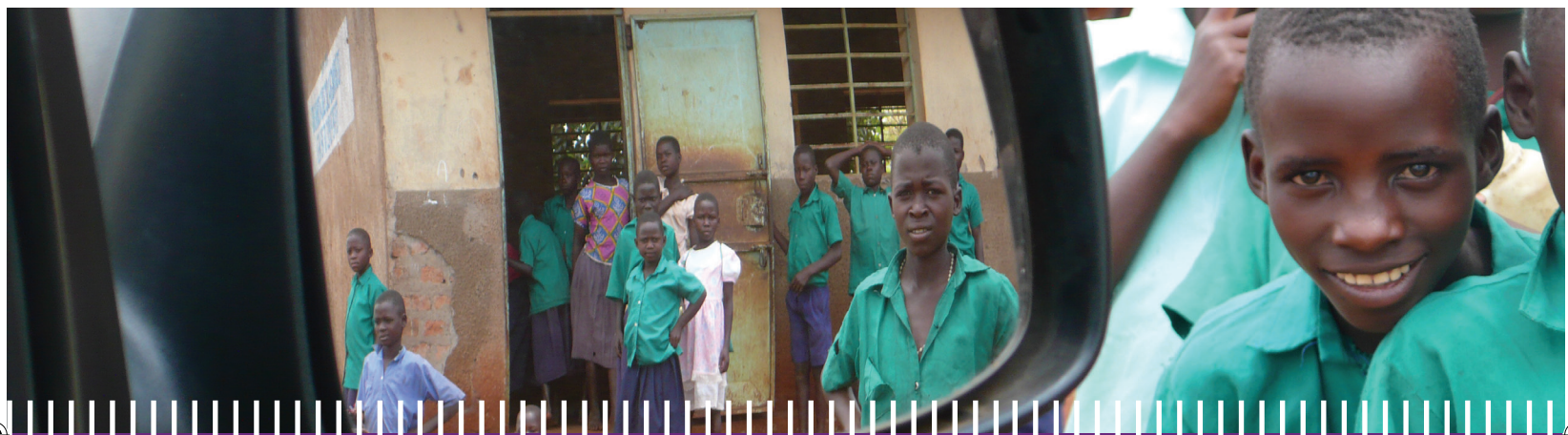




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## Development Education Research Centre Research Paper No.10



# School linking – where next?

## Partnership models between schools in Europe and Africa

Douglas Bourn and Olga Cara



Funded by the European Union as  
part of the Partners in Development  
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Research Paper No.10

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**Douglas Bourn and Olga Cara**

## Preface

School linking today faces a very different operating environment from that encountered by the Link Schools Programme when it first launched back in 1998. Stark shifts in UK policy towards development education are forcing those involved in facilitating school partnerships to ask fundamental questions about the purpose of school linking, who benefits, and the economic sustainability of existing linking models.

These changes have directly affected Link's operation of the Link Schools Programme and the European Union (EU) Partners in Development grant that we received to support our linking work. When our EU funding began in 2010, UK education and overseas aid policy was firmly behind development education. Global citizenship was referenced in the curriculum, increasing school demand for international links and DFID funding required development projects to "include an element of building support for development in the UK"<sup>1</sup>. Over the three year lifetime of our EU grant, there has been a complete policy reversal following the election of a Coalition government in the UK. The concept of global citizenship is no longer referred to in the curriculum in England, although it still has some status in Wales and Scotland. DFID now stipulates that: "Absolutely no Global Poverty Action Fund (GPAF) funding can be used for awareness-raising activities in the UK"<sup>2</sup>.

As a result of this increasingly challenging environment and the end of our current EU grant, Link has decided, with regret, to end its school linking programme after fifteen years of operation. At this turning point for us as an organisation, we wanted to reflect on what we have learnt from working in the sector, to celebrate our achievements, and to encourage wider debate on the challenges we have faced and their implications for the sector as a whole.

The Link Schools Programme was different from other linking models in that it deliberately set out to address the imbalance in existing linking programmes between northern and southern benefit. It worked exclusively with rural, African, government-run schools that were already part of Link's broader school improvement projects. It established a supported linking model that benefited all African schools in a district, both linked and not linked, and openly encouraged closely monitored and targeted fundraising to support development projects in African partner schools. As a result of this emphasis on southern benefit, the programme embodied, more than most linking programmes, the tensions that have existed across the linking sector between northern biased grant priorities and southern beneficiary needs. As this report outlines, the programme has achieved notable success both in contributing to improved school performance in African schools and in building development knowledge in European schools, but overall

<sup>1</sup> DFID Civil Society Challenge Fund, application guidelines, 2010

<sup>2</sup> DFID Global Poverty Action Fund, application guidelines, 2012

it has struggled to meet the breadth of outcomes its dual-beneficiary structure demanded.

Over the course of fifteen years of coordinating school links and teacher placements - and of juggling these competing priorities - we have learnt some key lessons:

- a consistent policy environment at both ends of the partnership is crucial to building effective and sustainable programmes;
- linking should have a clear purpose – not just linking for linking’s sake – and that purpose should be defined by schools and communities on both sides of the partnership;
- linking can help meet school improvement and development education agendas, but success requires significant capacity and balanced funding. Economically sustainable, fully-supported linking models without external donor funding are just not viable in the current climate;
- structured overseas placements north-south or south-north can have real impact.

In order to explore these lessons further and to set them in a broader context, this final evaluation report for our EU Partners in Development programme, conducted by the Institute of Education, focuses not just on the evaluation of a single project, but also on comparing linking models and challenges across the sector. As we now bid farewell and offer heartfelt thanks to all of the schools and staff that have worked with us over the last fifteen years, we hope that this report does justice to all that they have achieved and provides a critical lens through which to plan for the future.

**Beth Kreling, Programme Director, Link Community Development**

## Executive Summary

Linking between schools in the UK and schools in sub-Saharan Africa has been a feature of the educational landscape for more than twenty years, but became a government priority between 2000 and 2010. Whilst the interest in Ireland was less, both countries resourced linking programmes primarily as a means of raising awareness of development issues.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) also became involved in school linking during the first decade of the twenty first century with Plan UK and Link Community Development (Link) being the leading organisations in this field. However due to funding constraints and change in UK government policy post 2010, both of these NGOs ended their linking programmes in 2011 and 2012 respectively.

Link's involvement in school linking came from a development perspective; links were primarily seen as a mechanism for improving schools in sub-Saharan Africa. Development education only became a main feature of their linking programme with their European Union funded project, Partners in Development (PiD), which ran from 2010 to 2012. This project was funded from a development awareness budget line, but the NGO's proposal included development goals within the project. This became a major source of tension that was unresolved throughout the life of the project.

This report is an evaluation of the *Partners in Development* project that was based on linking schools in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, with schools in Ghana, Malawi, Uganda and South Africa. The evidence gathered was based on a combination of quantitative based questionnaires, interviews with key staff within Link and in-depth data gathered from a number of schools in Scotland.

### **The main findings of the evaluation are as follows:**

- i) The Link Schools Programme (LSP) was clearly valued but its impact was different in the UK and Ireland from that in South Africa, Ghana, Malawi and Uganda. For the schools in Africa the impact of the programme was clearly much more on skills gained and access to resources and infrastructure support; whereas in the UK and Ireland impact was more noticeable in terms of knowledge gained.
- ii) The breadth of schools involved, particularly in the UK, suggests that the programme reached different schools from those which have been involved in other linking programmes.
- iii) The project suffered from funding criteria that continually focused on a target

driven approach. This meant that some of the more imaginative and creative areas that emerged during the life of the project were not able to be fully explored.

iv) Link staff became too heavily involved in administration and support, particularly administering the exchange of letters between schools, and did not focus enough on professional development support in Europe. However there was evidence of well supported professional development programmes in partner countries in Africa.

v) As a consequence, many of the issues that often emerge in linking activities, such as perceptions of the lives of the partner school's pupils, the dangers of reproducing colonial relationships and sharing examples of mutual learning, were not fully addressed. The themed resource packs were welcomed but were not necessarily the priority need in terms of areas of study for partner schools in the Global South.

vi) The website was popular and the Solar Connect component that provided internet access to some of the schools in Africa was highly valued. The direct exchange of letters and material, although costly in terms of time and support, was regarded as very important, particularly in terms of raising standards in English language.

vii) Supported links developed by the Link model clearly have value. They can locate partnerships within specific communities by maximising existing contacts. They can provide opportunities for professional development support and act as conduits for access to broader educational support and resources. But seeking funding to pay for this from partner schools in the UK and Ireland is a challenge; the amounts they are prepared to give are never going to be sufficient to ensure such programmes can be self-funding.

The project had considerable impact and value to schools in both Europe and Africa. The benefits were however quite specific and distinct to particular schools, and in many cases were not easily categorised within development education objectives.

An overall recommendation for funders of school linking programmes in future is that links need to be supported on their own terms, which by the nature of the bi-lateral relationship at the heart of school linking, will always be both educational and developmental. Programmes should make reference to mutual learning but at the same time include an understanding that agendas and needs will be different in the Global North from those in the Global South.

### *'Do you ride an Elephant to school?'*

(Question posed by pupil from school in England to partner school in Ghana)



1

## Introduction

This research report has been produced by a research team at the Institute of Education based at the Development Education Research Centre (DERC), in partnership with Link Community Development (Link). It is the third and final report in a series produced by the Research Centre on the work of Link and its European Union (EU) funded Partners in Development (PiD) project.

The two earlier reports were: a mid-term evaluation of PiD (Bourn and Cara, 2012); and research that looked specifically at the impact of partnerships on rural schools in a district in Uganda (Bourn and Bain, 2012).

This research report builds on the evidence published in those reports and is the final evaluation report of the PiD project. This report particularly aims to reflect on:

- i) the impact of Link's PiD programme on schools and pupils;
- ii) its role and value in relation to models of school linking;
- iii) the merits of international partnerships for NGOs where the primary focus of the organisation is based on development goals and objectives.

This report does not aim to reflect on some of the broader debates and questions regarding international school partnerships, such as neo-colonial and power relationships, changing priorities and the agendas of funders, nor what is meant by inter-cultural understanding and contribution of personal experience to learning. Some of these issues are covered in Alison Leonard's (2012) research report on the Aston-Makunduchi partnership; and have also been addressed in the work of Andreotti (2011), Martin (2007) and Disney (2008). To date, Link's activity in school linking has not featured significantly in any other research.

In commissioning the Research Centre to undertake this research and final evaluation of the PiD project, Link was primarily interested in the value of the school partnerships model they had developed, particularly in relation to similar programmes; the impact of having a project framed by the EU funding criteria; and the interrelationship between development education aims and practices and the NGO's broader development programmes.

In 2012, in reviewing the PiD project and earlier programmes on school linking, Link made the decision to close its engagement in this area of activity. It is continuing to raise awareness of development issues in schools via a new campaign named "Passport to Education" which aims to promote global citizenship skills whilst fundraising for sustainable school improvement work

in sub-Saharan Africa. For both financial and strategic policy reasons, the organisation has decided to focus more on its core business of building capacity and improving performance in schools in specific countries in sub-Saharan Africa. This report is thus in part a reflection on the lessons of the organisation's overall engagement in development education.

## 2 Methodology

For this final evaluation of PiD, a methodology was agreed with Link that not only aimed to address the impact of the objectives agreed with the funder, the EU, but also to consider the most appropriate models for school linking and the role that NGOs can play when their main focus is on development goals and objectives.

This study has therefore aimed to address three key questions:

- i) What has been the impact of the *Partners in Development* project in terms of increasing awareness and understanding of development issues in schools in UK and Ireland?
- ii) To what extent has the project improved the quality and performance of schools in Ghana, Uganda, Malawi and South Africa?
- iii) What does the evaluation of the PiD project tell us about the most effective models of school linking?

To gather evidence for this final evaluation, a mixed methods approach has been taken so as to ensure a combination of quantitative data related to usage and impact of the materials produced from the project, alongside qualitative evidence based on interviews and reflections from key personnel in Link in both Europe and Africa. Questionnaires were sent to all schools in Europe and samples of schools in African countries engaged in the project. Whilst there were some variations from country to country in terms of the quantity of the data gathered, we feel we have gathered sufficient evidence to enable us to provide an in-depth evaluation of the PiD project.

The main elements of the research conducted for this evaluation have been:

- analysis of existing documentation and research in international school partnerships;
- interviews with key players involved in the PiD programme;
- analysis of data from questionnaires (130) and focus groups (9) from schools in England, Scotland and Ireland;
- incorporation of data from a study conducted in Scotland of 6 schools' engagement with the programme, including evidence from teachers and pupils;
- surveys of impact of the programme from schools in Uganda, Malawi and Ghana;

- evidence from evaluations of use of themed resource packs;
- analysis of comments made by speakers and participants at the IOE/Link Conference on school linking held in November 2012;
- Link staff reflections.

A feature of the evidence gathered in Scotland was the combination of interviews, focus groups and a pupil-centred exercise. The Heads, Hearts and Hands (HHH) activity required small groups of children to sketch a human body outline on to paper, and write what they know (head), feel (heart) and do (hands) regarding their school partnership. This research method was chosen as it was used successfully in some of the earlier research and evaluation material for this project (Bourn and Bain, 2012; Bourn and Cara, 2012). Focus groups were conducted with teaching staff in each school. Interviews were carried out with the link coordinator in each school. There were six schools in the sample, four primary and two secondary, with varying lengths of relationships.

There were some limitations to the approach taken. For example, it was not possible for the research team to undertake any direct qualitative research with the end-users of the project, teachers and schools. Also there was more evidence gathered in Scotland and England, for example, than in Ireland. It was also not possible to have in-depth interviews with Link staff in all countries involved in the project in sub-Saharan Africa. Evidence from most of these staff was based on written material submitted, based on an agreed number of question areas.

3

## Context

International partnerships between schools in the UK and schools elsewhere in the world have been part of the landscape of the British education system for many years. The drivers for this have been:

- teachers' own enthusiasm for encouraging broader world views amongst their pupils, to learn and experience different cultures;
- policy makers' belief in school partnerships as a way of breaking down international barriers and healing rifts between countries; as part of European, Commonwealth or UK-US programmes; and as a means of increasing support for the allocation of taxpayers' money to the DFID budget;
- development education and development awareness grants for school partnerships as a means of meeting global citizenship and development awareness goals;
- belief in the value of global connectedness as a mechanism for broadening the experiences and outlook of pupils.

Cook, in her review of the EU funded Comenius school partnership programme, found that it was an 'effective vehicle to support the delivery of two major education initiatives': *'Developing a workforce with the necessary skills to live and work in a global economy'*; and *'Providing professional development for teachers'*. These, she suggested, were key drivers for international school partnerships in all four UK nations, including 'raising awareness of global issues, promoting tolerance of and an appreciation of different beliefs, cultures and backgrounds and improving relationships between different communities (Cook, 2012:i).

In the UK, partnerships with schools in the Global South become a major feature of school life from 2000 onwards, as a result of a drive from DFID and the then Department for Education and Skills to encourage all schools to have a link by 2010. As a result, a major programme of funding through the British Council and other NGOs and educational bodies led to a significant expansion of international school links in the first decade of the twenty-first century (Disney, 2008; Leonard, 2012). Elsewhere in Europe, notably Ireland, there was the emergence of a similar initiative of encouraging school links, with funding from Irish Aid (see Toland, 2010).

These initiatives were part of broader goals set by the UK government, the Irish government and the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales to give greater prominence to global and development themes within education. Whilst there may have been variations in the use of terminology and the specific focus and countries

for partnerships, the overall themes tended to be linked to development awareness. Supporting a partnership with a school in the Global South through mutual learning and real life experience was seen as a practical and valuable way of building understanding of international development and of global issues.

The European Commission in its grant-making programme for civil society organisations in development awareness, whilst not directly mentioning linking, clearly saw direct engagement with partners in the Global South as an important element of its funding criteria.

Similarly, DFID included a development awareness line in its mainstream development funding as part of the Civil Society Challenge Fund (CSCF). Whilst project activity was usually focused on poverty alleviation in the Global South, the grant conditions stipulated that "It is a requirement that all CSCF projects include an element of building support for development in the UK". For UK NGOs focused on project activity in the Global South, this created an immediate incentive to spread their focus to encompass development education activity in the UK as well, in order to qualify for development funding.

Any linking programme must have dual beneficiaries, either directly or indirectly. Funding streams which favour one or other beneficiary create explicit or implicit tensions in project delivery and reporting. Most funding opportunities for school linking, whilst coming from a development focus, saw constituencies in the Global North as the main beneficiaries, with a consequent impact on the management and emphasis of linking programmes. The importance of this tension does not appear to have been recognised in programmes supported by either the EU or DFID prior to 2010.

Following UK elections in 2010, the Coalition government in the UK, through DFID, decided to end its grant programme to NGOs on development awareness, and not to support development organisations including any form of development education activity within their broad strategic partnership agreements. The government did however agree to continue to support international partnerships, but only through one programme, the British Council Connecting Classrooms programme, which brought together the former DFID funded Global Schools Partnership programme and an earlier version of Connecting Classrooms. This new programme has a much stronger focus on professional development for teachers around the world, with international partnerships being only one element <sup>3</sup>.

The consequence of these decisions was that for a number of organisations, school linking alongside broader development education became a lower priority, or in some cases resulted in organisations withdrawing from engagement in this area of practice altogether (Bourn and Kybird, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> <http://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/programmes-and-funding/linking-programmes-worldwide/connecting-classrooms>

4

## Models of School Linking

Before we review the model of school linking, it is necessary to summarise the range of linking programmes other than those developed by Link which have evolved over the past decade in the UK and that have a global theme. The sixteen programmes outlined below have a focus on partnerships between the UK and the Global South. There are other programmes such as the wide range of European programmes, links between schools and teachers in the UK and North America, Anglo-Japanese partnerships and a large number of small scale, community based initiatives that may well involve schools. Those identified here in Table 4-1, are chosen according to those which feature most prominently in linking programme catalogues.<sup>4</sup> The sample was analysed according to the following criteria:

1. Year the programme was established (and terminated, where relevant)
2. The organisation's ethos and motivation for providing the programme
3. The extent of support provided to schools by the programme
4. The scope of the countries involved in the programme
5. The number of schools involved in the programme
6. The number of organisation staff dedicated specifically to the programme
7. The funding for the programme

The following observations can be made about these programmes:

- i) nearly three quarters of the programmes in the sample started in the 1996-2007 period;
- ii) the majority of the programmes involve joining specific communities, or children-centred development, or had development education themes within the aims of their activities;
- iii) the majority of the programme support is based on linking advice, professional development, teaching resources, partner allocation, arranging visits and online resources;
- iv) almost half the programmes have a worldwide scope, whereas the remainder focus on specific areas of the world, or particular communities in those areas;

<sup>4</sup> [www.bbc.co.uk/worldclass](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldclass); [www.globaldimension.org.uk](http://www.globaldimension.org.uk)

Table 4.1 A comparison of school linking programmes

Linking programme name (and organisation if different)	Active since	Ethos/Motivation for programme	Extent of programme support	Worldwide scope of programme	Number of schools	Number of staff dedicated to linking programme	Linking Fee/External Funding
<b>Afri Twin</b> <sup>5</sup>	2001	Connect learners and teachers from South Africa & UK	School clustering, partner allocation, guidance & advice, conferences & workshops	UK and South Africa	250+	One in the UK, one in South Africa	Not stated/Sponsored by Winning Ways.
<b>Achievers International</b> <sup>6</sup>	2006	Encourage international trading awareness	Online support, partner allocation	Worldwide	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	£100 annual fee per partner/Initially funded by Apax Foundation.
<b>BBC World Class</b> <sup>7</sup>	2011	Educational legacy for London 2012 Olympics	Partner allocation and advice	Worldwide	Undisclosed	Undisclosed.	Not stated/BBC funded.
<b>Connecting Classrooms, British Council</b> <sup>8</sup>	2005	Developing global dimension and sustainable partnerships	Professional development, educational accreditation, partner sourcing and allocation	180 countries	c. 8000 <sup>9</sup>	Undisclosed.	Free registration / British Council funded.
<b>Development Direct</b> <sup>10</sup>	2002	Support global dimension particularly health education	School link development	North East of England and Africa	42	Undisclosed	Not stated/Initially funded by One World Network North East (OWNNE).
<b>Global Classroom</b> <sup>11</sup>	1996	Research and develop excellence in learning	Exchange visits, student research, video conferencing	Worldwide	43	Undisclosed	Not stated/Scottish Executive & Shetland Islands Council.
<b>Global School Partnerships, DFID</b> <sup>12</sup>	2003–2012	Embed global dimension into the curricula of schools worldwide	Online curricular resources, linking advice, reciprocal visit grants	64 countries including UK	5000 in UK	Undisclosed.	No joining fee/Funded by DfID.
<b>iEARN</b> <sup>13</sup>	1988	Establish meaningful educational projects	Internet support, workshops, project support & linking advice	Over 130 countries	Over 30000 <sup>14</sup>	1 per country	Not stated/Funding from USAID.
<b>Link Ethiopia</b> <sup>15</sup>	1996	Inter-cultural sharing	Country-specific teaching resources, organises visits	Britain and Ethiopia	Over 120	1	Annual fee of up to £500. <sup>16</sup> /Funded by donations and fundraising events.



Linking programme name (and organisation if different)	Active since	Ethos/Motivation for programme	Extent of programme support	Worldwide scope of programme	Number of schools	Number of staff dedicated to linking programme	Linking Fee/External Funding
<b>My School, My Voice, Child Reach International</b> <sup>17</sup>	2004	Encourage mutual understanding between children worldwide	Assembly presentations, teacher support, workshops	UK, Tanzania and Southern Asia	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	Not stated, but presentations free. Funded by Eaga Trust.
<b>OWL (One World Link)</b> <sup>18</sup>	1981	Encourage justice, equality, human understanding and mutual support	Teaching materials, coordinates visits, lessons and assemblies	Bo District, Sierra Leone and Warwick, UK	32 schools (both countries)	Undisclosed number of ex-teachers from Warwick	Not stated. Funders undisclosed.
<b>Partner Ghana, Sabre Trust</b> <sup>19</sup>	Not stated	A brighter future for schoolchildren in Ghana	Teaching resources, training, advice, facilitates exchange visits	UK and Southern Ghana	28 <sup>20</sup>	Undisclosed	Annual fee charged to UK school,
<b>Plan UK</b> <sup>21</sup>	2007 – 2011	Child-centred development	Monthly contact with teachers, <sup>22</sup> professional development support	UK, China and Africa	Over 320	1	Not stated/ Funded by European Commission <sup>23</sup>
<b>Take It Global, TIG</b> <sup>24</sup>	1999	Engaging youth, developing sustainable and peaceful world	Heavily focused on e-resources	136 countries	3351	Undisclosed	Not stated/ Funded by American and Canadian donors.
<b>York Fanteakwa Community Link</b> <sup>25</sup>	2000	Learning and support between York and Fanteakwa	Telephone, e-mail, face-to-face advice on linking and fundraising, workshops	UK and Ghana	16 (York and Fanteakwa)	Undisclosed	Not stated/ Funded mainly by private donations.

5 Afri Twin (2010). All the remaining sources for each organisation are stated in this first column, unless otherwise stated.

6 Achievers International (2012)

7 BBC (2011)

8 Previously Global Gateway, British Council (2012a)

9 4000 partnerships, so around 8000 assumed, British Council (2012b)

10 Development Direct (2007)

11 Global Classroom (2012)

12 Now merged with Connecting Classrooms, DfID (2012)

13 IEARN (2012)

14 Including youth organisations

15 Link Ethiopia (2012)

16 Stuart (2009: 12)

17 Child Reach International (2011), Previously Global Development Links

18 OWL (2012)

19 Sabre Trust (2012a)

20 Sabre Trust (2012b)

21 Bourn & Cara (2012: 39)

22 Bourn & Hunt (2011: 35)

23 *ibid.*: 36

24 TIG (2012), previously Gemini & Rafiki

25 YOWLA (2010)

- v) the majority of programmes operate with around 120 schools or more.
- vi) 80% of the organisations receive external funding to operate their programmes. At least four programmes openly state that a linking fee <sup>26</sup> is not charged.

What this evidence shows above all is that it seems to be very difficult to have any form of ongoing self-funded programme of support to schools in both the North and the South; also that most programmes, despite good intentions, tend to have a Northern driven agenda. Finally there is an underlying assumption that mutual learning and co-operation is not only desirable but feasible. Yet few programmes address the fact that power relations can and do play an important role in what and how pupils learn, in terms of who sets the framework and content of any educational programme, and who influences the pedagogy.

Within these types of linking and the many other more informal partnerships that may exist between schools in the UK and elsewhere in the world, are a range of approaches from links that have grown out of personal contacts by teachers or wider community/local authority initiatives and joint curriculum projects, movements of teachers and pupils, as well as the more traditional areas of exchange of letters and direct fundraising and infrastructure support from the North to the South.

The contribution of school linking to development education themes in terms of raising understanding of global issues, giving a voice to the peoples of the Global South, challenging stereotypes and showing similarities and differences in how children and young people live has been discussed and debated in a number of publications in recent years (See Andreotti, 2006; Disney 2005, Leonard, 2012; Martin, 2012).

A development education lens for reviewing a school partnership could cover the following questions:

- To what extent does the link go beyond fundraising, fasting and having fun (Bryan et al 2012)?
- To what extent does the partnership encourage critical self-reflection, learning 'through other eyes', challenging stereotypes and moving from a charitable mentality to one concerned with social justice?
- To what extent is there a respect for difference as well as similarity, for valuing a range of perspectives?

<sup>26</sup> A fee, often annual, can be charged to schools for the service provided by school linking programmes.

- To what extent does the link encourage learning that addresses global perspectives and the value of mutual learning?<sup>27</sup>

What the review of literature and evidence from a range of reports show is that any analysis of school linking should look at it through a number of lenses regardless of the funding priorities. These lenses could be summarised as follows:

- inter-cultural understanding;
- cosmopolitanism in terms of a common sense of humanity and belief in being part of a global community;
- improving school performance and broader educational goals;
- development education goals such as building understanding of development issues and recognising the interdependent nature of the world in which we live.

In terms of identifying general conclusions that could be relevant to the evaluation of Link's programme, the following points can be stated:

- i) School linking can be an important motivator for teachers in the North and the South. Direct experience and contact can help to increase confidence, broaden horizons and above all give a 'sense of worth and value' to their work. The consequence of this could be seen in improved quality of teaching and learning in the UK and the Global South.
- ii) Pupils' perceptions of the lives of children from their partner school may well be challenged. For example, one pupil from a school in England wrote to a pupil in Ghana, 'do you ride an elephant to school?'
- iii) The emotional attachment by teachers and pupils in the Global North to help and support partner schools through fundraising, assisting with infrastructure development or giving resources cannot be ignored (Leonard, 2012).
- iv) School links can raise many challenges for teachers and pupils in both the North and the South in terms of questioning their own assumptions. Professional development programmes can play a key role in helping to reflect on how to deal with these challenges (Alcock, 2010).
- v) Support organisations in the Global South as well as the Global North can play an important role in dealing with the dangers of imbalance and power relations that inevitably emerge in linking (Bourn and Kybird, 2012).

<sup>27</sup> These points were the summary of Dr Bourn's presentation on research on school linking given at IOE/Link Conference held in November 2012 in London.

A useful summary of the range of benefits schools and pupils gain from partnerships can be seen in the research by McNicoll (2011:50) that is summarised in Table 4-2.

**Table 4.2 Benefits from partnerships**

	<b>Tanzanian Students:</b>	<b>UK Students</b>
<b>Culture</b>	Exposure to another culture and exchange of ideas Breaking down stereotypes Similarity as well as difference Mutual understanding	Exposure to another culture and exchange of ideas Breaking down stereotypes Broadening horizons Similarities as well as difference Mutual understanding
<b>Personal Development</b>	Self Confidence and expanded ambition	Self Confidence Life Changing Experience Challenge and goal setting Sustained Commitment Team work Not taking things for granted e.g. meals, family, education
<b>School Related</b>	Joint projects English Language Different learning styles Increased awareness of world issues	Increased awareness of world issues Joint projects Positive influence of returnees on other students
<b>Sponsorship</b>	Fees paid for students Travel sponsorship to UK for teachers	Make new friends Visit new places
<b>Fun and Tourism</b>	Make new friends Visit new places	Make new friends Visit new places

What this research and other studies (Leonard 2012; Disney 2006) show is the range of influences, many of which go beyond what either the sponsoring organisation or the funder envisaged. Moreover, many of these benefits are very difficult to measure. In some cases, the benefits and outcomes might not be seen as appropriate for a programme funded by an international development programme. Therefore in reviewing the activities of one programme from Link, it is appropriate and necessary to assess not only its impact in terms of the objectives identified with the funder, but also the unintended and wider outcomes. In the case of school linking, it is suggested that this means going beyond development education lenses and objectives and looking at development goals, inter-cultural themes, personal transformations, school improvement and improvements in the quality of learning.

A useful comparison with Link's programme has been Plan UK's school linking work. Both organisations have now closed their linking programmes, in part due to the same challenge: self-funding by schools was neither realistic nor sustainable. Plan UK's school linking programme existed between 2007 and 2011 and consisted of over 300 schools in the UK, with partner schools in China, Kenya, Malawi, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

Plan's vision for their school partnership programme was that every child in the UK and in Plan programmes (around the world) who had their lives touched by a link would gain an understanding of global issues and develop skills to act on issues which affect children locally and globally. What was distinctive about Plan's programme was the focus on child-centred development. The aim of the programme was that:

*'Children understand and act on their rights and responsibilities as global citizens leading to improved governance and effectiveness of schools and other institutions that are responsible for realising the rights of children'*

(Plan UK p. 7).

The challenges Plan had were related to the number of schools in the UK that were prepared to become engaged in the linking programme, and the ongoing tensions that International NGOs have regarding the relationship between development education and educational development goals.

The evaluation of Plan's school linking programme showed that in many countries the programme increased communication skills, broadened horizons and developed cross-cultural understanding. There was some evidence amongst UK pupils of increased empathy and concern with social justice. There was also some evidence in a small number of UK schools that having a link influenced changes to the curriculum and approaches to teaching. Outside the UK, the other main benefits appeared to have been infrastructure support including buildings and computers (Wood, 2010). But it was the use of School Councils and opportunities for pupils themselves to debate issues that appeared to have the biggest impact. This gave pupils the opportunity to engage in decision-making processes and to develop the skills to engage in governance issues rather than more traditional development education (Bourn and Kybird, 2012).

The evidence suggests that whilst many organisations have been involved with school linking in some form, the impact has been difficult to measure, particularly if the programme has been judged against specific funding objectives. The objectives of the organisation may well be different from that of the school or the teacher in terms of their motivation for engagement in an international partnership. Above all, the relationship between development goals and development education practices was rarely explored. A consequence of this has been that issues of power relations, and questions regarding whose agenda the partnership was working on, were not explored.

## 5

## Link Community Development and School Linking

Link was formed in 1989, with South Africa as the main focus of its development work. This focus grew in the 1990s to include working in partnership with governments on educational development in Ghana, Uganda, Malawi and Ethiopia. Its focus has always been to support the delivery of quality education in rural districts:

*'Rather than creating islands of excellence, we use a "whole district approach". Through innovative engagement and support to the district education authorities, we work with every school in a district in order to demonstrate that improved outcomes can be delivered by existing systems and structures and with existing resources. We aim for depth of impact within our core districts to demonstrate good practice that can be taken to scale'<sup>27</sup>.*

Link developed a well-respected school partnership programme in the late 1990s, resulting in over 300 links between schools in the UK and Ireland and schools in Ghana, Malawi, South Africa and Uganda. Alongside this it developed 350 alumni of the Global Teachers Programme, who undertook placements in African schools between 2000 and 2008. In the first decade of this century, Link was recognised, alongside Plan UK, as the leading development NGO involved in school linking in the UK. One of the first programmes on school linking was a result of securing a Millennium Award which enabled teachers from the UK to have a placement for up to five weeks in a rural school in one of the African countries with which Link operated. Another important early initiative was the promotion of links between schools in Scotland with Malawi. This started in 2005 and had school improvement in both countries as one of its main goals.

The organisation's engagement in linking was a natural and evolutionary process that built on its initial project work in South Africa supporting the development of schools. As the work expanded into other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Link recognised the value of promoting partnerships between schools in the UK and schools in countries where they already had some strength and depth of engagement. The partnerships were seen in terms of providing a source of support to African schools, particularly in areas such as school improvement. Raising funds for these partner schools or skills transfer from reciprocal visits and sharing of teaching practice were seen as the main features of these programmes. The focus on development education benefits only came later, as a secondary and complementary goal, largely driven by Northern demand and donor emphasis.

In 2009, Link applied for EU funding to develop its links in a new project, *Partners in Development* (PiD). The basis on which partnerships developed, between the

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.lcdinternational.org/our-model>

UK and Ireland with partner schools in countries where Link already operated, is important in assessing the impact of the PiD project. Development education themes based around mutual learning and understanding, broadening pupils' visions about the world and promoting a sense of empathy between pupils around the world were not high on Link's agenda. This meant that for many of the schools that became involved in PiD there was already a well-established tradition as to how the schools and teachers saw the nature of their relationships.

## 6

## Partners in Development Project

### 6.1 Aims and Challenges for the Project

This three-year project began in January 2010 and ended in December 2012 (see Bourn and Bain, 2012; Bourn and Cara, 2012). The project proposal set out to build on and expand Link's existing school linking programme, which had been running since the late 1990s. It aimed to demonstrate that partnerships between schools in Europe and schools in Africa could considerably enhance both development education and education quality in African schools through a focus on themed learning activities related to development, complemented by direct actions to support African school improvement, including a 40 school solar technology pilot. The project proposal openly acknowledged its dual focus, stating that the project aimed to address:

dissatisfaction with existing school linking models expressed by southern partners, who argue that linking often promotes northern development education without also adequately supporting southern school improvement. The needs of African partner schools are central to *Partners in Development's* design, especially the right of children to quality education.

Nevertheless, as the project was funded by the EU's Development Education and Awareness Raising budget line, the project's overall objective remained to improve the relevance and effectiveness of development education and therefore raise public awareness of development issues in the UK and Ireland through school linking. The specific objectives of the *Partners in Development* (PiD) project were to develop and implement a new and sustainable model of school partnerships that would bring effective and relevant development education and enhanced benefits to a target of 700 European schools and 700 African partner schools. The project focused on three areas:

- 1) developing a clustered linking model with associated support documents;
- 2) applying ICT and solar power technology to improve communication, reduce the carbon footprint of linking, and further learning in sustainable development;
- 3) producing thematic learning resources to engage students and teachers with MDG agendas and to promote direct action in support of development.

The project partners were the seven Link organisations across England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Malawi, South Africa, Ghana and Uganda.



The rationale for the project was that direct communication between schools and direct action taken to support development issues identified in the classroom – all facilitated by Link staff – would provide a key mechanism for bringing learning about development issues to life. It built on previous work by the organisation, notably its Global Teacher programme that was based on short study visits by UK and Irish teachers to supported schools in Africa, and broader NGO work on school improvement in the Global South.

Major challenges to Link in delivering this programme were the criteria and framework set by the funder, the EU. The focus of this funding line was to promote awareness and understanding of global and development issues in Europe. The project aimed to address these objectives and priorities directly, in the following ways:

- Through the development and implementation of an enhanced model for school partnerships, PiD will – *‘Raise public awareness of development issues and promote education for development in the EU’*
- Through direct communication, teaching about the needs and priorities of partner school communities and promoting direct action by learners and teachers, PiD will – *‘mobilise greater public support for actions against poverty and fairer relations between developed and developing countries’*
- Through themed learning experiences that are directly related to the MDGs and firmly rooted in the reality of the African partner schools, PiD will – *‘change attitudes to the issues and difficulties the developing countries and their peoples are facing’*.

Throughout the project, Link made it clear that alongside the development education goals were broader development goals related to the needs of schools in Africa. The funding proposal for example stated:

*‘PiD will also strive to improve the quality of education for an estimated 800,000 pupils in 750 linked African schools in Ghana, Malawi, South Africa and Uganda’*

Southern impact is therefore included in the project impact assessment, but it was accepted that the overall objective remained increased awareness and understanding in Europe.

It is evident from the research carried out for this report that the tensions and relationships between these goals and objectives were never fully resolved, particularly in terms of the extent to which the focus was on mutual learning or using partnerships for differing needs and priorities. The tensions had been recognised in the proposal for the funding:

'It is Link's experience that in many partnerships between EU and African schools, the 'northern' development education agenda can come into competition with the 'southern' school improvement agenda. The obvious economic inequality between EU and African schools leads to the risk that the EU partner will impose its own agenda onto the partnership.' This concern was well articulated by Naledi Pandor, the South African Minister for Education who challenged the audience at the 'Partnerships in the Commonwealth' conference in 2006 with the following words:

*'Unfortunately most funding agencies and policy makers in the North are still mainly concerned about the advantage for children in the North. The important lessons of our experience are that partnerships should not be an end in itself. They should be a means to an end. And that end should be overall school improvement'.*

The PiD project aimed to respond directly to this challenge by aiming to ensure that the development education components included reference to supporting the development of the African partner school.

What this meant in practice became challenging both in terms of the areas to address and the scope of activities. The benefits in the Global North and the Global South are very different and therefore have to be measured differently. This became a challenge for Link, with its limited resources and the inevitable need to meet the priorities of the funder, for whom the Northern beneficiaries took priority.

The project had always assumed a connection with Link's broader educational programme in sub-Saharan Africa and particularly its school improvement projects. For example, the project proposal stated:

*'Through PiD, while learning about development issues, UK and Ireland partner schools will also be invited to directly support efforts to improve their partner school. Through supporting school improvement, (UK and Ireland) pupils and teachers will realise the impact that individual and community action can have in development, therefore mobilising greater public support for action against poverty'.*

It was also assumed that 'through joint curriculum activities, PiD would build real friendships and bring the voices of African learners into European classrooms. A criticism of development education practice (see Bourn, 2012) is that all too often the issues discussed are not based on real world examples and fail to show the complexities and dilemmas that may well exist. One of the issues Link wanted to address was to promote mutual understanding of the everyday issues schools were facing.

Slow speed of communication and irregularity of correspondence were recognised as important constraints to school partnerships. In order to address the differences between schools in UK and Ireland and those in rural areas of Africa, solar powered internet connections were aimed to be established, in 10 schools in each of the 4 participating African countries.

It was anticipated that 100 of the school partnerships in PiD would be in Scotland, 100 in Ireland (including Northern Ireland), and 500 in England and Wales, linked with 700 in Africa. The project also aimed to improve education for an estimated 800,000 pupils in the 700 linked African schools in Ghana, Malawi, South Africa and Uganda.

To achieve these goals and targets, the following areas were seen to be crucial:

- i) Developing networks of clusters of schools in UK and Ireland that will be linked to similar networks of partner schools in Africa.
- ii) Production of themed curriculum materials that are appropriate for skills in UK and Ireland and partner Africa schools.
- iii) UK and Ireland schools through their involvement in the project will engage in further action to support their partner school based on responding to needs and priorities identified at a local level.
- iv) A web-based portal will be developed, to share up-to-date school profiles, progress reports, feedback, information about school improvement projects and learning materials.
- v) Provision of solar power and ICT equipment to 9 schools and the district office in selected target districts in Sub-Saharan Africa, accompanied with provision of training for head teachers and district officials.

It was also assumed that with expanded membership, the subscription service for the UK and Ireland schools would enable the programme to become sustainable after the end of the three-year funding.

## 6.2 Targets and Goals

As will be shown in detail later in this report, these targets and goals became a straightjacket for the project. The key learning outcomes which emerged were subsumed or marginalised in the pursuit of meeting what became unrealistic, quantifiable targets; and the tension between development education and educational development aims stretched activities across too broad a spectrum for the staffing available.

The emphasis on targets, particularly that of engaging 700 schools in Europe, meant that too much attention was spent on trying to engage schools and too little on learning and building understanding of development. Related to this was the structural problem of communication between UK and Irish schools with rural schools in Uganda, Ghana, Malawi and South Africa. The primary method of communication remained the physical sending and exchange of letters, sent via Link offices to the schools, and organised through DHL. This proved to be a very costly and labour intensive part of the project. Whilst there are examples in this report of the impact of these communications, it is clearly not a sustainable form of dialogue between schools, without external funding.

At a technical and quantitative target level, the Solar Connect component of the project achieved what it set out to do. The target of 40 installations was exceeded across the four African countries. Each installation included a solar panel, a netbook, a printer and ICT training for three teachers per school.

Evaluations show that whilst the installations took longer than expected and ICT skill levels proved a major challenge, schools and District Education Offices actively benefited from the pilot. The main benefits were in terms of school improvement, with African schools accessing teaching materials online, communicating with their District Education Office by email (rather than teachers having to leave the classroom for long periods to visit the office in person) and use of the installation as a hub resource for local schools in the area. Whilst some partnership benefits were noted with schools sharing resources by email or via the programme portal, the equipment was never intended to be high enough in its specification to enable skype or other high bandwidth activities; and poor ICT skills meant communication online with partner schools was limited. This created some tensions with UK and Irish schools, who sought partnership benefits rather than development benefits from the installations.

The emphasis in the programme on awareness-raising in the North alongside the differing needs of the African schools meant that with limited resources, the focus became more on ticking boxes to satisfy the funder. The consequence was that, rather than being a programme based on mutual learning, it became determined by the goals and needs of Northern funders and schools. The clearest examples here are the themed resource materials, which are discussed in more depth later. Despite the attempts of the authors of these materials to make them relevant to the African partner schools, comments from teachers and officers in Africa suggested that the themes identified were not seen as most important to their teaching and learning. This does not mean that teachers did not find the materials valuable. Teachers, wherever they are located, will always be resourceful and make use of materials, adapting them to their own needs and gaining new ideas. But on reflection it may have been more appropriate to produce more flexible materials that could have been more easily adapted to different environments.

Link has always seen its priorities as an NGO in terms of impact in Africa. Senior staff within the organisation had envisaged that the project could have benefits at both the Northern and Southern end. Whilst, as this and the earlier research reports show, there is some evidence of this, there was an inevitable and unresolved tension throughout the life of the project between development and development awareness goals and objectives.

The professional development support programme was welcomed and supported by many teachers in the partner countries in Africa. Examples of this were headteacher training in Ghana, pedagogical training in Uganda, literacy and numeracy teacher training in Uganda and gender and health education in Ghana.

The delivery and development of the project was also not helped by a number of changes to the staff team involved in PiD. For example the staff who wrote the proposal had left before the project began. The staff who started off the project, perhaps inevitably, focused on meeting recruitment and development education priorities, but left mid-way through. Finally, the group of staff responsible for the final eighteen months of the project re-focused activity on the original proposal goal of meeting dual needs, and ensuring northern and southern benefit and synergies with Link's development work in the South.

### 6.3 Evidence from the Mid-Term Evaluation

A number of these themes have already been identified in the two earlier research reports produced in this series. The mid-term evaluation noted some very positive features about the impact of the project (Bourn and Cara, 2012). There was evidence that pupils in the UK and Ireland increased their knowledge and understanding about development and global issues and that having a partnership with a school in Africa made this learning real. Pupils learnt about the lives of pupils from their partner schools. A theme that emerged from pupils in both European and African schools was the recognition of the importance of topics such as environment, health and social justice. However, there was some evidence from pupils in the European schools of paternalistic notions towards their counterparts in Africa. For the schools in Africa, there was much more evidence of impact, particularly in terms of skills development and also in terms of learning in environment and health. In both regions, there was noticeable evidence of increased learning, skills and confidence in teaching global and development themes as a result of engagement in the project. Direct contact with fellow teachers was particularly valued. There were several examples of the positive impact of the partnership in revitalising the overall life of the school. There was also evidence of the value of the curriculum resources, which enabled teachers to consider and introduce styles of learning that were more participatory.

A key issue to emerge in the mid-term evaluation was that Link, unlike other organisations engaged in partnership programmes, placed a particular emphasis on the contribution of school links to development goals in the Global South. However the report noted that what this meant in practice did not appear to have been fully explored or debated within the NGO.

The Link Schools Programme (LSP) worked exclusively with rural schools, most of which would not have been capable of sustaining a link without NGO support. The aim was to engage schools who would not usually have had the opportunity to get involved. Link's ethos was that the programme should support all schools in a district, and that whilst they selected schools that were capable of sustaining a link, the aim of the programme was to ensure that both link schools and non-link schools would benefit from activities. An example of this was Solar Connect, where individual schools were installed with solar and IT equipment so that they could act as hub schools for other schools in the area (which may or may not be part of the project). Similarly, when schools raised money for direct action projects in their partner school, a percentage of the money raised went to Link's wider work in the school's district.

This area of support to schools in the Global South was the main focus of the other mid-project research report on schools in Uganda (Bourn and Bain, 2011). The research focused on schools in rural areas within the Masindi district of Uganda and compared the impact of links in five programme schools with five schools that had not had links. The main themes to emerge from this research were:

- linked schools had, compared with non-linked schools, a strong sense of self esteem;
- the link, through formal and informal professional development, had improved the quality of teaching and learning, and overall leadership, in the linked schools;
- children, particularly girls, had more enthusiasm and motivation to attend school as a result of their school having a link;
- local communities with linked schools had a sense of pride and enthusiasm in their school.

By having a link, the school also benefited from opportunities for the teachers and pupils to improve their English language skills. The teachers and pupils tended to have a broader vision, to look beyond their own community and to recognise they are part of a wider world.

However, despite Link's efforts to avert this, the direct action support to the linked schools tended to create a two-tier structure in the district, with significant

differences in terms of resources, quality of teaching and motivation of teachers and pupils. For Southern schools, the priority for any link will always be the extent to which it can help with improving access to education, increasing resources and support, and as a consequence improving the quality of education. NGOs facilitating linking programmes will always face an uphill battle: a) with Southern schools whose first priority is basic teaching and learning needs; and b) Northern schools whose focus on building personal relationships makes it hard to broaden their fundraising priorities beyond an exclusive focus on their partner school. Despite mixed success, Link continued to feel that openly addressing fundraising and resource imbalances when building a partnership would always be better than ignoring them and allowing activities to continue without support or adequate guidance.

## 6.4 Impact in UK and Ireland

The detailed evidence outlined in the next section demonstrates the continued value and impact of the project for both schools in the UK and Ireland and partner schools in Africa. However this evidence, reflected upon in the final section, needs to be seen in the context of the priorities of an NGO, the needs of schools in rural districts in Africa, and how best to develop learning and understanding about development issues in schools in the UK and Ireland.

In most countries in the North, *Partners in Development* (PiD) built on contacts and particularly the motivations of individual teachers who had been involved with the organisation's Global Teacher programme. A starting point therefore is to look at the impact of the project and the targets set in the individual countries involved.

Link's programme in Scotland was reasonably successful. In part this was due to the number of schools involved: 63 schools were engaged in some form with the project, 13 of whom had very good engagement. They also had a full time officer dedicated to supporting them. Another reason for the success of the programme in Scotland was that the majority of the links were with schools in Malawi, a priority country for the Scottish government in terms of development and promotion of international partnerships. Having links with just one country logistically makes management and support to links much easier to manage.

PiD's cluster training programme and accompanying resource materials had some impact in terms of moving teachers towards a deeper understanding of development education. The school curriculum in Scotland also created spaces for learning about some of the themes promoted by the project.

In Ireland, the situation was rather different. International school partnerships as an area of development education practice did not have a strong history and tradition, apart from missionary connections with schools and communities in

sub-Saharan Africa. As a consequence it was a more contentious issue within development education than in Scotland. Recent support for school linking from the Irish government, through Irish Aid, was focused on secondary schools; and primarily with Uganda, a priority country for the Irish government. Two-thirds of school links in Ireland were with Uganda, in part due to the Global Teacher connections, but also because Uganda was a priority country for Irish Aid. Link's priorities have always been with primary schools and this gave it a potentially new and distinctive feature, distinct from the Irish government funded programme.

The support in Ireland from schools came from personal contacts, the majority being teachers who had some experience of the Global Teacher programme. Uganda also became the most popular country to develop links with, probably influenced by the history of partnership between the two countries.

Ireland also had an officer to support the schools, and as a consequence 20 professional development sessions were held with teachers in Ireland. Whilst teachers and schools welcomed and used the themed resource materials, they tended to be used as an 'add-on' rather than as an integral component of the curriculum. Sustaining the school partnerships in Ireland became increasingly difficult because of the changing economic situation in Ireland. Schools found it difficult to identify funds to support the project and their partner school. But Link staff in Ireland noted that the project was successful in that it did raise awareness and understanding of development issues, and schools had 'real life' stories and contacts with schools and children in Africa. This 'sense of connectedness between the schools', recognising similarities as well as differences and being able to have communication with each other, was seen as one of the legacies of the project for schools in Ireland.

The situation in England and to a lesser extent Wales obviously changed dramatically during the lifetime of the project, from school linking and development education being popular with the Labour government in 2009 to a much more lukewarm relationship under the Coalition government. This had consequences in terms of motivation and engagement from schools. England and Wales, whilst having the largest programme, also faced the most difficult challenges as a result of high school to staff ratios. The original target was 500 schools, and it became apparent within a year or so of the project starting that this was not going to be reached. In the end, the project worked with 155 schools which, compared with other NGO programmes, was a respectable number. However despite having an officer to support the programme, in reality Link could only respond to some of the demand for support and did not have the resources to be proactive in terms of identifying professional development needs in European schools (because of complementary project activity more effective support was provided in the African schools). This had consequences for the quality of Link schools' activities, and, there was still a tendency in many schools to



see the relationship in terms of fundraising and helping the 'African school' rather than a process of mutual learning.

The schools that had the most effective educational programme were those with individual teachers who were passionate about the area. Whilst regional training sessions were held, demand for sessions was limited and only 8% of schools who signed up to the programme attended a training session. One of the reasons for this was the pressures on teachers in terms of time and space to engage in an area of professional development that was increasingly being perceived as not central to school objectives.

Within the network of schools involved, 70% were primary schools; and the London area was the region with the strongest representation.

## 6.5 Impact in Ghana, South Africa, Uganda and Malawi

In terms of the impact of the programme on the Southern partners, there were similarities across the countries, but also some specific features related to the strength of Link's history of engagement in school linking in particular countries.

### Ghana

Ghana is a country with a wealth of schools that have links with schools in the UK. But Link's contribution was different from many other support or funding organisations. In Ghana, the NGO works with 350 rural primary schools with the aim of building the capacity of these schools and improving their performance. The schools are supported by District Education Officers and it was through these Officers that most of the communication and support to schools for the project was undertaken. Working within existing government structures is central to Link's approach to development interventions, in all the countries with which it works.

For most schools involved in the programme in Ghana, the major impact was the access to increased resources and direct contact with schools in the UK and Ireland, which helped to broaden both teachers' and pupils' horizons. The schools felt valued and gained a greater sense of self esteem.

Whilst the direct links and exchanges between teachers were few, there was considerable exchange of correspondence in letters, as outlined in the next section. The resource materials were seen as useful, but did not cover the priority learning areas that school teachers were looking for - they were more interested in having support in areas such as school management and leadership training. But the approaches and methodologies outlined in the resource materials were valued and did have an impact. For example the Link staff team in Ghana noted the impact on teaching practice, with more evidence of the use of participatory methodologies and group based activities.

Communication was also a problem, with far too much of the contact being via DHL and letter correspondence. Although this was later addressed via Solar Connect, the impact of this appears to have been seen only at local and district level, rather than any notable benefit to the partnership communications. Nonetheless, access to the internet did have impact in terms of access to materials and engagement, not only of the teachers but also of the wider community, in the running of the schools.

The Link Ghana team did see the programme in development education terms. For example one of the officers said she saw the programme's aims as 'to promote global awareness in education, in the sense that we want to get first-hand experience of other continents, because we have different environments. Link was brought in to enlighten people to learn more about each other's culture'. The team saw that a key need was to encourage in children an understanding that there were similarities as well as differences between the learning in Ghana and that in the UK and Ireland.

The project also had an impact on engaging parents and the local communities in supporting schools. The rise of local fundraising was seen as a significant outcome. Ghanaian schools were encouraged to make their own contribution to direct action projects, to prevent fundraising being seen as paternalistic or one sided, and to engage communities in projects in the short and longer term. Although education is now free, engagement in the project showed the value of raising funds for the benefit of the school and the wider community. This raising of funds helped not only with infrastructure developments but also with more in-service training for teachers.

### **Malawi**

Malawi has been consistently involved in the programme, primarily because of the strength of its partnerships with schools in Scotland, as part of a long-standing national programme. A successful feature of the links in Malawi was the exchange of letters. In the Mulanje district for example, 90% of the linked schools were able to send parcels to their partner schools, with on average an 85% response rate from the partner schools. The installation of solar power in six centres in Mulanje also helped with communication.

The themed resource packs were used and valued. For example all 23 linked schools in Mulanje district participated in training on use of the packs. As in Ghana, as a result of the training, lessons were held in schools on the themes. The approaches in the resource materials were recognised as different in many ways from their own experience, but this was not seen as a problem. The materials helped 'teachers to believe learners can do a lot of good work using different practical methods of skills, knowledge and values transfer when engaged systematically'.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Comment of district official linked to the programme in written response to questionnaire.

The installation of the solar equipment had an impact on wider communities, with training being held on how to use the computers. The Centres also became focal points for raising money by asking people to pay to charge their mobile phones. As a result of this, the money generated in one Centre enabled the development of the Teacher Centre. Access to this equipment and its use also led in some areas to a lower drop-out rate of students and teachers.

The programme was seen in many schools to have broadened both teachers' and pupils' horizons. However, the extent to which schools have taken the learning beyond what was presented to them via the themed resources depended upon computer and internet access.

### **Uganda**

In Uganda, the evidence of impact was similar to that in Malawi and Ghana, although there appear to have been fewer long-standing reciprocal relationships. There was evidence of increased knowledge and understanding about global issues, teachers valued and welcomed the resources and opportunities to learn differing approaches, and access to the internet and equipment resulted in new skills being developed. There was evidence from a number of primary schools of direct engagement with the themes from the packs, resulting in follow-up local activities. One school, for example, as a result of learning from the environment pack, started a forestation programme. Over 50 schools were trained in teaching methods on literacy and numeracy, using some of the resource materials as examples.

But unlike Malawi, the Solar Connect initiative in Uganda did not result in generating income because of lack of direct experience in the use of computers, and problems with competitors on paying for charging mobile phones.

Also in Uganda, the role of the teacher acting as a trainer and supporter to other teachers in a cluster did not really work due to problems of access to equipment and distance between schools.

### **South Africa**

In South Africa, the evidence demonstrates similar stories, with schools valuing the partnerships; the support from Link was particularly important in terms of building infrastructure support, internet access and sharing resources more widely.

Link South Africa staff commented on how a number of strong partnerships had been developed with schools, particularly in the UK. It was reported that pupils in rural schools involved in the partnerships appeared to have increased their knowledge and understanding of global issues.

The partnerships were however seen as particularly important because a number of UK schools had raised funds for their partner school in South Africa. This resulted in improved infrastructure, and the Solar Connect installations enabled stronger and closer communications to be established with schools in the UK.

The quality of teaching, management and school leadership was noted as more effective.

Examples of improved teaching and learning reported were:

- gardening projects funded by UK schools supplemented the government school feeding scheme;
- placement of global teachers/ reciprocal visitors improved school-community integration;
- literacy projects started by UK teachers continue to improve reading, speaking and writing skills of learners.

The evidence on literacy improvement is particularly important. Research findings indicate that primary school children in South Africa cannot read, write and speak English with confidence. The literacy projects, initiated by UK teachers, helped to respond to this challenge by encouraging poetry, drama, recitation, reading and story-telling through competitions.

Link staff in South Africa also noted the impact of the project upon increased understanding and respect for different cultures and languages, and for the Millennium Development Goals. Evidence of this was seen in one school in Eastern Cape, who following completion of the environment resource with their UK partner school (including joint project work on tree and flower planting) were inspired to establish a local environmental outreach programme, focussing on 3 strands – water pollution, air pollution and land pollution. Pupils held advocacy meetings with local community members to raise awareness of environmental issues such as the need to avoid veldt fires in the winter<sup>30</sup>.

Overall, in South Africa as in the other African countries involved in the project, future priority needs were in improving the overall quality of teaching, and an emphasis on improved literacy with greater access to materials, particularly reading material.

## 7 Analysis of School and Teacher Engagement with Partners in Development

This section reviews the data gathered from surveys, questionnaires, focus groups and interviews with teachers, and pupil activities in the partner countries. The evidence gathered is patchy, with details about the schools focussed on the UK end of the partnership. The evidence includes material from the UK, Ireland and African schools on the use of letter exchanges, the materials, professional development and broader support.

This review is followed by case study evidence from schools in Scotland and England, looking particularly at the value and use of the themed resource packs.

### 7.1 Schools' involvement

This section looks at the profile of the UK schools that participated in the Link Schools Programme throughout the three years of the PiD project, their activity range, and the degree of their involvement in the programme.

Table 7.1.1 summarises the data on the main characteristics of the schools involved in the programme. In total, out of 234 UK schools in the database at the end of the project, 65% were from England and Wales and 35% from Scotland. The majority of schools had partner schools in Uganda, South Africa, Malawi and Ghana, with an additional 5 schools (not part of the PiD programme) linked to partner schools in Ethiopia. Most of the schools were linked between 2004 and 2008 (39%) and 2009-2011 (32%). 11% of schools joined recently in 2012 and 19% joined between 1998 and 2003. The highest proportion of schools involved were mixed gender (96%), community schools<sup>31</sup> (55%) non-religious (81%), primary schools (65%). School profiles were mixed, with both low and high proportions of pupils eligible for Free School Meals or those with English as a second language. However, overall 80% of schools had more than 5% of children on Free School Meals and over 50% had more than 5% of children with English as a second language. Most of the schools were rated as outstanding (31%) or good (52%) in school inspections, with 16% rated as satisfactory. 15.5% of schools held the British Council International School Award. This Award, which encourages schools to have international partnerships and to include a global dimension within their curriculum, is the most well-respected and supported of the various award programmes for schools.

<sup>30</sup> Link South Africa staff input to Year 3 Project End report to the EU.

**Table 7.1.1 Profile of UK schools involved in the Link programme**  
(only data available is included; missing data is excluded from all calculations)

	N	%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Country</b>		
England/Wales	152	65.0
Scotland	82	35.0
<b>Link Country</b>		
Uganda	63	27.0
South Africa	60	25.8
Malawi	64	27.5
Ghana	41	17.6
Ethiopia	5	2.1
<b>Length of Partnership:</b>		
1998-2003	44	18.9
2004-2008	90	38.6
2009-2011	74	31.8
2012	25	10.7
<b>Type of School</b>		
Infant	9	3.8
Junior	10	4.3
Primary	151	64.5
Secondary	48	20.5
Special	13	5.6
Independent Primary/Secondary	3	1.3
<b>Inspection rating</b>		
Outstanding (E)/ Very good (S)	69	31.1
Good	116	52.3
Satisfactory (E) / Fair (S)	36	16.2
Unsatisfactory	1	.5
<b>British Council International school award</b>		
Yes	32	15.5
No	174	84.5

<b>School size</b>		
Small	63	29.3
Medium	82	38.1
Large	70	32.6
<b>School type <sup>31</sup></b>		
Voluntary controlled/ Voluntary aided	30	19.7
Independent	8	5.3
Foundation	2	1.3
Community Special	11	7.2
Community	83	54.6
Academy	18	11.8
<b>School type (gender)</b>		
Mixed	223	96.1
Girls	7	3.0
Boys	2	.9
<b>School type (religion)</b>		
Roman Catholic	6	3.9
Church of England	21	13.8
Does not apply	123	80.9
Roman Catholic/Church of England	2	1.3
<b>% of Free School Meals</b>		
under 5%	42	20.4
6-14 %	56	27.2
15-30%	63	30.6
more than 30%	45	21.8
<b>% of English As Second Language</b>		
under 5%	56	45.9
6-14 %	17	13.9
15-30%	16	13.1
more than 30%	33	27.0

<sup>31</sup> **Community schools:** (formerly county schools): controlled by the local council and not influenced by business or religious groups. The local authority employs the school staff, owns the school lands and buildings, and has primary responsibility for admissions.

**Foundation schools:** have more freedom to change the way they do things than community schools. The governing body employs the staff and has primary responsibility for admissions. School land and buildings are owned by the governing body or by a charitable foundation.

**Voluntary controlled schools:** almost always church schools, with the lands and buildings often owned by a charitable foundation. However, the local authority employs the school staff and has primary responsibility for admissions.

**Voluntary aided schools:** linked to a variety of organisations. They can be faith schools (often the Church of England or the Roman Catholic Church), or non-denominational schools. The charitable foundation contributes towards the capital costs of the school, and appoints a majority of the school governors. The governing body employs the staff and has primary responsibility for admissions.

**Academies:** run by a governing body, independent from the local council; they can follow a different curriculum.

This data tells us that the schools in the UK involved with the project were very diverse, with no one type of school being more prominent than another. If there is one distinctive feature it is the relatively high proportion of schools where pupils receive free school meals - this perhaps counters the common perception that school linking is of most interest to schools with pupils from more affluent families.

Table 7.1.2 illustrates the profile of the take-up of different activities within the Link Schools Programme. Out of seven main activities offered by the programme, on average schools participated in two, with only 23% of schools participating in more than two activities. The most popular activity was exchange of letters and packages through the scheduled DHL mailings (86%), with cluster training the next most popular (25%). Other activities were taken up on average by one fifth of the participating UK schools.

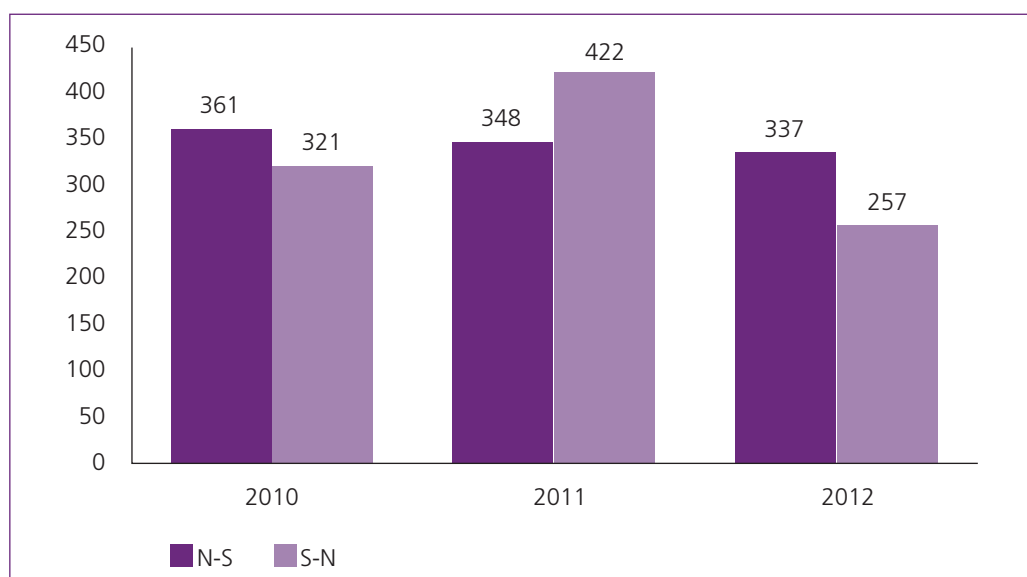
**Table 7.1.2 Profile of take-up of activities by UK schools in the Link Schools Programme** (only data available is included; missing data is excluded from all calculations)

		N	%
<b>Number of activities</b>	0	28	12.0
	1	89	38.0
	2	63	26.9
	3	31	13.2
	4	12	5.1
	5	10	4.3
	6	1	.4
<b>Types of activities</b>			
DHL letter exchanges	201	85.9	
Visits from Link	32	13.7	
Themed Resources	41	17.5	
Cluster Training	59	25.2	
Reciprocal Visits	32	13.7	
Fundraised for Link Community Development or other	36	15.4	
Solar Connect	11	4.7	

This suggests that for UK schools, just having the opportunity to make contact with their partner school was important. The interest in cluster training reflects the thirst for and interest in both linking and learning about global and development issues in general. Although should be viewed in context of the fact that very few schools took up the opportunity to attend cluster training when offered, suggesting time pressures outweigh interest and demand.

Since the exchange of letters was the most popular activity, it is useful to look at the number of packages of correspondence sent throughout the project period. As Figure 7.1.3 shows, in the course of the programme since 2010, 2,046 DHL packages have been sent. Slightly more DHL packages were sent from the South to the North (1,046 compared with 1,000).

**Figure 7.1.3 Number of DHLs per year**



This graph shows the consistency of interest in this activity during the three years of the project, and goes some way to explaining why this remained a major feature of Link staff's allocation of time.

The relationship of the different activities to the nature of the school is reviewed Table C-1 in Appendix C. Overall, there is no tendency for a specific school type to choose any specific type of activities, one exception being that schools in Scotland were more active across the board. The relationships were also tested using logistic regression models. It is interesting that a school's choice of activities seems to be random, and could not be related to any particular school characteristic. This aspect perhaps needs further research into the strategies of schools when engaging in activities, projects and programmes related to global development and education.



## 7.2 Teachers' views

This section includes data from schools in the UK and Ireland, and partner schools in Ghana, Uganda, Malawi and South Africa.

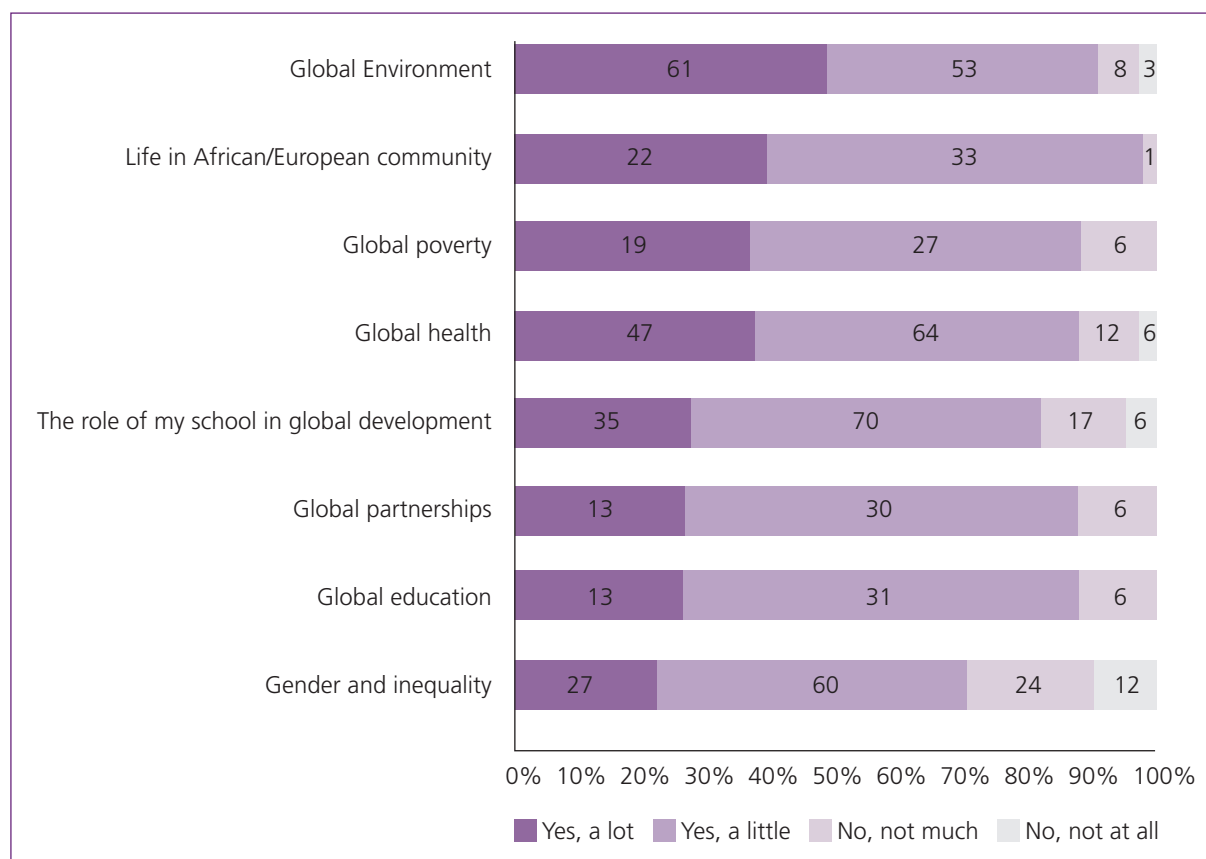
As Table A-1 (see Appendix A) shows, the number of partner schools in the UK and Ireland represented in the survey is approximately the same as the number of schools in Ghana, Uganda, Malawi and South Africa. Most of the respondent schools are primary (83%) and have been linked since 2004-2011 (91%). UK schools have a range of African countries with which they have partner schools. More than half of the African schools (all in Malawi) have their partner school in Scotland.

The following themes are addressed in terms of analysing the evidence from the surveys undertaken:

- increased knowledge and understanding of global themes;
- impact on teachers in terms of their skills, knowledge and expertise;
- value and usage of themed resource materials;
- impact of project on pupils;
- impact within specific curriculum subjects;
- impact on overall school performance;
- relative value of differing aspects of project.

The resource packs were produced in relation to specific global development themes. The responses from teachers tended to relate to the particular resource packs they used, and the overall impact of learning about life in their partner country. Below is the response from teachers to the question of impact of the project in terms of increased learning, based on themed resource packs alongside broader areas such as understanding of the partner country, wider learning about partnerships, and the role of schools. (Figure 7.2.1)

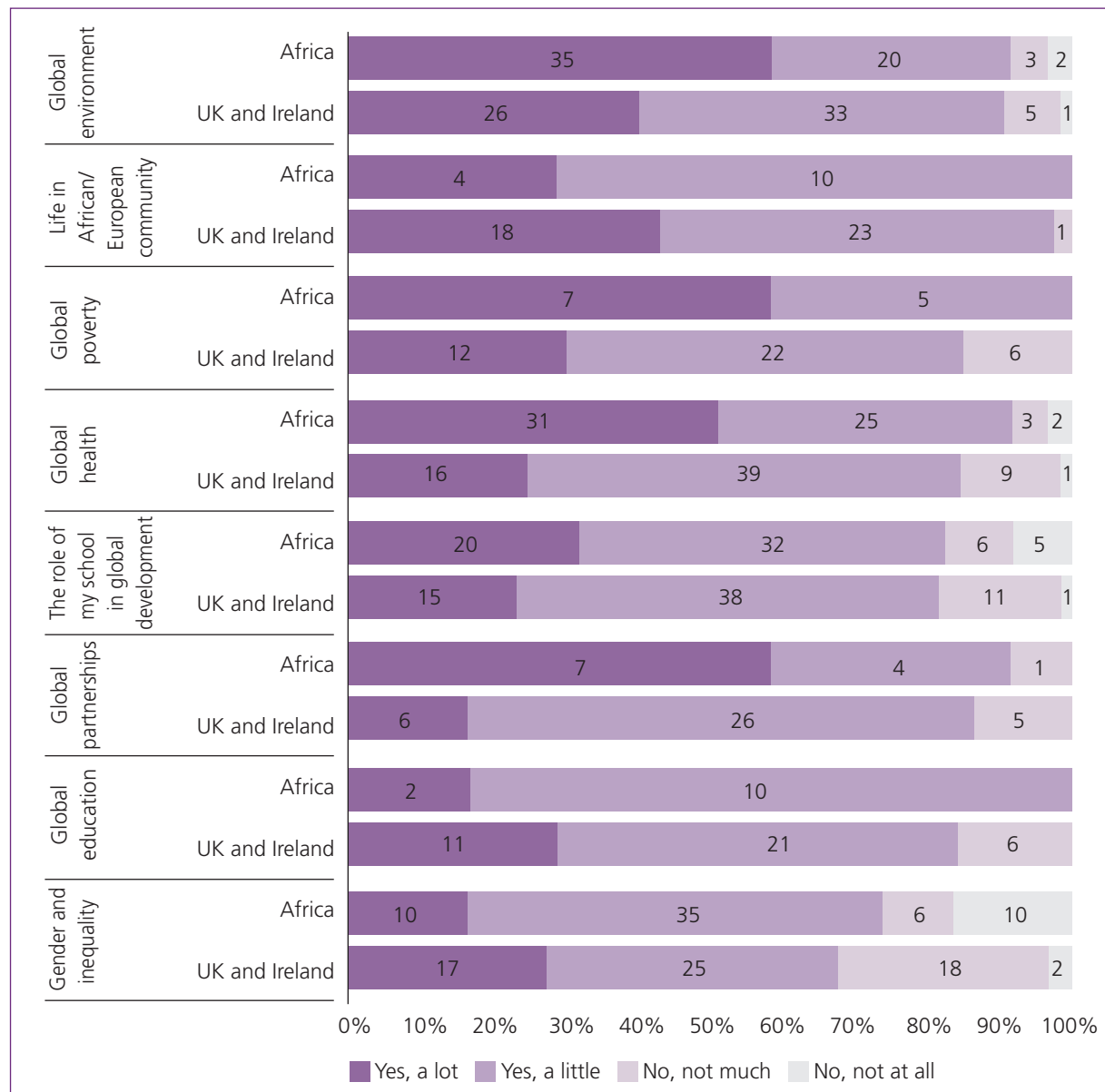
**Figure 7.2.1 Do you feel your learners have more knowledge and understanding in the following areas as a result of the Project? (absolute numbers)**



In general, the highest increases in knowledge and understanding among learners were in the areas of Global Environment, life in African/European communities, Global Poverty and Global Health. There was no difference in the reported increase in knowledge across all areas based on the year when schools joined the programme.

If this question is analysed region by region, significant variations appear, as seen in Figure 7.2.2.

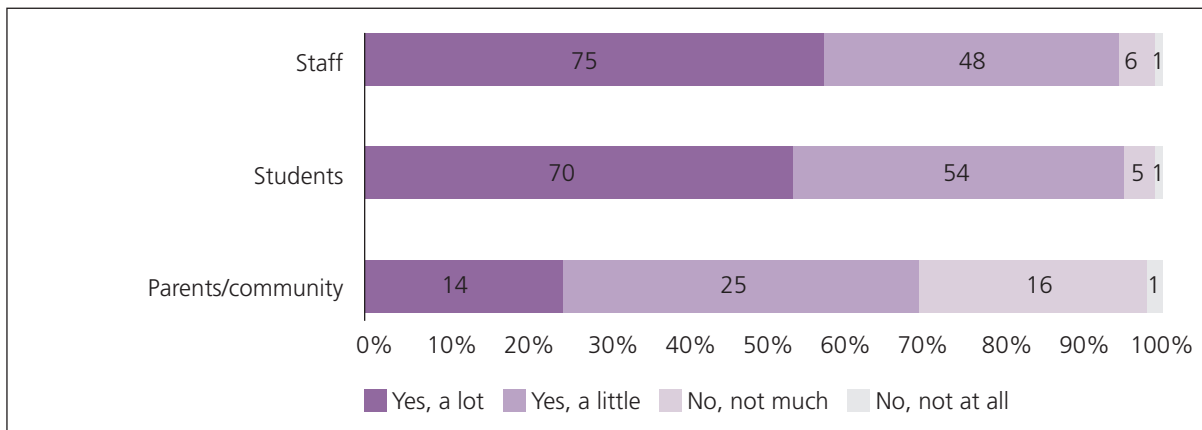
**Figure 7.2.2 Do you feel your learners have more knowledge and understanding in the following areas as a result of the Link Schools Programme?**  
**By region** (absolute numbers)



What is noticeable about this evidence is that overall the biggest impact appears to have been on African schools; and that for UK and Ireland schools, the general conclusions could be deemed to be rather disappointing considering this was the primary focus of the project. There is evidence of learning on the themes related to the resource packs in UK and Ireland but only in the environment area, and this may well be because this was one of the first packs to be produced so has had greater exposure and usage than the other resources.

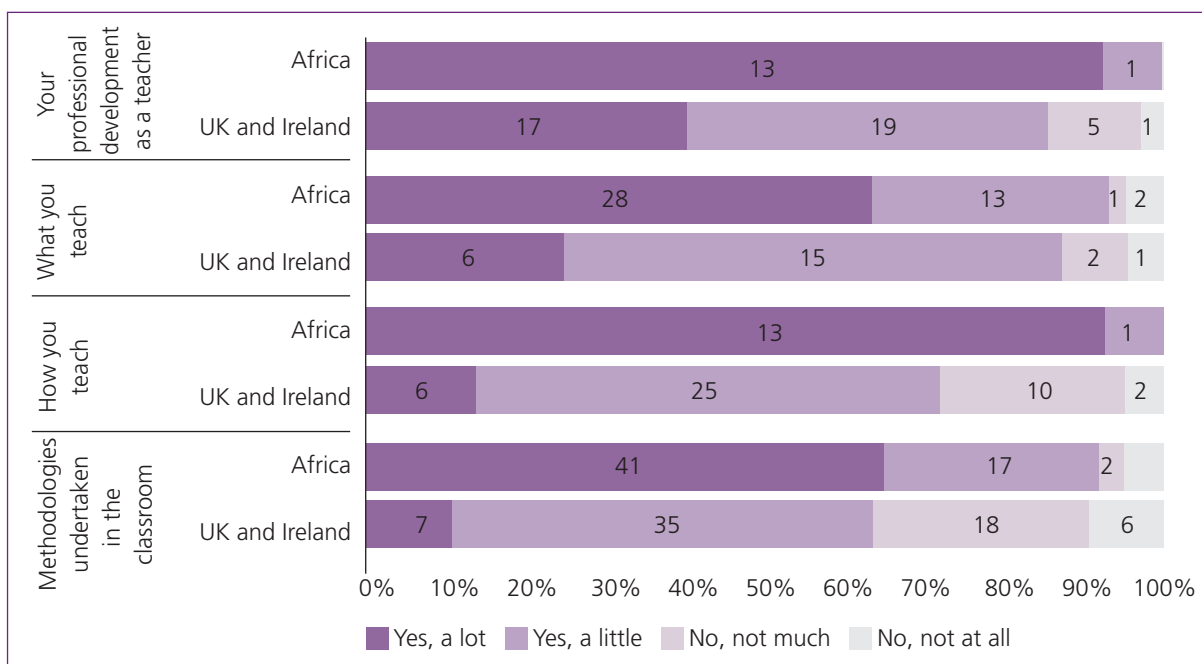
With regard to differentiated impact of the Link Schools Programmes on various audiences, teachers report stronger impact on members of staff in schools involved, followed by the student community (Figure 7.2.3).

**Figure 7.2.3 Overall, do you feel that the Link Schools Programme has contributed to greater awareness of development issues among the following audiences? (absolute numbers)**



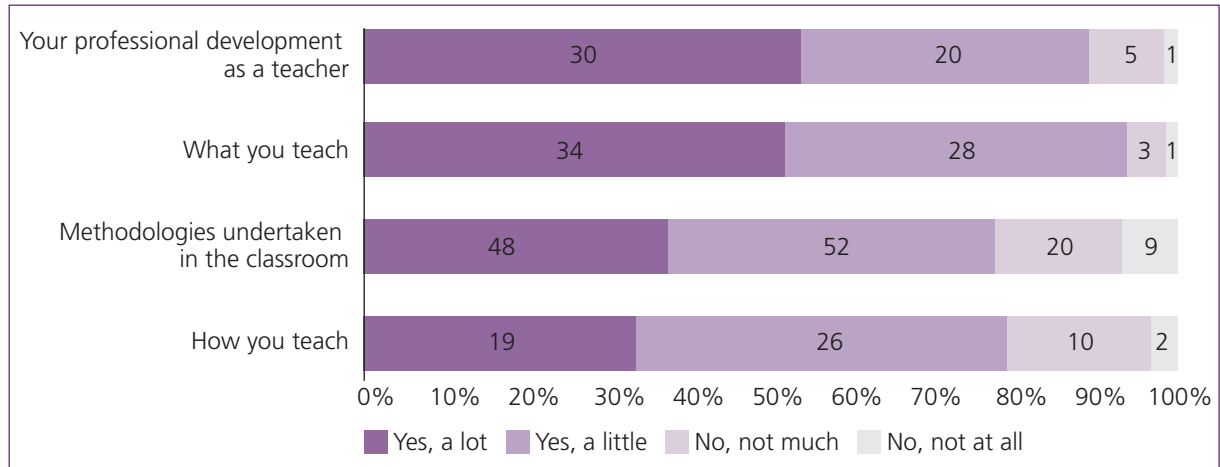
The contribution of the programme to greater awareness of development issues among parents and local communities is much smaller, as would be expected. Here again schools in Africa show a higher impact of the programme across all three audience groups, as seen in Figure 7.2.4

**Figure 7.2.4 Has your participation in the Link Schools Programme resulted in changes to? By region (absolute numbers)**



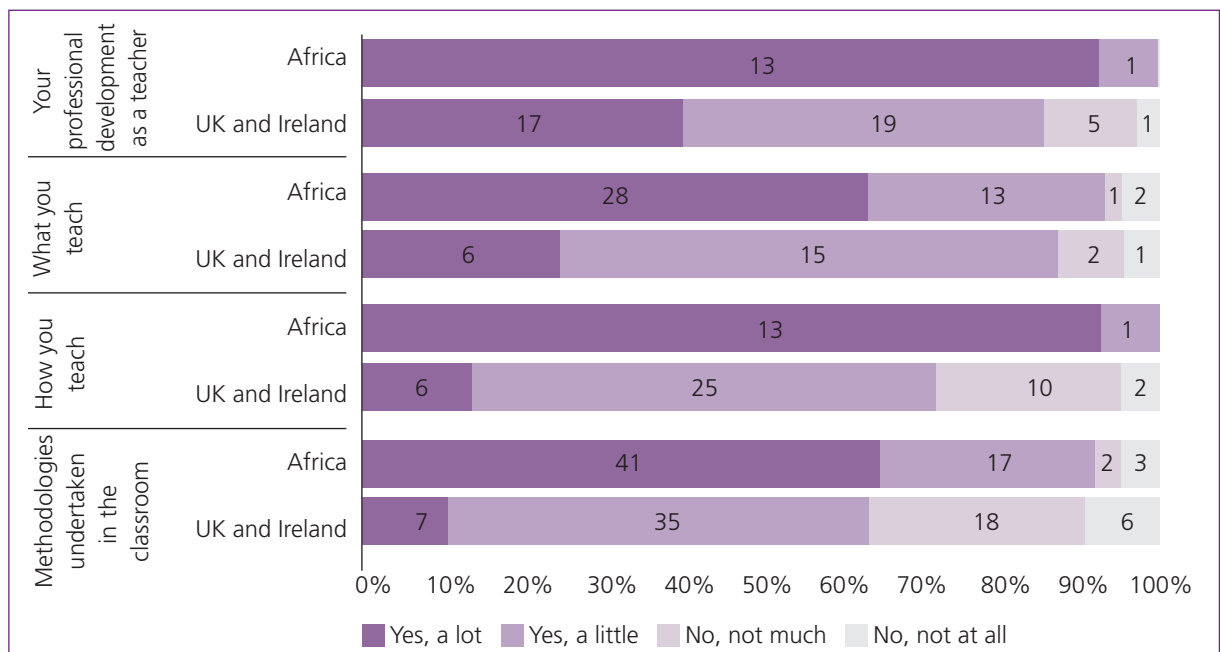
Another area of impact explored was changes in teachers' own behaviour (see Figure 7.2.5).

**Figure 7.2.5** *Has your participation in the Link Schools Programme resulted in changes to? (absolute numbers)*



More than half of teachers reported that the Programme had a substantial impact on their professional development as a teacher. Similar gains were reported in what teachers teach, showing some potential effect on the curricular content. There were also moderate gains and changes to teaching methodologies and classroom practice in particular. The teachers from schools in Africa reported more significant changes in their professional and school lives compared with teachers in the UK and Ireland (Figure 7.2.6).

**Figure 7.2.6** *Has your participation in the Link Schools Programme resulted in changes to? By region (absolute numbers)*



Teachers were also asked to respond in more detail on the influence of the programme on lessons and specific curriculum areas. As Table 7.2.1 illustrates, teaching methods in general had the biggest impact. In terms of curriculum subjects, around one third of teachers mentioned Science as a subject that experienced the most impact, closely followed by English, Geography and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), mentioned by around one quarter of teachers.

**Table 7.2.1 Has your participation in the Link Schools Programme resulted in changes to curriculum areas? (absolute numbers)**

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Teaching methods in general	45	23.1%	46.4%
Science	34	17.4%	35.1%
English	28	14.4%	28.9%
Geography	27	13.8%	27.8%
PSHE	24	12.3%	24.7%
Maths	15	7.7%	15.5%
Citizenship	8	4.1%	8.2%
ICT	6	3.1%	6.2%
Curriculum	4	2.1%	4.1%
Arts	3	1.5%	3.1%
History	1	0.5%	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	195	100.0%	201.0%

There were significant differences between the African and the UK and Ireland schools. The subjects that experienced the most change and benefit noted by teachers in African schools were Science and English, with many teachers reporting overall general changes in teaching methods. UK and Ireland teachers most often reported Geography as the subject most affected by the Link Schools Programme (Table 7.2.2).

**Table 7.2.2 Curriculum areas affected most by changes in how and what teachers teach, by region**

		Region	
		UK & Ireland	Africa
<b>ICT</b>	Count	1	5
	% within Region	2.6%	8.5%
<b>Curriculum</b>	Count	4	0
	% within Region	10.5%	0.0%
<b>Geography</b>	Count	21	6
	% within Region	55.3%	10.2%
<b>Science</b>	Count	8	26
	% within Region	21.1%	44.1%
<b>English</b>	Count	4	24
	% within Region	10.5%	40.7%
<b>Maths</b>	Count	1	14
	% within Region	2.6%	23.7%
<b>History</b>	Count	1	0
	% within Region	2.6%	0.0%
<b>Citizenship</b>	Count	8	0
	% within Region	21.1%	0.0%
<b>Arts</b>	Count	1	2
	% within Region	2.6%	3.4%
<b>PSHE</b>	Count	12	12
	% within Region	31.6%	20.3%
<b>Teaching Methods</b>	Count	9	36
	% within Region	23.7%	61.0%
<b>TOTAL count</b>		<b>38</b>	<b>59</b>

This evidence is reinforced by the observations of individual teachers below. While African schools gained knowledge about teaching methods and ICT and English skills, UK and Ireland schools gained more about the global dimension to teaching, helping to contextualise teaching and learning across different curriculum areas.

### Schools in Partner Countries in Africa

- Child centred methods like group work, pair work, interaction or discussion and discovery methods have been used. The subjects influenced include Science, English and Mathematics.
- The use of the computer in ICT lessons and the sharing of teaching experiences during the reciprocal visits have been applied in the methods of teaching.

- There has been an improvement in spoken and written English and creative work in Expressive Arts by learners; and use of active learning methodologies by teachers in a number of subject areas.

### Schools in UK & Ireland

- Geography is much more realistic now and this link means the children understand more easily/readily. They know that people throughout the world are not the same, through geographical or economic or cultural reasons etc. Words like earthquake/tsunami are now closer to home and watching foreign news is much more meaningful to the children (and staff).
- Meaningful, interesting contexts to deliver aspects of health and well being, geography, some aspects of science. Global citizenship fits in well to Curriculum for Excellence - Ethos and Life of the school.
- More aware of adding global dimension to teaching - similarities and differences. Biggest impact in Eco and fair trade awareness.

When teachers were asked about what impact the Link Schools Programme has had on their school performance (see Table 7.2.3) more than half of teachers (68%) said what had changed the most was learning; and almost half (48%) said teaching. Additionally 41% of teachers reported impact on the whole general development of the school; and reported using their participation in the Link programme as evidence for application for school Awards<sup>32</sup>(22%)

**Table 7.2.3 School performance areas affected the most by the Link Programme**

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
<b>Learning</b>	68	32.5%	68.0%
<b>Teaching</b>	46	22.0%	46.0%
<b>Whole school general development</b>	41	19.6%	41.0%
<b>Awards</b>	22	10.5%	22.0%
<b>Inspections</b>	11	5.3%	11.0%
<b>Resources</b>	11	5.3%	11.0%
<b>Projects</b>	9	4.3%	9.0%
<b>Parents</b>	1	0.5%	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	209	100.0%	209.0%

<sup>32</sup> Award programmes such as Eco-Schools, International School Awards and UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools Award are only really appropriate to UK schools, as can be seen from data in Figure 7.2.10.



As Table 7.2.4 demonstrates, there are regional differences with regard to school performance areas that were impacted most by the programme. 83% of teachers from African schools report impact on learning and 51% on teaching with a further 33% mentioning whole school general development. In contrast, the areas most affected as reported by European teachers are much more diverse. The same proportion of UK and Irish teachers (47%) report benefits to learning, and in applying for and receiving different school awards; 52% report positive impact on whole school general development.

**Table 7.2.4 School performance areas affected most by the Link Programme, by region**

		Region	
		UK	Africa
<b>Inspections</b>	Count	11	0
	% within Region	26.2%	0.0%
<b>Projects</b>	Count	8	1
	% within Region	19.0%	1.7%
<b>Awards</b>	Count	20	2
	% within Region	47.6%	3.4%
<b>Resources</b>	Count	1	10
	% within Region	2.4%	17.2%
<b>Teaching</b>	Count	16	30
	% within Region	38.1%	51.7%
<b>Learning</b>	Count	20	48
	% within Region	47.6%	82.8%
<b>Parents</b>	Count	1	0
	% within Region	2.4%	0.0%
<b>Whole school general development</b>	Count	22	19
	% within Region	52.4%	32.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>58</b>

The quotes presented below further illustrate the differentiated views of African and European teachers about the impact of the Link Schools Programme on their school performance. African teachers tend to talk more about teaching and technical resources, pupils' better English language skills, and awareness and knowledge about the UK. UK and Irish teachers mention school awards, inspections and new projects, and the positive effect the programme had on those aspects of school development.

### Partner Schools in African Countries

- It has improved the performance of the school, yes; it has also increased the school enrolment, enhanced quality education; and pupils also have access to internet and computer.
- Learners have acquired some knowledge and skills about the computer system; and corporal punishment was eliminated; and our learners have knowledge about UK.
- The Link Schools Programme has had a tremendous impact on our school performance because our learners don't lack supplementary readers because of a library that was donated by our partner school. Our school pass rate in English has also improved because of the many reading materials that learners and teachers are exposed to.
- The school has a lot of science subject books, computers and digital microscope which are used by students and teachers in academic activities. The projects done at school, e.g. tree and vegetable garden, assisted in imparting knowledge into students on sustainability and importance of environment.
- The school has learnt good upkeep of administrative and teaching records; and formulation of good school improvement plans. Besides, improvement in spoken and written English by learners has widened learners' understanding of subject matter in a number of subjects.

### Partner Schools in the UK & Ireland

- It is filed for school inspections, is it part of our school planning, it's also part of our Eco Awards evidence. It may be used for an application for a British Council grant for reciprocal visits.
- Link School Programme is part of our application for the British Council International Schools Award. The committee specifically mentioned it in their response to our action plan.
- Links with UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools. Effective links with eco-focus on sustainable development - achieved 4th Green flag award. Successful applications for reciprocal visits in 2008 and global schools project in 201/11 - British Council. Used in evidence during local authority quality visits. Many pupils displaying Global Citizenship skills, knowledge, and positive attitudes in this area.
- We are still looking at best practice and ways to embed the global dimension in the school curriculum not just as an add-on.

Finally, teachers reported examples of the programme's impact on their pupils. As Table 7.2.5 illustrates, most of the teachers noticed changes in pupils' awareness and knowledge (90%); and slightly more than half (58%) mentioned more specific examples that demonstrate pupils' change in skills, participation and organisation of different activities and events related to the programme and global development. Only 11% reported changes in pupils' attitudes.

The effect on pupils as reported by their teachers was quite similar in both regions (see Table 7.2.6), with teachers in schools in partner countries in Africa giving more examples of practical skills and different activities. However here again, it is important to look at the teachers' actual words, presented in the selected quotes below. Most of the pupil skills and activities in partner schools in African countries are related to environment and health issues, whereas schools in UK and Ireland are more involved in fundraising and generic global development activities.

### **Partner Schools in African Countries**

- Children do their own discoveries and observations, for example they planted grass in the school compound to control soil erosion
- Some of the pupils have developed the habit on healthy living and are doing all it takes to keep their environment clean.

### **Partner Schools in the UK & Ireland**

- Some of the learners that have been inspired to pursue their interest in global and development issues are the "Rights Rangers" group who were inspired by the visit of some members of staff of our link school, and we also have the Dean Park Club
- We have had examples of individual children fundraising for our link but we have had many whole school and community activities to raise money and awareness too. We have an annual Rainbow Day in our citizenship term and very close links to our local fair trade group, who help support our link.
- We have since made a link with another school and we have sold handmade necklaces and bracelets made by the children of the partner school. All funds raised are sent to Uganda so that improvements can be made to their school.

With regards to sharing information on school partnerships in schools, most teachers reported use of notice boards, display cabinets or simply walls. Around a quarter of European schools mentioned that they use newsletters.

**Table 7.2.5 Ways in which pupils are affected by the Link Schools Programme**

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
<b>Knowledge, awareness</b>	73	56.6%	90.1%
<b>Attitudes</b>	9	7.0%	11.1%
<b>Skills, activities, events</b>	47	36.4%	58.0%
<b>Total</b>	129	100.0%	159.3%

**Table 7.2.6 Ways pupils are affected by the Link Schools Programme, by region**

		Region	
		UK	Africa
<b>Knowledge, awareness</b>	Count	21	52
	% within Region	87.5%	91.2%
<b>Attitudes</b>	Count	4	5
	% within Region	16.7%	8.8%
<b>Skills, activities, events</b>	Count	11	36
	% within Region	45.8%	63.2%
<b>Total</b>	Count	24	57

On average all Link Schools Programme services received high ratings from the teachers represented in the survey. Visits to or from partner schools were rated the highest (Table 7.2.7). Profiles of partner schools and correspondence between schools were reported as the most frequently used services. Reciprocal visits, other school development projects, projects or events with the local community, and Solar Connect projects were mentioned less frequently.

As Appendix B shows (see Table B-1 and B-2) African schools on average rated slightly lower projects or events with local school communities and other school development projects, and undertaking fundraising activities for the Link programme, compared with schools in the UK and Ireland. At the same time they gave higher ratings to the more direct programme activities related to teacher training and resources, such as cluster training and professional development training facilitated by Link, use of the Link schools teachers pack and other support publications, as well as Solar Connect and telephone and e-mail support from Link school staff.

**Table 7.2.7 Rating of the Link Schools Programme services**

	Yes, average rating of service					No (did not use)	
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	%
Visit to or from your partner school (reciprocal visit)	22	3	5	4.8	0.5	34	60.7
Any other School Development project	18	1	5	4.1	1.3	33	64.7
Link Schools Programme calendar	41	2	5	4	1	14	25.5
Telephone/Email support from Link Schools staff	42	1	5	4	1.1	13	23.6
Cluster training or Continual Professional Development training facilitated by Link	29	1	5	4	1.1	24	45.3
A project or event with your local community	26	1	5	4	1.1	29	52.7
Partnership Curriculum Projects (i.e. our themed resources which focus on the Millennium Development Goals)	110	1	5	3.9	0.5	17	13.4
Solar Connect project	24	1	5	3.9	1.4	35	59.3
Use of the Link Schools Teachers Pack or other Linking Support publications	43	1	5	3.8	1.1	9	17.3
Correspondence with your partner school (letters, photos etc.)	123	1	5	3.8	1.2	2	1.6
School visits from Link staff	97	1	5	3.7	1.3	31	24.2
Any profile information about your partner school	50	2	5	3.7	1.1	3	5.7
Baseline activity to measure pupils change in knowledge, values & attitudes (only UK schools)	17	2	5	3.6	1.3	21	55.3
Any other joint project carried out with your partner school	101	1	5	3.3	1.4	27	21.1
Undertaking fundraising activities for Link	93	1	5	2.9	1.7	28	23.1
Accessed online resources or support from www.Linkschools.org	103	1	5	2.4	1.4	24	18.9

Overall what this range of data from teachers and schools involved with PiD tells us is that the project did have an impact: there is evidence of increased understanding of global and development issues, the quality of teaching and learning appears to have improved, and materials produced were valued. However the evidence does not tell us a great deal about depth of learning and understanding within schools. The UK and Ireland schools in the main still tended

to see their relationship with the partner schools more in terms of donor-recipient than mutual learning. There is evidence that the project contributed to increased learning in some subjects, most notably geography, but less so in terms of cross curricular activities. There is evidence of increased learning about development issues but the depth of this learning is difficult to assess. There is some evidence that the project helped some schools to secure various awards, but it is difficult to assess how the project contributed to overall school performance.

From the schools in the partner countries in Africa, there is more evidence of impact both in terms of teaching and learning but also in terms of increased resources, notably Solar Connect. For many teachers, the project provided opportunities for professional development which they otherwise may not have had. It also gave them access to support structures, both in their own country and in the UK and Ireland.

In order to assess the impact of the project in the context of the aims of the funding for *Partners in Development*, particularly development awareness, research was undertaken with six schools in Scotland to gather more detailed evidence.

### 7.3 Case Study: Six Scottish Schools

Scotland had the most in-depth support of all the countries involved in the project. It is also a country whose education policies are very receptive to school linking; and the curriculum provides opportunities to use a school link for 'real world' examples on development themes.

The schools chosen for this study were based on a sample of those schools which had been most active in supporting the programme in Scotland.

Below (see Table 7.3.1) is a list of the six schools who were actively engaged in the project.

**Table 7.3.1 An overview of Scottish School Case-Studies**

Scottish school	School type	Teacher–Pupil Ratio	Partner school	Partner location	School type	Teacher–Pupil Ratio	Link length
Killermont, East Dunbartonshire	Primary	1 : 10	Dedza LEA	Dedza, Malawi	Primary	1 : 45	6 years
Clydemuir, West Dunbartonshire	Primary	1 : 10	Fumbwa	Dedza, Malawi	Primary	1 : 94	7 months
Craigdhu, East Dunbartonshire	Primary	1 : 10	Lidzinji	Dedza, Malawi	Primary	1 : 76	2 years
Inverkeithing, Fife	Secondary	1 : 14	Ben Mali	Eastern Cape, South Africa	Secondary	1 : 34	7 years
Dalbeattie, Dumfries and Galloway	Secondary	1 : 9	Katewe	Dedza, Malawi	Primary	1 : 80	5 years
Clarkston, North Lanarkshire	Primary	1 : 11	Kapiri	Dedza, Malawi	Primary	1 : 98	6 years

The evidence gathered from these schools came primarily from research undertaken by a researcher working with Link at its Scotland office. This included both individual interviews and focus group discussions (see Appendix E).

The primary schools tended to see the link as having a positive impact on their teaching and learning, and how it complemented the curriculum. For example the main teacher contact at Killermont School noted how much the resources complemented the Scottish Curriculum. At Clydemuir Primary School, the link prompted new ideas to use in class and in weekly assemblies dedicated to their partner school.

At Craigdhu School, increased knowledge about development themes was closely related to the knowledge gained through their partner school in Malawi. The evidence here also demonstrated the value of real world contacts. Comments from teachers included, for example, ‘having real people the pupils can communicate with has an impact on cementing their knowledge’. This was also mentioned as helping pupils to ‘no longer hold the usual stereotypes about Africa’.

The resource materials were well appreciated. For example at Clydemuir, there was evidence of use of the environment and health resources. They were seen as ‘ready to use’ and also helped to make the link real. Also, by sending actual pieces of work to their partner school, the link was cited as giving an ‘added purpose’ to class activities and this helped to ‘spur on their learning’. It was particularly noted by teachers at this school that the tangibility of being aware of specific children adds purpose to the learning. It was also noted that this approach resulted in involving children who would not usually contribute. Above all there

was a sense at this school that the link had raised the children's awareness, bringing 'a different perspective' of the world to children who could be perceived as living quite 'closeted' lives.

At Clarkston Primary School, the Environment and Health resource materials had been used for two years, in collaboration with the partner school, and this gave a stronger educational purpose to the link. However the Environment resource appeared to have been only used in a lunch-time club.

However there was also evidence that for some pupils the material was too advanced and not at the appropriate level. One comment from a teacher at Craighdu Primary School suggested that the resource materials were 'too complex' for the younger classes. As a result, they were not given to many of the staff. The school piloted the Education resource, but only with one class.

Teachers involved in the project from these primary schools appear to have valued the cluster-based professional development courses. The role of the contact person, who acted as the co-ordinator in the school, appears to have been important. It was noted at Craighdu Primary school, for example, that the teachers relied heavily on the coordinator for knowledge about their partner school; this despite all the staff sessions that had been carried out regarding the link.

In some of the primary schools, there was evidence that the partnership still had elements of paternalism, with a focus on providing support and raising money. Comments were made by both teachers and pupils that 'we have more than they do', that the pupils from the partner school were 'not as lucky as us' and the pupils are there to 'help'. But there was also evidence of pupils' understanding going beyond the stereotype and becoming empathetic as they began to know more about the pupils in their partner school.

The two secondary (or high) schools included for this case study of schools in Scotland showed similar evidence, with examples of material being used both in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities. At Dalbeattie High School, the Health resource pack was well used because it fitted in with the biology curriculum. But other themed resources, such as Gender, were less well used because teachers felt they did not have the confidence or knowledge to teach these areas. At Inverkeithing High School the link resulted in a global citizenship group being formed by twelve pupils, who organise events to fundraise for their partner school. Also at this school, the Environment resource was deemed to be popular because it helped to support the school's Eco Group.

At Inverkeithing, it was noted there was an ongoing tension between learning and fundraising objectives. There was an assumption that the partner school required technology and that action was seen as raising money through fundraising. There was a conscious attempt by the Link co-ordinator to change this perception, with



the aim of permeating the themes from the project across the whole school and embedding them within the curriculum. However it was noted that the mere process of raising money for the Solar Connect initiative had resulted in motivating the students to further learning, giving it a purpose. This theme also emerged at Dalbeattie High School: the letter-writing gave purpose to English classes as the work 'is going somewhere'.

In both secondary schools there was evidence that the link was of greater benefit to their partner school than to themselves. This was noted, for example, by the head at Dalbeattie, who said: 'we feel they've probably benefited more'. Similar observations were made at Inverkeithing, regarding helping the partner school to develop their English language skills.

What these six schools tell us about the project is that it certainly had an impact, but the depth of impact appears to be related to clear and strong curriculum links. The resources were liked and were on the whole well-used in relation to specific curriculum subjects but there was also evidence of the materials being seen as 'add-ons' to the main priorities of the school, through use in lunchtime clubs. The Health and Environment resources were the most popular, possibly because they fitted well into mainstream classes such as biology and geography. Lack of confidence in the subject matter was often a factor in other curriculum areas. Cluster training had an impact on the use of the resources. The resources were also a valuable tool for making the partnership more educationally focused.

All the schools' pupils appear to have gained specific knowledge from their partners, showing that this impact can only be attributed to the Link connection. The evidence from the activities and teacher comments showed that pupils had gained knowledge specific to the issues presented by the partner school, whether about gender, rights or sexual health matters.

The link also appeared to have improved pupil performance in classes such as English, as sharing pieces of work with another person gives a purpose to learning. The tangible quality of this was often cited as giving an added purpose to learning. Pupil performance was also improved as the link was credited with engaging children who would not otherwise contribute in class. The school links also presented pupils with increased responsibilities in school linking committees.

A lot of generic information about the partner school was cited in pupil activity, but it was at a rather superficial level, demonstrating emphasis on facts and data with little evidence of critical reflection and discussion. A lot of this information focused on what the partner school lacked, as opposed to what they had. Furthermore there appeared to be an undertone of 'helping' the partner, with a strong emphasis placed on fundraising and sending material resources to help the partner. Notions such as 'helping' and fundraising were commonplace.

There was undoubtedly considerable evidence of the impact on teachers' awareness of global issues as a result of the project. Among some teachers there was a comprehensive understanding of issues facing the partner school. But there was also evidence that some teachers' knowledge of the partner school was surprisingly weak, although this was mainly in the newer link schools. The opportunity for CPD was there for all the teachers, but it was not always taken up.

The dependence on the link coordinator was a common theme. Most schools demonstrated that teachers did not have a strong sense of ownership of the link, with a consequential heavy reliance on the coordinator. The impact of this could be seen in schools where the coordinator left, and none of the remaining staff was capable of taking over the link coordination role.

#### 7.4 Case Study: English Primary School

An in-depth interview was also held by Link staff with teachers at Hanover Primary School in London. The school had a strong tradition of linking, particularly with South Africa, and the evidence here showed similar themes to those identified in Scotland. The school had been linked since 2001, following the early stages of the Global Teacher Programme.

The school had found the curriculum materials useful, particularly on Environment and Health. There was evidence in the school of increased awareness and understanding of global issues, although as the Headteacher said, this could be applied to some pupils more than others. It was stated that the programme had 'challenged and changed the way' some of the pupils thought about global issues.

The programme was also noted for bringing to life everyday issues, particularly in *Geography and Citizenship*. To the head, it *'reinforced my internationalism and gave me a stronger basis for integrating this perspective with my everyday teaching'*.

Whilst the programme was felt to have improved school performance, it was noted that it was *'valuable in its own right and doesn't need to be justified in review of outstanding school performance! If it is fully integrated into a schools' practice (in our case it was partial) it can motivate pupils, enhance their learning and skills and curiosity'*.

But there was also evidence of a donor-recipient relationship: 'We are giving them an aspiration'. For example, assumptions were made about the partner: 'they have nothing'; and when asked how they act on their knowledge, emphasis was placed on donating and raising money.

## 7.5 Observations on this Data

This evidence demonstrates that the Link Schools Programme was clearly valued but that its impact and contribution was different in the UK and Ireland from that in South Africa, Ghana, Malawi and Uganda. For the schools in Africa, the impact of the programme was clearly much more on skills gained, access to resources and infrastructure support; whereas in the UK and Ireland impact was more noticeable in terms of knowledge gained. Even in schools in Africa where there was a direct impact on the curriculum, this was generally related to increased skills around studying and teaching English rather than curriculum content. The primary benefits in many African schools were often in those areas that are more difficult to measure, such as increased enthusiasm amongst pupils, increased motivation of teachers and wider support from the local community.

A feature of the programme, particularly in the UK, is the wide variety of schools involved. Linking programmes have tended to be most strongly supported by high achieving schools, with high inspection ratings and an existing International School Award. However, evidence from the schools involved with the *Partners in Development* programme suggests a much more varied membership, with schools ranging from outstanding to unsatisfactory. This breadth in school type makes it hard to draw general conclusions as to the relationship between the impact of PiD and school performance in the UK. However, it does suggest that the project was reaching a wider range of school types than the average linking programmes. Link staff in England noted, in their observations on the project, that they felt the breadth of school type and performance level had posed challenges, particularly in terms of identifying suitable support to meet such varied needs. The whole area of the relationship of school linking to wider school performance and improvement requires more research.

## 8

## Impact of the Project on Link's Work

The project clearly had a substantial impact on Link over the years of its operation. Evidence from data gathered from Link staff interviews and feedback demonstrates the challenges and difficulties of delivering a development education focused project in an NGO whose primary concern is building capacity and effectiveness of teaching and learning in rural schools in sub-Saharan Africa.

Whilst Link works closely with ministries and seeks to influence education policy where possible, Link has been primarily a project delivery organisation, rather than a campaigning and advocacy body. In terms of Link t's own organisational objectives, the impact of its school linking work was always measured in terms of educational development goals and objectives. This was at odds with the aims of the EU funding priorities: whilst development objectives were explicitly included in the project proposal and indicators, they were not the primary objective of the funding stream. This tension between the two sets of beneficiaries remained throughout the life of the project.

Link has sought to address some of these tensions through the creation of its new Passport to Education programme<sup>33</sup>, launched in UK schools in September 2012, to enable Link to continue working with UK schools beyond the end of the programme. Passport to Education moves away from a fully supported linking model, but maintains the ethos and focus of PiD: learning about development through real life experience; building knowledge of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) themes; and understanding your role as a global citizen and how you can take action to support development.

The Passport to Education package gives schools bi-annual updates on development activity in the African schools with which Link works, focusing on a particular MDG theme with each update, and providing an accompanying learning resource to help students understand the development challenges at the heart of the stories and support that Link provides. Schools are also pointed towards the *Partners in Development* online resources. Finally, schools are encouraged to think about how they could take action to support the schools that appear in the updates, or to build awareness of development challenges in their own communities. Schools chart their development learning and their fundraising achievements by adding stamps to their "passport".

The aim of this new Passport programme is to develop a more flexible programme in which schools can engage as part of an ongoing school partnership, or outside of a link, thus opening access to *Partners in Development* materials to a wider range of schools. The learning materials provided with the bi-annual updates build

<sup>33</sup> See <http://www.lcdinternational.org/passport-education>

on the thematic materials already produced, but enable them to be used without partner school input. In designing Passport, the organisation has consciously separated learning benefits in the Global North from development benefits in the Global South. The programme draws on real activities and learning from Southern development work in order to give Northern schools real live stories to engage with. It continues to enable and inform fundraising for general project work in sub-Saharan Africa. However, Link ceases to play an intermediary role of liaison between Northern and Southern schools, due to the cost in terms of resources and time in trying to balance the tensions between development and development education objectives.

This change in direction has in part emerged from the earlier evaluations of this project; but above all it has come from recognition of the different needs and agendas of schools in the UK and Ireland and those in Africa.

Finally in reflecting upon *Partners in Development*, a number of other issues need to be noted that had an impact upon the programme. The support and engagement of Link staff in the various African countries appeared to vary, and their understanding of the development education focus of the project varied from country to country. This was largely due to the fact that the linking programme had been running for 13 years prior to the advent of *Partners in Development*, with a primary focus on Southern school improvement and north-south relationship-building. The shift to prioritising development education goals and treating the programme as a discrete donor-funded project, with clear project outcomes, was a significant one for both Northern and Southern staff.

Thirdly in all countries, staff appear to have spent a lot of their time involved in administering the postal service between schools. This was not only time consuming (in order to meet with EU reporting requirements), but could be said to have de-skilled quality education and development staff. Nevertheless, the exchange of letters and the communications in general remained a hugely valued aspect of the project for the participating schools. These letters were also an essential tool for many of the rurally based schools in Africa as this was their only option for exchange of materials. Whilst, moving beyond mail exchanges to a greater depth and breadth of partnership activity was a project aim, feedback indicates that given limited infrastructure, postal mailings are currently, and are likely to remain, a rich source of partnership exchange when working with this cohort of African schools.

Fourthly, in hindsight, the targets for the growth of the project were unrealistic and unachievable. In part this was due to the influence of a change of government in the UK, but also to assumptions that there would continue to be an expansion of school linking after 2009 at the same rate as in the previous five years. Consequently, the focus on targets meant that, particularly in the first

eighteen months of the project, too little attention was given to the broader educational and development benefits of the project.

Fifthly, the project has shown that producing materials for both European and African schools, whilst having value and benefit, can reinforce power relations, and result in the North being seen as the purveyor of knowledge and expertise. This dependency relationship, despite the structure of Link as an organisation, meant that much of the learning in the North reproduced existing notions of Africa rather than challenging them; and that in Africa, the UK was seen primarily as a source of support and help. There were exceptions to this in a number of schools in UK and Ireland, with evidence of learning directly related to increased curriculum knowledge, and in a number of African schools with evidence of learner recognition of similarities and equality with European counterparts. But the dominant image to emerge is that for most of the UK and Irish schools, there was no noticeable change of 'mentality' amongst the pupils, nor amongst the teachers.

The resources in themselves as specific educational materials were however highly valued. Owing to the pressures to produce the materials mid-way through the life of the project, there appears to have been minimal time to trial the second three resources or to revise them based on experience in the different countries.

The website was popular and Solar Connect proved to be useful to those schools that gained internet access as a consequence, whether directly or indirectly via a hub centre. The direct exchange of letters and materials was ironically regarded as very important and receiving material direct from a partner school certainly had an impact. The exchange of letters also had an impact on the standard of English language in both Europe and Africa: pupils in a number of schools in the Global South learned that UK and Irish pupils were not necessarily much better at English than they were.

This opportunity to compare practices was an important side effect of the programme. An interesting example of this was that in more than one country, reference was made to the comparative use of corporal punishment, banned in UK and Ireland but still in use in many partner schools in Africa. One consequence of the project was that through the exchange of letters, pupils in Ghana learnt that corporal punishment was no longer used in the UK; they therefore ran a successful campaign to have it dropped in Ghana by the school.

Link staff recognised that whilst elements of the project were successful it did not succeed in effectively engaging or maximising the opportunities that existed for improving school performance in partner countries in Africa. The NGO's work is quite distinctive: what it offered was very different from many other programmes, particularly in working specifically with rural schools in Africa.

**To summarise, the distinctive features of the Link model could be seen as follows:**

- recognition of the importance of having a clear curriculum focus for both European and African schools;
- a unique cohort of schools as members – the majority rural African and state funded European schools;
- provision of professional development support related to specific national educational needs;
- resourcing and coordination of communications to enable effective dialogue between schools;
- the value of personal contact between teachers and, where possible, also between pupils;
- explicit provision for schools to fundraise to support Link -facilitated direct actions, to improve school performance in the partner school; and
- inclusion of a partnership fee paid by the UK and Irish school, which contributes towards the cost of facilitating and supporting the link both North and South, but also includes a donation to programme work in the partner school's district.

These distinctive features, like aspects of the programme developed by Plan in the past, and on a smaller scale by a number of other NGOs, show that despite the aims, such initiatives cannot be self-funding because the amount required is significantly beyond what schools would be prepared to pay. Also it is likely, at least in England, that the high point of school engagement with partners in sub-Saharan Africa has now past.

Despite critical comments raised in this evaluation, there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the project, although driven by agendas from Europe in terms of raising awareness and understanding of development, had considerable impact and value to schools in both Europe and Africa. The benefits were quite specific and distinct to particular schools, and in many cases cannot be easily categorised in development education terms. More examples may be needed of programmes that enable Northern and Southern partners themselves to construct and identify potential learning opportunities and benefits from partnership activities, rather than fitting into pre-determined goals and objectives.

If there is an overall recommendation from this evaluation for funders of school linking programmes in the future, it is that partnerships need to be supported on their own terms. Given the bilateral relationship at the heart of school linking, this will always imply both education and development objectives. Programmes should

make reference to mutual learning but at the same time include an understanding that agendas and needs will be different in the Global North from those in the Global South. In many respects the new British Council Connecting Classrooms programme is beginning to address these needs. What above all is needed is a more open debate about school linking, one that moves on from some of the negative debates that have dominated the discourse over the past few years, to one that encourages greater dialogue and sharing of data and evidence, in a form that includes critical reflection and learning from practice.



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## Appendix A:

### Breakdown of schools participating in the Teacher Survey

**Table A-1 Sample characteristics**

Region	N	%*
Europe	68	51.9
England	29	22.3
Scotland	22	16.9
Wales	1	0.8
Ireland	5	3.8
Northern Ireland	10	7.7
Africa	63	48.1
Ghana	10	7.7
Malawi	10	7.7
Uganda	37	28.5
South Africa	6	4.6
<b>Phase of education</b>		
Primary	102	82.9
Secondary	18	14.6
Special	3	2.4
<b>Linked since</b>		
1998-2003	6	8.0
2004-2008	33	44.0
2009-2011	35	46.7
2012	1	1.3
<b>Partner schools* For UK schools</b>		
Ghana	7	
Malawi	12	
Uganda	14	
South Africa	8	
Ethiopia	1	
<b>Partner schools* For African schools</b>		
England	5	
Scotland	8	

*Note: Data presented only where it was available. Therefore totals for each characteristic are not the same. \* absolute numbers are too small to present percentages.*

## Appendix B

**Table B-1 Rating of the Link Programme services. UK & Ireland schools**

	Yes, average rating of service					No (did not use)	
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	%
Visit to or from your partner school (reciprocal visit)	16	3	5	4.8	0.6	26	61.9
Any other School Development project for your partner school?	7	4	5	4.6	0.5	30	81.1
A project or event with your local community?	15	2	5	4.4	0.9	26	63.4
Partnership Curriculum Projects (i.e. our themed resources which focus on the Millennium Development Goals)	49	1	5	3.9	1.4	15	23.4
Telephone/Email support from Link Schools staff	28	1	5	3.9	1.3	13	31.7
School visits from Link staff	34	2	5	3.8	0.9	31	47.7
Undertaking fundraising activities for Link	39	1	5	3.7	1.3	25	39.1
Use of the Link Schools Teachers Pack or other Linking support publications	31	1	5	3.7	1.2	7	18.4
Link Schools Programme calendar	27	2	5	3.7	1	14	34.1
Solar Connect project	7	1	5	3.7	1.5	34	82.9
Baseline activity to measure pupils change in knowledge, values & attitudes	17	2	5	3.7	1.3	21	55.3
Any other joint project carried out with your partner school	40	1	5	3.5	1.4	25	38.5
Correspondence with your partner school	60	1	5	3.5	1.2	2	3.2
A profile of your partner school	36	2	5	3.5	1.1	3	7.7
Cluster training or Continual Professional Development training facilitated by Link	16	1	5	3.5	1.2	23	
Accessed online resources or support from www.Linkschools.org	43	2	5	3.0	1.2	21	32.8

**Table B-2 Rating of the Link Programme services. African schools**

	Yes, average rating of service					No (did not use)	
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	%
Visit to or from your partner school (reciprocal visit)	6	4	5	4.8	0.4	8	57.1
Link Schools Programme calendar	14	3	5	4.6	0.9	-	-
Cluster training or Continual Professional Development training facilitated by Link	13	2	5	4.5	0.9	1	
A profile of your partner school	14	3	5	4.3	0.7	-	-
Telephone/Email support from Link Schools staff	14	3	5	4.3	0.7	-	-
Correspondence with your partner school	37	2	5	4.1	1.2	-	-
Use of the Link Schools Teachers Pack or other Linking support publications	12	3	5	4	0.7	2	14.3
Solar Connect project	17	1	5	4	1.5	1	5.6
Partnership Curriculum Projects (i.e. our themed resources which focus on the Millennium Development Goals)	61	2	5	3.9	1.2	2	3.2
Any other School Development project for your partner school?	11	1	5	3.7	1.6	3	21.4
School visits from Link staff	63	1	5	3.6	1.7	-	-
A project or event with your local community?	11	1	4	3.4	1	3	21.4
Any other joint project carried out with your partner school	61	3	5	3.2	1.4	2	3.2
Undertaking fundraising activities for Link	54	3	5	2.3	1.7	3	5.3
Accessed online resources or support from <a href="http://www.Linkschools.org">www.Linkschools.org</a>	60	1	5	2.0	1.2	3	4.8

## Appendix C

**Table C-1 Profile of activities by school characteristics** (only data available is included; missing data is excluded from all calculations)

		Average number of activities	DHLs	Visits	Themed Project PCPs	Cluster Training	Reciprocal Visits	Fundraised for Link SDP or other	Solar Connect
	<b>N</b>		<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>All</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>88.2</b>	<b>19.2</b>	<b>22.7</b>	<b>30.7</b>	<b>18.9</b>	<b>21.6</b>	<b>7.2</b>
<b>Country</b>									
England/Wales	152	1.5	82.2	11.8	8.6	12.5	9.9	14.5	7.2
Scotland	82	2.3	92.7	17.1	34.1	48.8	20.7	17.1	-
Link Country									
Uganda	63	1.8	85.7	12.7	15.9	31.7	12.7	14.3	1.6
South Africa	60	1.4	76.7	11.7	5.0	13.3	10.0	10.0	11.7
Malawi	64	2.3	95.3	17.2	32.8	39.1	25.0	23.4	-
Ghana	41	1.5	82.9	12.2	14.6	12.2	4.9	14.6	7.3
Ethiopia	5	1.2	100.0	20.0	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Year linked since</b>									
1998-2003	44	1.5	81.8	20.5	4.5	15.9	13.6	11.4	2.3
2004-2008	90	1.8	80.0	8.9	22.2	23.3	17.8	17.8	7.8
2009-2011	74	2.0	95.9	20.3	25.7	27.0	12.2	18.9	4.1
2012	25	1.3	84.0	-	-	40.0	-	4.0	-
<b>School Phase</b>									
Primary (incl., infant and junior)	170	1.7	87.1	11.8	17.6	27.1	11.2	14.7	4.7
Secondary	48	1.9	83.3	18.8	18.8	25.0	22.9	16.7	4.2
Other	16	1.6	81.3	18.8	12.5	6.3	12.5	18.8	6.3
<b>School Inspection Rating</b>									
Outstanding (E)/ Very good (S)	69	1.8	87.0	13.0	15.9	24.6	18.8	17.4	7.2
Good	116	1.8	85.3	14.7	19.8	28.4	12.9	15.5	4.3
Satisfactory (E) / Fair (S)	36	1.4	88.9	8.3	13.9	16.7	8.3	8.3	-
<b>International School Award</b>									
Yes	32	1.8	71.9	9.4	21.9	28.1	18.8	15.6	-
No	174	1.7	89.7	14.4	19.0	26.4	13.2	16.7	4.6
<b>School size</b>									
Small	63	1.8	87.3	11.1	20.6	25.4	12.7	17.5	1.6
Medium	82	1.7	84.1	11.0	19.5	25.6	12.2	9.8	2.4
Large	70	1.8	87.1	15.7	15.7	25.7	14.3	15.7	7.1



		Average number of activities	DHLs	Visits	Themed Project PCPs	Cluster Training	Reciprocal Visits	Fundraised for Link SDP or other	Solar Connect
	<b>N</b>		<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>% of Free School Meals</b>									
under 5%	42	1.9	88.1	23.8	23.8	40.5	19.0	16.7	2.4
6-14 %	56	2.1	87.5	17.9	17.9	19.6	14.3	14.3	3.6
15-30%	63	1.7	82.5	17.5	17.5	19	7.9	11.1	1.6
more than 30%	45	1.5	86.7	15.6	15.6	26.7	15.6	15.6	8.9
<b>% of English Additional Language</b>									
under 5%	56	1.5	83.9	17.0	14.3	10.7	8.9	14.3	3.6
6-14 %	17	0.9	76.5	8.9	-	-	-	11.8	-
15-30%	16	2.1	93.8	5.9	12.5	37.5	18.8	12.5	6.3
more than 30%	33	1.2	78.8	25.0	3.0	-	9.1	9.1	15.2

## APPENDIX D: Evaluation questionnaire

<b>School Name:</b>	
<b>Your Name:</b>	
<b>Your Country:</b>	
<b>Partner Country:</b>	
<b>Linked Since:</b>	

**Type of school** (please select all that are relevant):

- Primary
  Secondary
  Faith Based
  Academy

**1. Please tick which of the following activities you have accessed as a result of your involvement in the Link Schools Programme?** For all those that you have used please indicate how successful you feel the activities or resources have been out of 5 for learning about development issues – where 5 is high impact and 0 is no impact at all. Feel free to add any comments also.

Link Schools Programme Activity or Resources	Yes (please score this service out of 5)	No	Any Comments
1 Correspondence with your partner school (letters, photos etc.)			
2 Use of the Link Schools Teachers Pack or other Linking Support Publications			
3 A profile of your partner school			
4 Link Schools Programme Calendar			
5 Telephone/Email support from Link Schools Staff			
6 Accessed online resources or support from www. Linkschools.org			
7 Baseline activity to measure pupils change in knowledge, values & attitudes			
8 Partnership Curriculum Projects (i.e. our themed resources which focus on the Millennium Development Goals)			
9 Any other joint project carried out with your partner school			

10 Clustering activity or Continual Professional Development training facilitated by Link			
11 Visit to or from your partner school (reciprocal visit?)			
12 School visits from Link staff			
13 Undertaking fundraising activities for Link			
14 Solar Connect			
15 Any other School Development project for your partner school			
16 A project or event with your local community			
17 Any other opportunity that has arisen as a result of your involvement (please detail)			

**2.** Do you feel your learners have more **knowledge and understanding** in the following areas as a result of your involvement in the Link Schools Programme?

	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No, not much	No, not at all
1 Life in an African community				
2 The role of my school in global development				
3 Global Environment				
4 Global Health				
5 Global Poverty				
6 Global Education				
7 Gender & inequality				
8 Global Partnerships				
9 Life in an African community				
10 The role of my school in global development				

**3.** Overall, do you feel that the Link Schools Programme has contributed to greater awareness of development issues among the following audiences?

	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No, not much	No, not at all
1 Staff				
2 Students				
3 Parents/Community				

**4.** Has your participation in the Link Schools Programme resulted in changes to:

	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No, not much	No, not at all
1 How you teach				
2 Methodologies undertaken in the classroom				
3 Your Professional Development as a teacher				

If 'Yes', please tell us about these changes and what lessons, curriculum areas have been most influenced (e.g. Science, English, Geography etc):

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**5.** What impact do you think the Link Programme has had on your school performance? Have you used your involvement to contribute/apply for awards such as Eco Schools, International Schools Award, British Council Grants etc. Or used it as evidence in Ofsted/School Inspections. Please give details:

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**6.** Have you any examples as of pupils being inspired to pursue their own interest in global and development issues as a result of their learning and experience from the link schools programme? Please give examples:

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**7.** In school, how is your link involvement displayed? For example do you have a Link notice board, flags, newsletter etc? Please give details:

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Please help us improve the Link Schools Programme by providing us with feedback via this short questionnaire & contribute to wider research into Development Education. Please return this survey to Rosemary Forest by 16th July 2012 in the Freepost envelope provided.

## Appendix E:

### Focus Group Questions for teachers in Scottish Link schools – June 2012

**1. General opening question(s) to start:**

What do you think about your school partnership? Could you describe your involvement with Link so far?

**2. Activities accessed/involvement with Link:**

Which Link resources have you used, and how have you found them helpful?

**3. Knowledge and understanding of learners:**

To what extent do you think your pupils have a better understanding of global issues such as the environment, health, education, gender, global poverty and working in partnership as a result of the Link Schools Programme?

Have any of your pupils put their learning into action in the local community?

Have any learners taken their own initiative that you know of to take their learning further?

**4. Awareness of development issues among different audiences:**

Which of the following groups do you think has most benefited from the Link Schools Programme and why – staff, students or parents / the surrounding community?

**5. Impact on teaching and professional development:**

Have you noticed an impact on the way you teach as a result of the Link Schools Programme? How has the Programme contributed to your professional development as a teacher?

**6. Impact on overall school performance:**

Your school partnership allows you to apply for certain awards and grants such as Eco Schools and British Council Grants. Have you used your partnership to apply for any such awards or grants, or maybe used your Link as evidence in school inspections?

Do you believe that the Link Schools Programme has the capacity to improve this school's performance?

Have you considered if the Programme might improve your partner school's educational performance?

**7. How is the partnership displayed:**

Do you have a place in the school where you dedicate a space to your school partnership, for example a notice board or school newsletter? How often is this used/circulated?

**8. Closing question (refer back to opening question, see if opinions have changed?):**

Finally, what specific impact do you think your link has had in this school?

## Authors

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The Institute of Education is the UK's leading centre for studies in education and related disciplines. Its staff of pre-eminent scholars and talented students make up an intellectually-rich learning community. A member of the 1994 Group of 19 leading research intensive UK universities, the Institute is the only college of the University of London dedicated entirely to education and related areas of social science.

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Link Community Development is an International Development NGO working at all levels of the education system - with communities, schools and governments to identify and remove the obstacles to quality education. Link currently works in rural districts of Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, South Africa, and Uganda. Link also works with schools in England & Wales, Ireland and Scotland to build support for development and raise awareness of important global issues, as well as to raise funds to support school improvement work in sub-Saharan Africa.