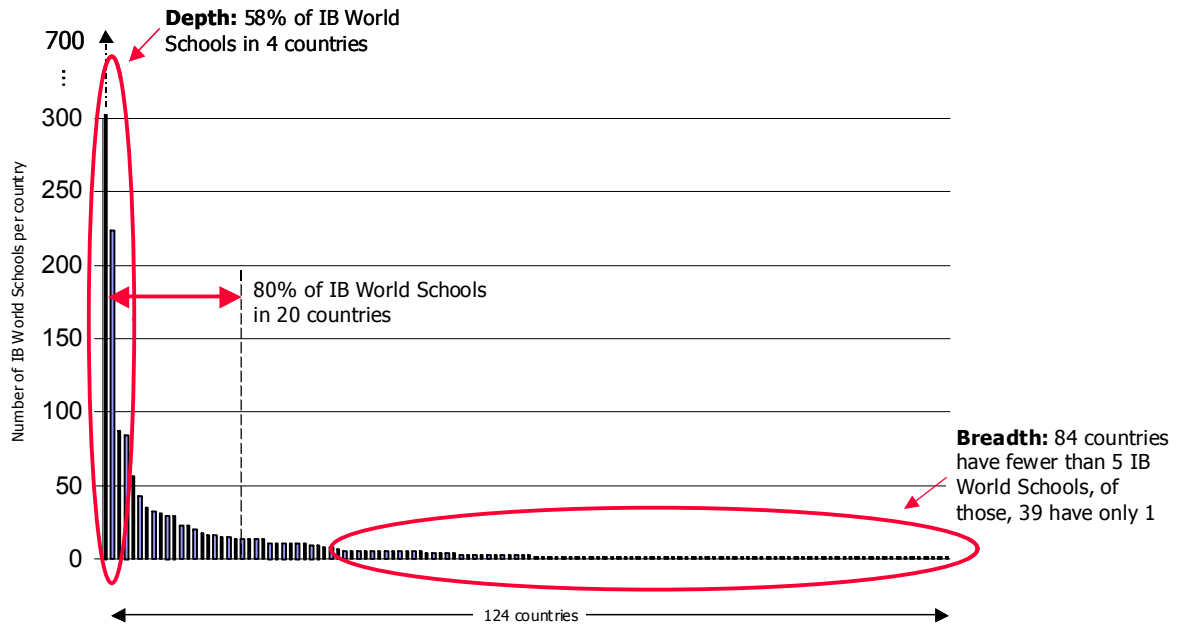


\* Based on World Bank list of economies (July 2005)

We also know that our growth falls unevenly in geographic terms. Despite our 'international' reputation and focus, the majority of IB World Schools and students can be found in just four countries. What's more, it is those four countries that are growing most rapidly<sup>2</sup> and it appears that a 'critical mass' of schools in these countries has increasing benefit in terms of facilitating further growth, enhancing school support and extending influence

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<sup>2</sup> June 2006 IBIS school data.



It is in this context that the IBO governing body, the Council of Foundation, has defined access as **“enabling more students to experience and benefit from an IB education regardless of personal circumstances”** and made it a strategic priority for the organization.

By emphasizing *“students”* and adding *“regardless of personal circumstances”* to this definition, the Council of Foundation is changing the focus of the organization from growth to access – a fundamental change that is described in this document.

## 2. A change in focus

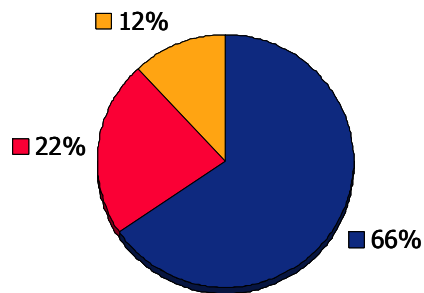
Let's contrast the focus on growth and access to illustrate the difference that an emphasis on "students" and "regardless of personal circumstances" can make.

Growth focus	Access focus
<b>Growth is about more schools, regardless of location or socio-economic factors</b>	<b>Access is about more students experiencing and benefiting from an IB education, regardless of personal circumstances</b>
More schools is good	More students is better
More countries/states is good	A critical mass of schools in a significant number of places is better
The PYP or MYP is not a prerequisite for the Diploma Programme	More school systems offer the three programs
School fees exclude many students from IB programmes, adding to our elitist image.	More and more schools offer scholarships and/or merit based admission
Some schools offer our programmes to a very small proportion of the school community, adding to our elitist image.	IB World Schools make IB programmes available to a significant proportion of the school population.
We leave it to schools to contact us if they want to become part of the IB	We proactively encourage growth in places that can achieve critical mass or that have strategic importance to us.
The community of IB World Schools consists mainly of well-off schools.	IB World Schools and students are representative of the broader communities in which they are based.

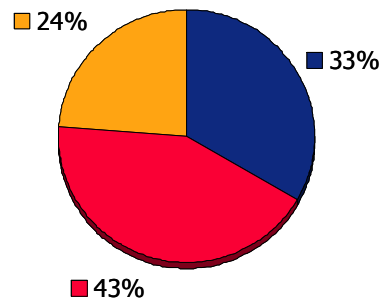
There is much more to this new focus than a change of words! It's a different way of thinking about the IBO. Indeed, when you start to look at the organization through an *access* lens rather than a *growth* lens, you actually see a different picture.

For example, here are three pie charts<sup>3</sup> showing the size of our three programmes. They tell different stories, yet the only difference is what you count – schools (on the left), the total number of students<sup>4</sup> (on the right) or the total number of students completing the programme each year (below).

**Programme size (by number of schools)**

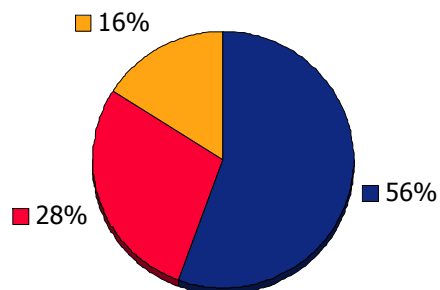


**Programme size (by number of students)**



■ Diploma ■ Middle Years ■ Primary Years

**Programme size (by students completing each year)**



According to the left hand pie chart, the Diploma Programme is our largest programme. On the right, the Diploma Programme is much smaller proportionately and it is the Middle Years Programme that is the largest!

Given that our mission statement reads: "The International Baccalaureate Organization aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people..." which is the more meaningful measure – schools or students?

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<sup>3</sup> Source: School data from IBIS in June 2006. Average number of students participating calculated from 2006 IB World School satisfaction survey data. Number of students completing calculated by dividing the totals by the average programme length.

<sup>4</sup> Students are counted across all years of each programme

### **3. A context for access**

The IBO operates in a somewhat unique environment with a highly distinctive quality programme of K-12 education, recognised in a variety of independent research studies for the way in which it prepares pupils for higher education and for a responsible life<sup>5</sup>. The College Board, Cambridge International Examinations and a small number of other national organizations also offer courses internationally, but with more limited service and support. No other K-12 programme reaches as far across the globe with programmes that, while based on a Western education ideal, still actively adapt to local languages and cultures. Most countries in the world have some form of national curriculum/ assessment, so in practice, these distinctly different choices are the main competition to the IB.

An estimate of the market size for international education is 100 million students<sup>6</sup> worldwide, demonstrating enormous future potential given that the organization currently reaches around ½ million students. There has been no large-scale attempt to market IB programmes as growth levels created by 'word of mouth' promotion have always absorbed and stretched any spare capacity.

As a not-for-profit foundation, resources to invest in infrastructure development (to increase capacity) remain limited and the IBO operating model is highly dependent on organic growth for increased capacity. Therefore, the organization is supply rather than demand constrained.

So, rather uniquely, the IBO operates in a supply-constrained environment with a highly distinctive product, limited direct competition (at least for now), strong demand and substantial long-term growth potential. Without the pressure of shareholders demanding financial returns, the IBO can make mission-focused choices about its growth, particularly as it enjoys a highly collaborative relationship with IB World Schools (its main source of revenue) who are likely to be cooperative in supporting a mission-focused access strategy provided that it does not compromise quality.

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<sup>5</sup> See Journal of Research in International Education and Research Notes

<sup>6</sup> McKinsey & Company, 2004

## **4. The objective, measures and strategies**

### **4.1 The objective**

The objective of access is expressed in the Council's definition of the term:

***"Access is enabling more students to experience and benefit from an IB education, regardless of personal circumstances"***

### **4.2 Measures of success**

We will measure our success in increasing access through three interdependent measures:

- Increase the number of students receiving an IB education. Today, this is approximately 470,000. By 2014, our target is x.
- Increase the percentage of students admitted into IB programmes without consideration of their ability to pay fees. Today, this is approximately yy%. By 2014, our target is zz%.
- In agreed countries/areas, improve the correlation between the socio/economic status of IB students and the broader educational community in which they operate. Today, the average correlation is x. By 2014, our target is y.

(Note: targets to be agreed)

We recognize the importance of data and research to support this strategy and will therefore introduce a more comprehensive annual school census and align our research agenda and information systems with the needs that emerge from this strategy.

### **4.3 Strategies for access**

The Council of Foundation has identified four strategic themes for how the access objective can be reached.

In the short-term (horizon one), we aim to:

- Increase access in existing IB World Schools.

In the medium-term (horizon two), we aim to:

- Achieve a critical mass of IB World Schools in relevant countries/areas
- Increase access by offering modified or new versions of our programmes

In the long-term, (horizon three) we aim to:

- Identify and fund initiatives that have the potential to dramatically increase access by moving beyond our current operational paradigms.

The three horizons describe when we expect to see results, not when we will start to work. We will only achieve our long-term ambitions if we start working on all of them today.

The following section describes the strategic themes in more detail.

### 4.3.1 Horizon one

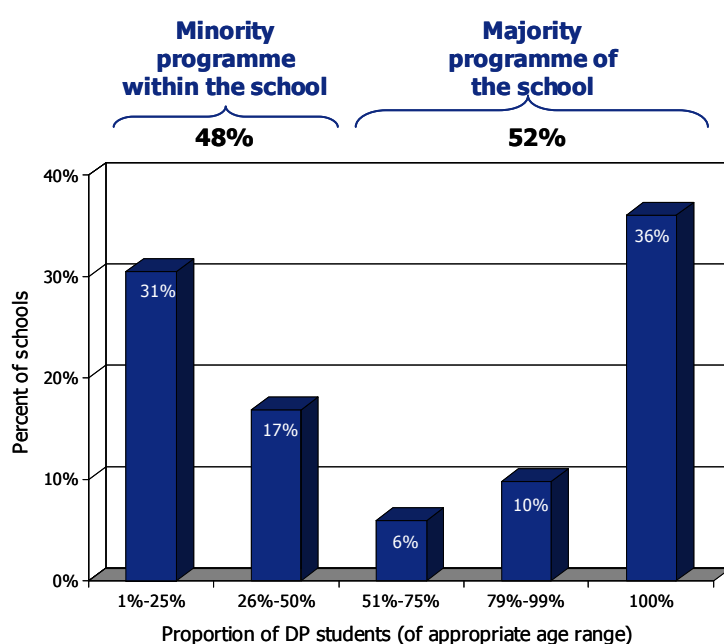
#### ***Strategy 1 – Increase access in existing IB World Schools***

Our existing programmes, delivered by existing IB World Schools are the core of our work and the obvious initial base for expanding access. The IBO does not own or manage schools but by working in cooperation with IB World Schools, sub-regional associations and others, we can attempt to influence the degree of access that is achieved.

Council has identified four potential tactics within this strategic theme.

- 1.1 Encourage schools to increase the proportion of the total school population undertaking MYP and DP.

Today, we know that 48% of IB World Schools offer the Diploma Programme to less than half their students<sup>7</sup>.



While we recognize that schools have varying school populations and needs for the Diploma Programme, we will encourage IB World Schools to offer the programme to more students ... both increasing access and reducing the perception that the IB is an elitist programme for a minority of students.

- 1.2 Encourage schools to select students on an entirely merit basis

We know (see page 3) that economic factors are the greatest limitation on students' access to an IB programme. Where IB programmes are available through state-funded education, then access is significantly enhanced. In addition, many private schools use bursary and scholarship schemes to ensure that students can be selected on a merit basis (ie. on the basis of their suitability for the programme without consideration of their ability to pay). By actively encouraging this good practice among IB World Schools, we can increase access to IB programmes.

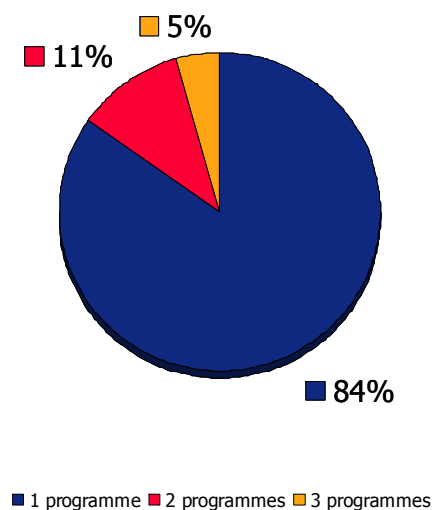
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<sup>7</sup> Source: 2006 IB World School satisfaction survey

### 1.3 Encourage school systems to offer the full IB programme continuum.

Today, 16% of IB World Schools<sup>8</sup> provide two or more of our programmes to their students. This percentage has been growing slowly since the introduction of PYP and MYP in the mid 1990's.

**Number of IB World Schools offering 1, 2 or 3 programmes**



Educational research<sup>9</sup> widely supports the view that long-term academic success can only be achieved by acting early in a student's educational experience.

*"Roughly half of the 'achievement gap' is already present when poor, minority children enter the schoolhouse door. The inescapable conclusion is that we must help these children get a better start early in life."<sup>10</sup>*

In this sense, we have to see our Primary and Middle Years Programmes as being the best international education preparation for success in the Diploma Programme and we will therefore aim to encourage more school systems to offer them as a continuum.

Note: We refer to *school systems* in recognition of the fact that many schools do not serve the entire K-12 age range, but nearly always work in collaboration with neighbouring schools to achieve this.

### 1.4 Increase the number of universities that recognize the IB Diploma and improve the quality of that recognition at the universities of most interest to IB graduates.

The opportunity for students to progress to high quality universities both creates demand for the Diploma Programme and ensures that the IB fulfils its role in the life-long educational experience of every student.

Therefore, increasing both the number of universities recognizing the Diploma and the quality of that recognition is important to achieving greater access.

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<sup>8</sup> Source: IBIS June 2006

<sup>9</sup> See "Improving educational access - A Review of the Research" published by IBNA, June 2006

<sup>10</sup> Hunt, James B., Jr. "Unrecognized Progress," Education Next, Spring 2003. Stanford, CA, Hoover Institution, Stanford University

### 4.3.2 Horizon two

#### ***Strategy two - Achieve a critical mass of IB World Schools in relevant countries/area***

Four countries account for 58% of all IB World Schools and 85% of all state schools<sup>11</sup>. Our experience in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia suggests that when a 'conducive local environment' is combined with 'proactive IB activity' it is possible to create a critical mass of schools where growth is more easily sustained, student numbers increase rapidly and the impact on the national educational debate is significant.

Achieving critical mass in a larger number of countries is desirable both to achieve greater access and to broaden the presence of the organization across the globe. We will therefore:

- 2.1 Define 'critical mass' then identify and prioritise those countries/areas of the world that are close to achieving critical mass.
- 2.2 Propose, create and implement a *development strategy* for selected prioritised countries to include creating strategic alliances and identifying local champions (eg. sub-regional associations) to support growth in these areas.

#### ***Strategy three - Increase access by offering modified or new versions of our programmes and services***

Our existing programmes are most attractive to particular groups and types of students. For example, the Diploma Programme typically appeals to motivated students who intend to progress to university.

In the medium-term we seek to broaden this audience by modifying our Middle Years and Diploma Programmes support to help schools in challenging environments that require more help in raising their standards to that of the Diploma Programme.

In addition, we are developing options for a career-related programme of international education aimed at those who wish to progress directly to employment.

However, we recognize that programme development brings risks and costs that must be carefully managed.

We will therefore:

- 3.1 Develop a career-related programme to create a programme of international education that is relevant to students that plan to progress directly to employment.
- 3.2 Develop a stronger continuum to support students moving from the Middle Years to the Diploma Programme so that a greater number of students are able to achieve the academic level demanded by the Diploma Programme.
- 3.3 Ensure that all projects are periodically assessed against clear criteria regarding their potential to reach new target groups of students, their sustainability, funding, etc.

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<sup>11</sup> Source: IBIS June 2006

### 4.3.3 Horizon three

#### ***Strategy four - Achieve a 'step-change' in access by moving beyond our current operational paradigms.***

The IB world we see today exists within an established paradigm:

- Students complete IB programmes in classrooms at IB World Schools.
- Our greatest growth, student and school presence is in a small number of wealthy countries.
- Technology supports our existing operational systems but has a relatively limited impact within learning communities.

Yet, we know that the full impact of globalization is still to be felt and the potential need for IB programmes is several orders of magnitude greater than our capacity to supply. We therefore need to plan to move beyond the paradigm we understand today by making a limited number of highly strategic investments that recognize:

- The impact of globalization on the world in which we (and the students we educate) live, work and operate.
- The emergence of new countries as major players in that globalized world.
- The capacity of technology to revolutionize the learning experience and the cost of providing learning.
- The potential for achieving mission impact for many more students in new ways.
- The importance of the IBO taking a place on the world education stage so that we can both influence and learn from the greater educational debate.

We will therefore:

- 4.1 Review and agree a small number of key geographic targets to develop a nucleus of IB World Schools (medium term) and critical mass (long-term). [Guidance – consider: Brazil, Russia, India, China, Turkey]. For each target, create, agree and implement a development strategy, which will include additional language support as appropriate.
- 4.2 Develop an online version of IB Diploma Programme that can both support delivery in existing IB World Schools but also reach out to completely new communities of students that cannot physically attend an IB World School.
- 4.3 Implement strategic investments in technology to enable greater access:
  - Achieve greater operating efficiencies so that prices can be held or reduced where possible.
  - Support the building of communities of support (eg. IB Association).
  - Streamline processes to build a more scaleable infrastructure to enable greater access.
- 4.4 Review other options for product development (eg. consultancy, teacher training college, etc) in terms of their impact on access and bring proposals to the Council of Foundation for further consideration.
- 4.5 Participate in the development of education at a world level by actively participating in conferences/programmes/projects to ensure that the IBO is widely recognized as an active participant in world education.

#### **4.4 Related issues**

It is worth commenting on a few points that are not explicit in the statement from Council, but nevertheless were clear from the debate.

First, community service is central to the ethos of the organization ... but we recognize that often it has little impact on access (as we have chosen to define and measure it). In other words, our motivation for engaging in community service projects is better aligned with our commitment to CAS and community service in our programmes and the general sense of “creating a better world” as described in our mission. Community service projects also provide highly motivational opportunities for teachers, students, IB staff and others – but they rarely deliver an IB education to significant numbers of disadvantaged students relative to the effort involved.

Second, the ability of the IB to achieve most of the above strategies will increasingly depend on the support and engagement we can achieve from other organizations. Strategic alliances with those that represent groups of schools, fund education, have resources and infrastructure, and share our mission will be increasingly important.

Third, we recognize that the IBO cannot act alone to achieve such significant ambitions – our resources and experience are simply not great enough. The alliances we enter into with other organizations will be both critical to achieving this strategy and to determining how long it takes.

## **5. Developing the access strategy**

This document has described the main themes that the Council of Foundation wants the IBO's access strategy to be built on.

The Council of Foundation has asked the Directors' Leadership Team (DLT) to take this work a step further. In November 2006, the Council wants the DLT to present an "IBO Access Strategy" built on the themes presented in this paper.

The strategy should include:

- Prioritised strategies in horizon one, two and three, with arguments to support the priorities, and considerations to what impact the strategies will have on different aspects of the organisation.
- Consideration of the needs and consequences of these strategies with regard to maintaining quality and building infrastructure.
- Realistic targets, budgets and key performance indicators, with explanations to underpin them.

The Council recognises that the DLT may find reason to rework or reprioritise the themes presented in this paper as a consequence of its exploration on how the strategies will impact the IBO at large.