

**Focusing the Partnership on the curriculum means**  
 The Partnership is of educational merit  
 Partners learn together and learn from each other  
 The whole school is committed to the partnership  
 The Partnership is sustainable and not dependent on key individuals  
 The focus for the Partnership is on similarities, not differences  
 The partnership is embedded in the school, not an added extra

**From linking to partnership...key steps**  
 Think before you link... if possible establish a local partnership first, as an effective way of learning about others and challenging stereotypes. A UK school in a contrasting area will share the same language, curriculum, technology and calendar – this enables the partnership to be embedded throughout both schools and reciprocal visits can be organised.  
**Initiating a partnership...** explore a range of starting points, including your education authority, local community and organisations which encourage reciprocal partnerships. Prepare background information about your school and curriculum to share with potential partners. Have exploratory discussions to balance what each school needs and can offer, before either makes a commitment.  
**Establishing a partnership...** negotiate and be clear about the aims and educational value of the partnership to both schools. Ensure it can be developed through a range of curriculum based activities and that you are able to work with your partner in a reciprocal way – see inside for suggestions. Make sure the partnership is embedded in the School Development Plan, decide how it will be evaluated and engage the support of the whole school, not just a small group of staff.  
**Sustaining a partnership...** make sure both schools can enrich their learning and teaching through the partnership – build commitment by providing opportunities for every area of the curriculum to be included. Involve the wider community, share the experience and demonstrate the educational value of the partnership e.g. as a means of challenging racist attitudes and stereotypes. With your partner, carry out regular reviews and evaluate the impact on both schools.

**“Why have you formed a link with a community that is 5,000 miles away and not with a Muslim Community in Britain?”**  
 A sceptical UKOWLA observer

# TEACHING & LEARNING: From linking to partnership

**“The partnership agreement between our two schools states that we want mutual knowledge and understanding – of cultures, of values, of interdependence, of our power to change.”**

Teacher involved in a Malawi/UK partnership

As a growing number of schools seek partners in other countries it's vital to explore the purpose and value of a partnership and recognise that the process of setting up and sustaining one that is worthwhile is extremely complex.

Partnerships between schools here and schools in the Majority World are too often a one-way street, with the agenda firmly set in the UK. Majority World partners have fed back concerns that UK schools may wrongly assume those schools in Africa, Asia, South America and the Caribbean want money more than educational links. In UK schools, linking is too often viewed as providing an opportunity for pupils to help people less fortunate than themselves. True partnerships acknowledge that each has much to learn from the other. If real understanding is to take place it is essential to develop an equal, reciprocal and respectful relationship.

**“Our partnership is not an extra but an integral part of the learning and teaching that goes on in both schools.”**

Teacher involved in a Malawi/UK partnership

**“We don't want a link like last time... we want a real partnership this time.”**  
 South African teacher 2005

(Adapted from advice by Harambée, Cambridge)

**The fundraising issue...**  
 It is natural for a school in the UK to want to offer 'help' to its link school in the form of money - and the partner school may well expect it. However, depending on how the fundraising activity is planned and undertaken, this charity can have an unintended negative impact by:  
 Reinforcing the stereotype that the North has control and money while the South is poor and needy  
 Increasing inequality, as the school in the North becomes the active giver and the school in the South become the passive receiver  
 Fostering reliance on income from the Northern partner  
 Patronising the Southern partner by assuming that they need and want this help  
 Focusing the link on finance at the expense of education  
 However, to ignore the potential fundraising element of a school partnership is often denying the reality of a situation. Before embarking on any fundraising activity for your partner school ask yourself:  
 Is it the right time in the development of our partnership to be fundraising?  
 Will our pupils' mutual respect for pupils at our partner school be undermined? How would the activity influence their perception of and relationship with pupils at our partner school?  
 Have we identified and agreed with our partner school a specific need for fundraising?  
 How could fulfilling this need benefit learning within the partnership?  
 Could both schools contribute towards the fundraising activities?  
 Are there other ways in which we could support our partner school? eg sharing teachers' expertise or pupils' talents  
 Examples of well thought-out fundraising include recording music sung by both schools to raise money for the link, or selling calendars of photos of the link. Funds raised might... pay for internet access for both schools to improve communication... pay for materials for a joint project e.g. using disposable cameras... support an exchange visit.

**“First you came to us as missionaries, then you came to us as colonisers, now you come to us as linkers.”**

Participant at a Conference on linking, 2002

**Step back from the possible pitfalls of linking and ask**  
 Why do we want a partnership? Who and what is it for? Ask yourself whether partnership is the most effective way to achieve your aims and consider alternatives  
 What assumptions are we making about our partner? Ensure there is a dialogue between partners, fostering a reciprocal and respectful relationship  
 What images do we have of our partners? What images do they have of us? Make sure all participants are happy that the images used give each a balanced view of the other  
 Why is there a disparity of material resources between us? Explore the reasons behind this disparity and what it says about our own levels of consumption  
 How can our partnership enhance learning and teaching? Embed the partnership throughout the school, within and beyond the curriculum  
 How comfortable would I feel if a teacher from my partner school were a 'fly on the wall' in my classroom?

**“A link is for life, not just for OFSTED.”**

DEC project worker

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# School Partnerships & Curriculum Links

## Art & Design

- include both traditional and contemporary art and artists from both countries
- acknowledge the global influences on art and artists
- reflect the diversity of artists working in each country

## Citizenship

- share ways of involving pupils in decision-making through School Councils
- use the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to explore pupils' rights and responsibilities
- exchange pupils' thoughts on their probable and preferable futures

## Design & Technology

- design and exchange recipes using locally grown produce, favourite breakfasts, healthy snacks
- investigate dwellings and their use of materials in the locality of the schools
- reflect the developments and influences of textiles and textile technologies between cultures, past and present: weaving, dyeing, printing

## Drama

- use drama to dispel myths about ourselves and each other
- share proverbs as scenarios for drama work
- exchange current news stories to dramatise

## English

- explore identity, the meanings of names and the use of borrowed words
- consider the media portrayal of the same events in each country  
[www.onlinenewspapers.com](http://www.onlinenewspapers.com)
- include the work of traditional and contemporary writers from both countries and the influence of poetry and prose, theatrical and oral traditions on literary expression

## Geography

- examine students' existing perceptions of each other (people and locality) and monitor changes in knowledge and attitudes
- consider students' journey to school, distance, economic activity, transport, environmental impact
- measure and record weather, seasonal changes, research local impact of climate change

## History

- map the localities' historical links with the wider world
- research and exchange family histories
  - study the biographies of significant individuals in each other's countries or the same biographies from around the world: Mary Seacole (the Americas), Gandhi (Asia), Nelson Mandela (Africa), Florence Nightingale (Europe)

## ICT

- research the use of landlines and mobile phones in each community
- research the most effective means of communication between the schools
- design websites/pages reflecting the partnership, exchange data

## Maths

- use an investigation of food miles in the schools and their wider communities for data-handling
- examine and compare images on each other's bank notes, use for activities on trade and exchange rates
- use mathematical activities to learn more about our own and each other's local community: housing, population, transport and work

## Modern Foreign Languages

- acknowledge bilingualism in each country, and learn and share greetings
- conduct a survey of languages spoken in the wider communities
- study the historical reasons for the global spread of European languages

## Music

- include both traditional and contemporary music and musicians from both countries
- acknowledge the global influences on music and musicians
- reflect the diversity of musicians working in each country

## PE

- collect and exchange playground games and pupils' attitudes to sports
- focus on world sporting events such as the Commonwealth Games, Olympic Games and the World Cup
- organise a joint Sports Day, with teams made up of pupils from each school and aggregated results

## PSHE

- exchange pupils' work on healthy lifestyles
- discuss responses to bullying and the role of peer mediation
- explore pupils' attitudes on race, gender, class, disability, sexuality, migrants and refugees

## RE

- exchange information on festivals and special days that are celebrated within each school
- explore the pupils' own values and their feelings about the dominant values in their own and each other's society, (and key Values Education themes)
- consider the ways in which faiths, traditions and belief systems have influenced each other

## Science

- develop school gardens and learn about growing food and composting the schools' waste
- compare Global Footprints and each schools' consumption, conservation and waste of resources such as energy and water
- acknowledge and celebrate the contribution to scientific achievement by people from the Majority World, past and present

Adinkra is a printed cloth made by the Ashanti people of Ghana since the 18th century, to be worn at funerals though now used for clothing and furnishings. Adinkra symbols carry meanings, each represents a value. Symbols are widely found on shop fronts, jewellery and bank notes. These are some of the Adinkra symbols of particular relevance to partnership. For more information: [www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/ontheline/schools/adinkra/adinkra.htm](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/ontheline/schools/adinkra/adinkra.htm)



### Teeth & Tongue

- the teeth and the tongue are different, but complementary
- we need both to speak
- symbol of interdependence and co-operation



### Help Me & Let Me Help You

- the left hand washes the right, and in turn the right hand washes the left
- we depend upon each other
- symbol of interdependence and co-operation



### Two Good Friends

- fruitful ideas are born when two heads come together
- symbol of friendship



### All the Peppers

- all the peppers on the same tree do not ripen at the same time
- symbol of unequal opportunity and uneven development

## Resources to support partnership

Global School Partnerships offer grants for reciprocal visits  
[www.britishcouncil.org/globalschools.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/globalschools.htm)

There are an increasing number of publications available with information and advice about linking/partnerships. We think this is the most useful:

**Toolkit for Linking: Challenges and Opportunities** UKOWLA 2006  
[www.ukowla.org.uk/main/toolkit.asp](http://www.ukowla.org.uk/main/toolkit.asp)

Produced by a long established linking organisation, this guide explores linking in its broadest context and encourages wider community partnerships. It encourages schools to consider whether linking is the best way forward and suggests a variety of options to develop a Global Dimension.

Classroom resources to reinforce a reciprocal and respectful partnership:

**Letters from... Bangladesh, China, France, India, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya and Spain** Cherrytree Books KS1/2

A series containing penpal letters introducing children, their families, schools and where they live.

**Just Linking** Leeds DEC KS2

This handbook is a practical guide based on the experiences of primary teachers who have developed successful links between schools within the UK.

**Speaking for Ourselves, Listening to Others** Leeds DEC KS2/3

An invaluable resource for exploring children's perceptions, featuring children from Britain, Kenya and Greece.

**Citizenship for the Future** David Hicks WWF-UK KS3/4

The best resource around for encouraging students to consider what kind of world they want to live in, and their role in creating it.

**The resources listed are available on mailorder from RISC.**

**We also have other theme focused packs available.**

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