

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Checklist:

Consider the *Principles of Linking* and how you will try and ensure them within your link.

Are senior management involved?

Is more than one teacher involved?

Is there a link management committee?

Is the link in the school development plan?

Is there a partnership agreement (MOU)?

Is the link embedded in the curriculum?

Are there plans for sustainability and continuity of the link?

Are there strategies for teacher training on the global dimension?

Is there funding to administer the link?

Do you have enough resources: time, energy, money?

Have you considered the wealth of resources from the wider community?

Are governors and parents involved?

Is there wider community involvement: consider teacher to teacher groups from both areas?

Next steps

- Remember that a constant high level of involvement and engagement cannot be maintained all of the time.
- Ensure co-ordinators are keeping in touch.
- Make sure everyone is aware of the pressures and demands which can affect the rate of progress.
- Plan for activities to cover the changes in pace.
- Ensure partner involvement in decision making and ownership of the link.
- Look at your regular evaluation and review as part of your linking cycle.

How do we know it's working

It is essential that monitoring of the effectiveness and value of a link is ongoing throughout the link. These areas are key to reflect on regularly:

Partnerships: aiming for equality is essential. The benefits remain clear to all participants.

Expectations: why is the project being embarked on? Teacher and pupil expectations should be clear.

Effective communication: this must not be underestimated. Teachers involved should have the opportunity to meet and the regular communication with the link school/community must be maintained.

Roles and responsibilities: these must be clarified and agreed – systems need to be put in place to monitor this.

Thematic Links

Global School Partnerships: aims to motivate young people's commitment to a fairer, more sustainable world. The focus of GSP is on educational, equity-based and sustainable partnerships.

To find out more about the workshops and grants offered go to:

www.dfid.gov.uk/Get-Involved/In-your-school/global-school-partnerships

Schools Linking Network: facilitates links between schools in England to help children and young people explore their identity, celebrate diversity and develop dialogue.

- It offers support and training for schools and local authorities to deliver on their statutory duty to promote community cohesion.
- Its projects support children and young people in becoming active citizens.
- Its work in community cohesion is nationally recognized.

www.schoolslinkingnetwork.org.uk



Global Learning Centre

Tower Hamlets PDC
229 Bethnal Green Road, London E2 6AB
T. 020 7364 6405 E. hec@gn.apc.org
[@hecglobal](https://twitter.com/hecglobal)

Details of current teacher training, information on global learning and examples of HEC's work
www.globallearninglondon.org.uk

Join the London Global Teacher Network - LGTN offers London teachers the chance to connect around global learning.
www.lgtn.org.uk

Learning in a Global Context is a framework for supporting schools in preparing young people for life in an increasingly globalised world.



Learning in a Global Context was developed through Local4Global, funded by UK Aid.



Linking

School linking

Linking can enable pupils and teachers to be partners in learning and provide a context for them to reflect on their attitudes, gain an understanding of other perspectives and challenge stereotypical views. However this does not happen automatically – it needs careful planning with partners.

The purpose of linking is to enrich the learning experience of pupils in both schools. Learning through direct contact with other people helps to promote feelings of friendship and common purpose and helps us to understand the diversity within societies as well as between them.

Successful linking requires clear aims and objectives. Remember that linking should be a dynamic process covering community involvement; awareness raising and education; principles of linking; policy and agenda setting; fund raising; co-ordination; accountability and evaluation.

School linking and global learning

Establishing a link with a school in another country can enrich all curriculum areas through the exchange and sharing of information and it can provide the opportunity for a fulfilling and wider world experience for both pupils and staff. There may be the opportunity for staff and pupil visits and exchanges as part of the link. If accessible, ICT can play a vital part in joint work between schools.

School linking can broaden and deepen knowledge about other countries, build friendships and feelings of solidarity with others, challenge narrow and distorted ideas about other races and cultures. The learning journey is at the heart of a link.

Linking is about reciprocity, mutual growth and learning together; it is about acquiring and using knowledge and skills. Learning within linking provides an opportunity for us to look afresh at our own society and question and understand it better. Often we may gain more than we give. Through links we learn that communities are complex, diverse and changing and links can lead us to value similarities and respect difference and diversity within our community and to bring that understanding to a wider audience. Links can give us the opportunity to speak directly to each other; to answer each other's questions and enable the voices of the young and marginalised to be heard. Linking can raise awareness of issues of injustice and inequality on a scale we can relate to and understand. A good link should increase understanding of the historical, economic, social, political and environmental forces which shape our lives and encourage young people to work towards achieving a more just and sustainable world in which power and resources are more equitably shared.

It is important that young people are able to see themselves as part of the wider world and to have a voice themselves.

Where available the Internet is a valuable tool for providing those without power with a voice. It enables them to participate directly in discussions and to contribute to the debate. In development education it enables young people in the North to engage with partners in the South and to learn from them directly about the issues which affect their lives.

Outcomes for pupils

Linking can:

- motivate pupils
- encouraging them to take responsibility for their own learning
- inform debate and heighten awareness of global issues.
- create an environment which encourages enquiry, research and investigation
- develop their skills in communication
- provide a context for them to reflect on their attitudes

Participating in activities related to linking can encourage the development of a range of skills including:

- questioning
- discussion
- critical thinking
- participation
- facilitation
- co-operation
- evaluation
- investigation
- problem solving
- research, that can lead to effective advocacy.



Taken from Uganda or UK, RISC 2010

Linking can offer an engaging context through which to learn about another culture and way of life, exploring both similarities and differences.

Quotes for reflection

We are talking about a partnership of equals. In development as in all linking, if inequality is inherent or apparent in the relationship then we should not call it a partnership.
Peter Nyoni, Oxfam Zimbabwe

Linking should involve a sense of sacrifice on both sides.
Gambian teacher

I am not interested in picking up crumbs of compassion thrown from the table of someone who considers himself my master. I want the full menu of rights.
Bishop Desmond Tutu, South Africa

Linking should be an equitable partnership, and we will give what we have.
Michael Ndubiwa, Zimbabwe

White man is a fish who comes out of the river to leave offerings and to return to the water as fast as he has arrived.
African proverb

A woman from a very rich industrialised country once advised me: 'Tell your people to do as we have done: to use their heads, to work hard, to be honest and they will achieve what we have already achieved'. Her thinking contains three basic misunderstandings: first that we are unintelligent; second that we do not have the will to work hard; and third, that we are dishonest.
Dom Helder Camara, Brazil

Charity sees the need not the cause.
German Proverb



Increasingly the internet is being used to sustain links to schools in the South

Opportunities:

- Linking can help your school and your pupils to:
- make the curriculum real and relevant
 - provide real learning about real issues
 - enhance education and curriculum
 - provide experiential training/learning
 - learn about own culture through learning about another
 - encourage global awareness
 - break down stereotypes
 - make friendships
 - develop creativity within the curriculum
 - enhance personal and professional development
 - develop critical thinking skills

Challenges

- to maintaining a truly mutually beneficial and equal partnership. The link requires acknowledgement and awareness of:
- clarity of aims: having a joint vision
 - different socio-political contexts
 - need for reflection
 - promotion of stereotypical views
 - strategies to manage resource inequalities
 - differences in methodology
 - demands on staff
 - curriculum demands of each school
 - staff changes and continuity
 - need for genuine and regular communication
 - effects of year groups moving up
 - differences in numbers of pupils
 - fitting the link into the school day
 - timetable priorities and differences

Successful Linking means:

- ensuring an equal and sharing relationship
- ensuring opportunities for reflection
- recognising and appreciating different value systems and perspectives
- acknowledging the legacy of colonial relationships
- recognising the difference in teaching techniques
- recognising and appreciating what the link school has to offer
- take care not to lead the agenda
- avoiding representations of partners as poor
- avoiding engagement by pupils on fundraising for 'poor' partners
- being aware of the challenges of fundraising to maintaining an equal partnership
- exploring perceptions of what the relationship means to each partner
- managing expectations of the link school
- ensuring your partners voice is heard and valued
- recognising difference in teaching techniques and methodologies
- ensuring full and equal participation by partners
- creating opportunities to reciprocate within the link
- ensuring all contributions to the link are recognised, acknowledged and valued



The UKOWLA 'Toolkit for Linking' was developed by HEC's director Margaret Burr (in photo on right) for UKOWLA (UK One World Linking Association) and the linking coalition BUILD (Building Understanding through International Links for Development). Launched and endorsed by Desmond Tutu (in photo on left), it outlines guidance across many aspects of the process of linking. It is available from UKOWLA and downloadable from www.ukowla.org.uk

Working with differences, and against notions of 'cultural supremacy'

There are differences in schools even within a country, but there are inevitably more differences between schools, teachers and pupils across the world. There will be different curriculum content, teaching methods, access to resources and priorities. The academic cycle may start at a different time of year so that the natural ebb and flow of work is influenced by holidays, exam times and activities such as festivals, planting and harvesting which involve the whole community. Differences in the access of individuals and communities to resources are key factors influencing many links. Where differences are also inequalities, the 'power relations' can reproduce ideas of cultural supremacy which need to be challenged if the link is to be successful.

Links are sustainable only when participants in the linked communities share common aims and objectives, understand the circumstances of their partner community and are realistic about the problems they are likely to face.

Key elements for success are

- ensuring that your partner feels valued,
- that you share a joint agenda, consult widely and are inclusive within your communities.
- involving the diaspora or expatriate communities in your partnership. They know their home country and can help maintain the link's momentum.

The Purpose of a Link...

Linking should not be a narrow end in itself, rather it should be a means of helping people to grow in awareness and understanding through real relationships and joint endeavor.

Principles of conduct:

- Transparency of motives and benefits
- Honest dialogue
- Trust
- Listening rather than telling
- Flexibility, with accountability
- Recognition of the value of enthusiasm and commitment
- subjected to regular review.

Characteristics:

- Commitment
- Community wide participation
- Mutual understanding and respect
- Equity
- Mutuality of endeavour and sacrifice
- Reciprocity

Successful links:

- are dynamic rather than static
- are based on a commitment to mutual understanding
- define from experience what they mean by equality
- develop a basis for open and honest communication.

Outcomes:

- mutual understanding and respect
- community cohesion
- sustainable development
- personal confidence, dignity and empowerment, leading to improved security, justice, prosperity and peace.

Thinking about Linking?

These key elements of linking take time to develop, but must be recognised as central to the planning process from the beginning. Linking must mean open engagement with regular reviews and consultation. It is often a tough road but it can be both fun and rewarding for those involved.

Linking can provide an insight into alternative perspectives and combat prejudice, racism and xenophobia, however without careful thought and consideration it can reinforce stereotypes.