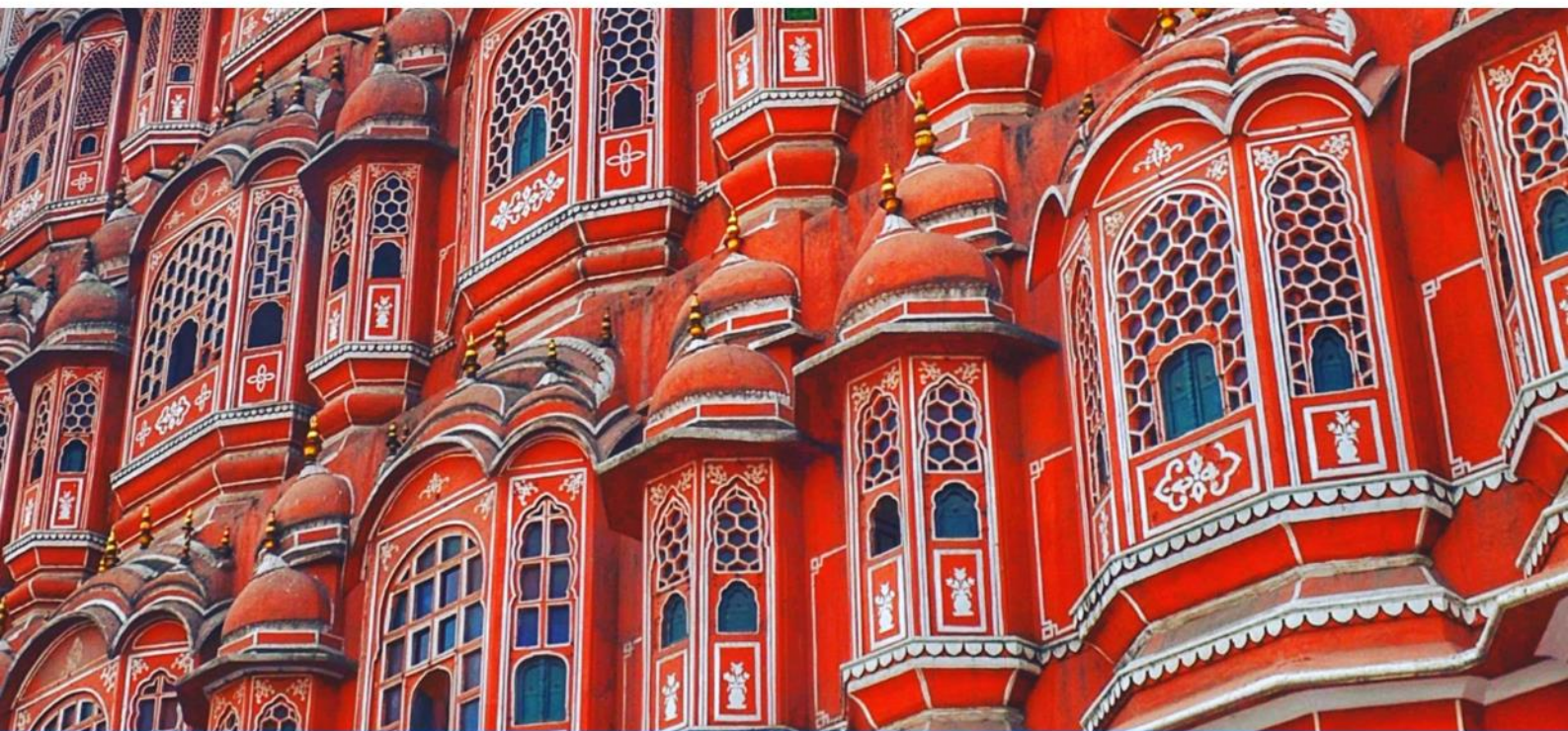**Institute of Education**

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Development Education Research Centre

Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning
Practitioner Research Fund Paper 1

What perceptions do children involved in an active school partnership with a school in India have of the country?

Aimée Tinkler
2021

Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning Practitioner Research Fund

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

The aim of this study was to research the perceptions children in my school, a small rural primary school in England, have of India, the country with which we have an established international school partnership. The intention was to provide an insight into the images our children have developed over the course of our link project which began following a visit to India funded by the British Council and UK aid five years ago. The findings provide an interesting insight into what the children think about their partner country and will inform the development of similar projects in the future and encourage teachers who are considering developing international links to carefully consider their own preconceptions along with the aims of their projects. This will allow them to make informed choices about how best to approach the inclusion of resultant learning into their curriculum in a way which promotes critical global citizenship and does not simply reinforce stereotypes that may already exist.

The research was originally designed to use children's drawings as a basis for semi-structured interviews with pupils in school however, due to Covid-19 restrictions, interviews have not been possible and so the data collection was adapted to take account of school closures and the remote learning provision provided by our school. As many children were learning remotely, the data was collected through the analysis of annotated children's drawings which were completed following online video input on our home learning platform. The research method was designed to access the voices of children from the entire primary age range in a child-friendly and effective way..

Contents

Introduction

This study took place in a small church primary school in rural Derbyshire. The aim was to understand what perceptions children had of India, taking into account a partnership with a school in Kolkata which had been established for over five years. Although there was some variation in socio-economic backgrounds, pupils were predominantly middle-class and all white British. I have been a teacher in the school for the past seven years, and for the last five have led the development of a school linking project in collaboration with the Derby Diocesan Board of Education. The project was a collaboration between the Church of North India, the Diocese of Kolkata and the Diocese of Derby, and created link partnerships between church schools in Derbyshire and schools in the Kolkata slums which are run by the Kolkata Cathedral Relief Service. At the time of writing there are approximately 15 active partnerships between Derbyshire schools and schools in Kolkata though the project.

The initial aim of the project was to develop partnerships between schools which were mutually beneficial, allowing pupils and teachers from both countries to experience a diverse culture beyond their own and to encourage the pupils to connect with peers living in another part of the world. An initial visit was arranged and a group of teachers received Connecting Classrooms funding to travel to Kolkata and begin what have now become a network of well-established school links. I became involved in the project in its second year and have subsequently visited our partner school in India four times.

The project, now in its sixth year, has been met with great enthusiasm by our pupils and our wider school community. Discussions and comparisons with India are evident in many areas of the curriculum and staff and parents frequently refer to our Indian link schools in conversations with the children and in assemblies. Studies based on India form a significant part of our geography curriculum across the school with India being one of the main non-European Union countries studied in both the infant (age 4-7) and junior (age 7-11) classes. All classes study India as a topic for a week each year, coinciding with my visit to allow communication between countries through video calls, blogging and emails. Lessons explore the geography of the country, traditions, food, transport and the lives of peers in our link school. Religious diversity in India also regularly forms a starting point for learning about global world religions as part of our religious education curriculum. Fundraising in school focuses on raising money for our partner school to buy school equipment, fund school meals and provide other help as required. Led largely by the parents, fundraising activities have raised large sums of money to buy resources and provide emergency aid throughout the current pandemic.

This financial help has been met with great appreciation in Kolkata however, following discussions with some members of the team, we have begun to raise questions around the development of the project as a purely charitable endeavour. The project's initial aim was that it should be mutually beneficial for all the children involved, but as the project has evolved and the emphasis on fundraising has increased, questions have been raised around the benefits of the project for our own pupils and the impact the link is having on their perceptions and ideas about India and other countries in the Global South (Simpson, 2017).

Whilst some of the teachers involved feel the link remains of great value to the children in our schools in terms of developing empathy and understanding, a number of colleagues have begun to raise concerns that the project is unintentionally reinforcing stereotypical views of less developed countries. This is particularly the case for those who have been involved in the project for a number of years, and for my

own senior leadership team. Concerns have been raised that the focus on poverty, lack of development and a problematic society ignores the rich culture and diversity of the country, and that the focus on charitable aspects promotes the idea that problems in a country can be solved by provision of financial aid from the Global North.

This project, therefore, aimed to find out what perceptions our children have of India. Whilst the thoughts and ideas the children shared in the project may not be entirely attributable to our school partnership, I hope that any conclusions drawn will provide an insight into how their perceptions may be developing allowing us, if necessary, to better tailor our approach to the partnership and global learning as a whole as we embed it into our curriculum in future years.

Literature Review

There is a wide body of research looking at global learning, education and citizenship in schools. Whilst definitions of the precise meaning of global citizenship education vary, there is general agreement that global learning constitutes learning which encourages understanding of diversity, injustice and equality in the world and encourages 'action to effect social change' (Oberman et.al., 2014). Research carried out by Hunt (2013) looked at global learning in over 200 primary schools and concluded that its inclusion in the curriculum is generally seen as a 'good thing' with those involved reporting that it has a positive impact in their schools, enhancing 'pupils' awareness and interactions with diversity' and supporting 'mutual respect and responsibility towards others' (Hunt, 2013, p10). Although Hunt concludes that further research into impacts may be helpful, she suggests that the 'perceived' benefits make a strong case for wide scale implementation of learning of this type in the school curriculum.

The approaches schools take to global learning differ. Many schools, including my own, regularly engage with charitable events such as Comic Relief and Christian Aid Week as well as learning prompted by initiatives like the International School Award. Some schools have also chosen to engage in partnerships with schools internationally, often supported by organisations such as the British Council and it is the impact of a partnership such as this that this study aims to consider.

International school partnerships have been a part of the educational landscape in England for a number of years (Bourn and Cara, 2013). Funding support through various government schemes and a curricula emphasis on developing understanding of international issues such as diversity and sustainable development (Martin, 2007) have encouraged the formation of partnerships between schools, often with schools in less economically developed countries. Although the 2014 curriculum review refocused citizenship education to national citizenship, schools, and in particular Church of England schools, continue to attempt to develop cross-cultural understanding and advocate for a more equitable, fairer world through global learning (Church of England Education Office, 2018).

Oxfam, as well as being well known for their charitable work, are a significant provider of resources to support teachers to develop a global aspect to their curriculum and provide support for school partnerships, particularly with schools in the Global South. They present a number of case studies of effective school partnership and cite benefits such as the development of an appreciation of diversity, respect for others, enquiry skills and the development of a 'sense of injustice and a commitment to tackling it' (Oxfam 2007, p2). Whilst one of Oxfam's main activities is to raise money and provide aid, their report notes that fundraising and charitable giving is only one of the positive aspects which may result from a school partnership and that if successful, school links can provide a strong foundation for global citizenship education.

However, whilst some literature appears to suggest that, 'school linking is usually seen as uncontroversial and a good thing' (Martin, 2007), an opposing body of research concludes that school links may actually be problematic despite the honourable intentions of all involved. A number of authors suggest that, unless approached carefully by knowledgeable teachers, school links with less developed countries may in fact promote the stereotypes and preconceptions that they were initially designed to combat, undermining the original aims entirely (Andreotti, 2006, Oxfam, 2007, Pickering, 2008). Martin and Griffiths (2012) carried out an analysis of the discourse around global learning practices in education from a post-colonial perspective. They concluded that, whilst partnerships are successful in providing

children with experience of another country, these partnerships may reinforce rather than challenge stereotypical attitudes because they are often facilitated by teachers who themselves may unknowingly hold stereotypical worldviews, formed through exposure to charitable media (Tallon, 2013) and through international visits focusing on inequality with little understanding of the reasons behind it. Pickering (2008, p2) suggests that all teachers teach according to their own experiences of distant places and if this experience is 'negative and narrow', so too will be the teaching and learning experiences they provide.

Andreotti (2006) provides a helpful differentiation between "soft' and "critical" approaches to global citizenship education. She suggests that, where the focus is on helplessness and poverty, global learning appeals to the 'learner's humanitarian principles' (Oberman, 2014 p10). This in turn makes those in developed countries feel a responsibility to help those in less developed countries by educating and providing aid. Whilst this raises awareness of issues in other countries, an aim of many school partnerships, she also suggests that this reinforces colonial assumptions and is consistent with a view that in order to develop, countries should become more like those in the West. In contrast, critical approaches attempt to understand the development of preconceptions and encourage learners to reflect on the complex processes and power relationships involved with global issues, encouraging independent thinking and informed, ethical action. This criticality of approach however, appears to rely on teachers themselves being 'critically literate' (Andreotti, 2006) in order to avoid unintentionally reinforcing the approaches and belief systems which they may originally have set out to challenge.

A small number of studies have concluded that, where there is an awareness that everyone involved may hold unintentional preconceptions and biases, it is possible to challenge this predominantly charitable and paternalistic discourse. Lawson (2018) carried out a piece of research with upper primary age pupils and concluded that, where children were taught the skills to engage critically with what they were learning, they were able to interact with issues of global justice beyond traditional stereotypes and charitable views. Disney (2005) carried out a small-scale project in two primary schools which asked children what they imagined the locality of their link schools to be like at the initiation of the link and again after two years. Initially, the children's responses were consistent with the ideas children may have encountered in the media – poverty, hunger, lack of technology and the need for Western aid. However, when the research was repeated two years into the link project, the children's perceptions were more varied, reflecting the knowledge and understanding they had gained as a result of careful guidance from knowledgeable teachers. These positive findings appear to suggest that there is potential for school links, if handled effectively, to challenge predominant stereotypes, but this appears to rely to a large extent upon the 'knowledge base of teachers' (Disney, 2005 p334).

Methods

This research is underpinned by both my academic background and my experience as an infant teacher. It is framed through the lens of the new sociology of childhood (Matthews, 2007) which suggests that children are capable of constructing their own sense of the world around them as independent social actors who have independent agency, and the right to participate and have their views heard (UNICEF, 1989). I acknowledge that children's knowledge is constructed through their interactions with the people around them as they 'engage in interpretation' (Robson and McCarton, 2011, p24) and it is this interpretation and knowledge which children have developed through their lived experiences that I intend to investigate. I hope that this project will add to the body of research which 'view children as experts on their own lives' (Mukherji and Albon, 2018, p133).

This piece of research seeks to understand the perspectives, thoughts and ideas of children within my school and so relies on qualitative methods of data collection and analysis in order to understand the social world as viewed from their perspectives (Robson and McCarton, 2011). Generalizability of my findings, whilst useful, is not a major concern as the research is highly specific to the context of my school, and it is the voices of the children in our classes that I am interested in hearing. Although from my position as an insider researcher, I know the children well, an inductive approach has been used in the hope that through data collection and analysis, ideas and concepts will emerge which will provide some insight into the children's thinking.

Over the past decade, there has been an increasing acceptance that the use of children's voices and perspectives can provide a valid and effective research method (Fargas-Malet et al., 2010). Until relatively recently, much research involving children saw them as the subject of enquiry rather than active participants. However, the emergence of less traditional research methodologies have allowed access to children's voices using methods which are specifically designed with consideration of their developmental stage and abilities. Dell Clark (2011) suggests that visual methods are particularly effective in accessing the voice of children, including young children who may not yet have developed the linguistic competence of older pupils (O'Connell, 2013). The method employed in this study aimed to access children's voices across the school through an enjoyable activity which did not require particular skill or competence beyond that which was developmentally appropriate for the youngest children involved (Greig, 2007).

The method, an adaptation of an idea originally used by Reading International Solidarity Centre's Global Schools project (Green, 2010), was designed to access the thoughts of the children in an independent and non-threatening way without the influence of an adult researcher. A video prompt was provided to the children, following which they were asked to draw their ideas and annotate them as appropriate. No discussion as a class or with the teacher took place and the children were reassured that there were no correct or incorrect answers. As an insider researcher, I was very aware of my role as the children's class teacher and Head of School, and hoped that by allowing the children to work independently on an activity with which they were comfortable, I would be able to access the children's honest thoughts and perspectives despite the inevitable power relationships involved. It was intended that the method used would reduce the possibility that some children would provide answers which were tailored to what they believed I wanted to hear as the 'right' answer, rather than their genuine thoughts.

Following a small pilot study, the results of which led to some small practical adaptations of the research method (Appendix 1), the study took place in June 2020 whilst schools in England were closed to all but the children of key workers, children classed as vulnerable and a small number of target year groups. I created a video which all children who were given permission to participate were asked to watch as part of the school's home learning provision. Whilst this method of sampling was pragmatic and somewhat accidental, the children who took part spanned the entire primary age range (Table 1).

Table 1: Research participants: Number of participants, year group and gender

Year group	Number of participants	Girls	Boys
Reception	4	1	3
Year 1	0	0	0
Year 2	4	2	2
Year 3	3	1	2
Year 4	4	1	3
Year 5	2	2	0
Year 6	6	2	4
Total	**23**	**9**	**14**

The children who were in school also watched the video with no additional input from their class teachers. In the video I explained the project to the children and asked them to draw a series of images to represent what they thought of when they thought about India. I explained that the images could be annotated and that there was no right or wrong answer. I made it clear that it was important that this was their own work and whilst there was little possibility that the children in school would be able to copy or share ideas in their newly socially distanced classroom settings, I hoped that this would make it clear to any parents involved in children's home learning that I was interested in their thoughts and ideas, whatever they may be.

Whilst my pre-pandemic research design intended to employ a mixed method of data collection through the analysis of children's drawings and semi-structured interviews, I decided to continue with the research without the interviews, which could not take place following the closure of schools. Whilst there are studies that analyse children's drawing alone, independently from the children (Harrison et al., 2007; Kendrick and McKay, 2002) I was also aware that without with the children present, there was a possibility that during analysis I might make incorrect assumptions about the meaning behind drawings and that I might misinterpret images (Moriarty, 2005 p231). In order to try and prevent this I encouraged older children to annotate their drawings themselves and where this was not appropriate due to the developing abilities of the child, an adult helped with annotation by adding to the image the exact words reported to them (Appendix 2).

The data analysis process

A thematic coding of the data was carried out using a programme called NVivo 12 (Appendix 3). The analysis followed the 6-phase procedure described by Braun Clarke (2006) whilst considering the trustworthiness of my decisions at each stage as discussed by Nowell et al (2017).

Once I had collated the data and digitised all the images, I worked carefully through each page, making notes about potential themes and codes. At this stage I also discussed any images which appeared to be ambiguous with the child's class teachers who, as experienced educators, knew their children well and were able to decipher handwriting which was not immediately clear. There were three instances of this and in all but one image, the adults were able to identify what the children had intended to draw and write.

In phase 2, I revisited each image and, working with NVivo, created a large number of initial codes. At this point, in line my conceptual framework, I wanted to give 'full and equal attention' (Braun Clarke, 2006) to each item, allowing me to access the full voice of each child with the understanding that anything the child had to say was important and valid as experts within their own lives (Mukherji and Albon, 2018). When all of the images had been initially coded, I attempted to refine the codes into overarching themes (phase 3). Whilst themes did emerge, there were a small number of codes which did not appear to fit into any theme and these were collated under the miscellaneous category.

Phase 4 involved looking again at all the images in each theme. At this stage it became apparent that the initial themes needed some refinement and in a number of cases themes were combined or split as appropriate. Following this, I created a thematic overview table (phase 5) which I then discussed with the Junior class teacher in combination with a collation of the original images. The teacher had an expert knowledge of education, the children involved, and the link project on which this research was based. During this triangulation process we were able to discuss the reasons why I had linked certain images to particular themes, and how themes linked back to the raw data. In phase 6 I highlighted images of particular significance in an attempt to demonstrate the relevance and trustworthiness of the codes and themes I had selected (Appendix 5).

Ethical considerations

Ethical issues associated with the study were considered carefully in line with British Council guidance, and approval was gained from my Executive Headteacher. I emailed all of the parents of the children in my school (Appendix 6) and made myself available for additional questions. 23 children were given permission to take part, which included all of the children who were currently at school and a small number of children who continued to learn from home. Both the parents and the children were assured that there was no obligation to take part and that they could withdraw at any time. I made it clear that this activity was in addition to normal learning provision in school or through our home learning platform and that the work the children produced would be used for research purposes alone. They were also assured that although the pictures produced could be used in the final report and may be identifiable by peers, they would be anonymised. Additional consideration was given to the safeguarding procedures related to working with children both in school and online and these procedures were followed at all times.
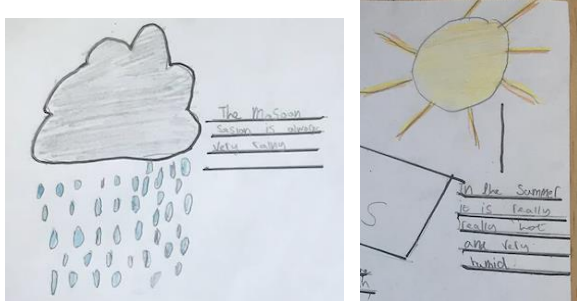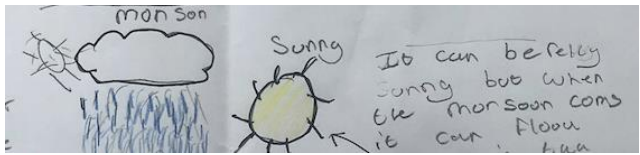
Findings

The results of the analysis showed children's responses fitted into 17 categories (Table 1). There was a miscellaneous category containing 6 references. These items showed no correlation to other images and so were removed from the analysis. The categories were then collected into eight themes. Each of the themes is discussed below. I have included quotes from the annotations provided and, where appropriate, have corrected spellings for clarity. The age of each child has been included with example images to help provide context.

Theme	Name	Individual references	Thematic references
Climate	Monsoon	8	27
	Hot climate	19	
Daily life	Population proximity	4	36
	School	8	
	Transport	11	
	Food	13	
Geographical knowledge	Physical environment	5	30
	Taj Mahal	7	
	Pollution	8	
	Maps, flag etc	10	
Inequality	Water	4	37
	Financial inequality	14	
	Other inequality	19	
Negative outlook	Sadness	9	9
Positive outlook	Happiness	11	11
Traditions and customs	Customs	9	9
Wildlife including plants	Plants	9	36
	Animals	27	

Table 1: Frequency of references for specified area

Climate

The climate in India was a recurrent theme and the majority of the children, including the youngest children in the study, referred to the weather as being hot and sunny. A number of the children also referred to the monsoon season. All but one of these children were in the upper junior year groups.

	Child A – age 5 - *"It's hot and sunny."* Child J – age 5 – *"It's so hot there."* Child L – age 7 – *"Person sweating."*
	Child R – age 11 *"The monsoon season is always very rainy."* *"In the summer it is really, really hot and very humid."*
	Child T – age 10 *"It can be really sunny but when the monsoon comes it can flood."*

Although these responses treat India as an area as a whole and do not take account of any difference between regions, they are unsurprising as during each visit teachers from the UK have made to Kolkata in January, the weather has been cold at home whilst it has been relatively hot in Kolkata, a contrast which can easily be seen in photographs and through video calls.

The junior children's awareness of a monsoon season does demonstrate that they are aware of differences in weather at different times of the year although they have identified the extremes of weather conditions and from their responses it seems likely that they are considering India as a whole area and not accounting for any regional variation.

Daily Life

The theme 'daily life' contained four codes (school, transport, food and population proximity). The theme was designed around aspects of life in India for normal people without reference to people being rich or poor.

Half of the children in the study made a reference to food. The majority of these children appeared to suggest that curry and rice were the main food associated with India. This idea would be consistent with experiences the children had during India themed days in school where the children cooked and made traditional Indian food and reports the children received whilst I was in India of the food I was eating whilst I was there. One child noted that McDonalds was available, but associated this with wealth.

	Child V – age 9 – "*The main food is curry.*" Child N – age 11 – "*In India they eat lots of curry.*" Child J – age 5 – "*Curry and rice.*" Child O – age 10
	Child M – age 10 – *Tuktuks are a transport, a bit like a taxi.*" Child S – age 10 Child N – age 11 Images showing various modes of transport on a busy road.
	Child S – age 10, Child I – age 7 and Child J – age 5 Images of school with no other context or detail.
	Child D – Year 4 "*Covid-19 would be bad because they live really close together.*" Child T – age 10 "*In the classrooms they are very cramped and now, just as we are going through Covid-19, the classroom is very spaced out.*"

Ideas around transport were varied. Six of the eleven references referred to tuktuks and rickshaws, items which the children had noted in photographs discussed in class and during assemblies, but there was also recognition that there were other forms of transport in India similar to those which could be found at home.

Within this theme, there were various references to the existence of schools but with very little wider context. Once child's annotation noted that more children in the slums can go to school. The population proximity code referred to the children's perceptions of busyness. Two of the references in this section referred to the difficulty in social distancing. This appeared to show a level of connection and empathy between what was currently happening in the children's own lives and those of peers in India.

Geographical Knowledge
Under this theme children, especially those is the older year groups, were able to demonstrate recall of some of the facts they had learnt about India as part of the geography lessons covered as a normal part of the curriculum.

There were ten references to pollution and in particular litter. This could be attributed to photographs the children have seen of their link school in the city of Kolkata as there was also reference made to forest and jungle areas suggesting the children did not believe all of India was covered in litter. The reference one child made to rubbish picking was of particular interest as the child appeared to assume rubbish picking was a result of the prevalence of rubbish caused by people littering, not as a way by which to make an income.

	Child E – age 9 – "*There is lots of rubbish because people litter.*" Child S – age 10
	Child I – age 7 – *"Tropical forest"* Child E – Year 4 – "*The jungle where they all live*" (referring to the animals)

Inequality
Inequality was an overriding theme in the data and the majority of pupils suggested that both rich and poor people lived in India, with the rich having greater access to resources such as money, material goods and clean water. This basic level of differentiation is likely to have resulted from the attempts our teachers have made to provide a balanced view of Indian society without focusing purely on poverty.

There were notable differences in what children drew when depicting the concepts of rich and poor. For example, 'poor' houses being made from rubbish whilst 'rich' houses looked more substantial and possibly Western in style. The poor ate curry whilst the rich were associated with more Westernised food such as McDonalds. Two of the images described the rich people as selfish. Without further investigation it is not possible to understand what made the children draw this conclusion, but it does demonstrate the sense of injustice they felt.

	Child O - image showing financial inequality between rich and poor people and also the perception that rich people would eat McDonalds whilst poor people would eat curry.
	Child Q, Child L – images of 'rich' people's houses.
	Child R – image showing a 'rich' person's house. *"Some Indian houses are rich and some are poor. Not many people are in the middle. In some rich places they have guards so nobody can go there."*
	Child C – age 8, Child I – age 7 Images of 'poor' houses.
	Child I – age 7, Child E – age 9 Images portraying rich people as 'selfish' at the expense of poor people.

Negative outlook

This theme was made of only one code, and related to people feeling or looking obviously sad. The reasons behind the sadness were not clear from the images and whilst in three of the cases it can be attributed to poverty, this was not clearly the case in all the references.

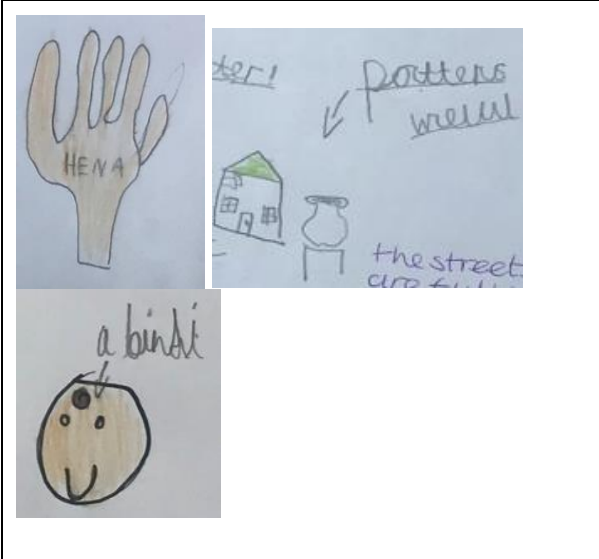|	
	Child C – age 8, Child I – age 7 and Child K – age 5. Images showing sadness apparently caused by issues associated with poverty.

Positive outlook

Again, this theme was made of only one code which whilst important, did not correlate with other themes. There were 11 references made to happiness. The reason behind the happiness was not always made clear and where it was, there was no correlation between different children's perceptions. There was also little reference to rich or poor in this theme. This was a particularly interesting theme as whilst there was clearly a perception amongst most children that some people in India live in poverty, this did not appear to prevent the idea that people in the country could be happy.

	Child B – age 5 Child M – age 10 Child P – age 4

Traditions and customs
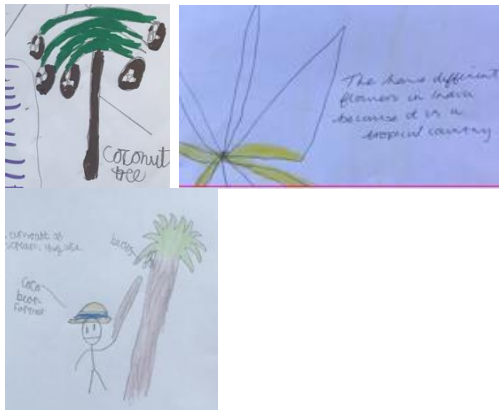
Under this theme, children were able to identify some of the traditions and customary activities carried out in India. They had learnt about many of these in school and in some cases tried them out during themed days. The drawings do not allow assumptions around understandings of the frequency of these

events, participants etc. and whilst they do show some awareness of cultural aspects of their perceptions, this understanding does not appear to go beyond the experiences they themselves have had in school.

	Child D – age 9 – *"Henna."* Child I – age 7 – *"Potters wheel."* Child V – age 9 – *"A bindi."*

Wildlife including plants

Elements of this theme appeared frequently in the children's drawings. They were able to identify a variety of species focusing on those which were different to those we would find in the UK. On a number of occasions, some pupils drew animals which are not traditionally found in Asia, but these animals were still different from those traditionally found at home. Through this code it was clear the children were identifying differences possibly because of the novelty of exciting wildlife which they would not see at home.

	Child B – age 5 Child E – age 9 Images showing animals children perceive to live in India
	Child F – age 8 Child H – age 5 – "*They have different flowers because it is a tropical county.*" Child W – age 11 – *"Cocoa bean farmer."* Images showing the perceived difference between plant life in India and at home.
	Child C – age 8 – *"Kangaroo."* Child I – age 7 –*"Zebra."* Images showing different animals children perceive to live in India but which are not found on the Asian continent.

Conclusions

This small-scale piece of research attempted to ascertain the views our children have of India. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic meant that the method I used had to be done from a distance and as a result I was not able to discuss the reasons why children had drawn or written about particular things. However, the drawings that the children produced in response to the video prompt have provided a rich insight into their ideas and whilst context specific, the themes which were identified provide an understanding of the perceptions the children hold.

Many of the images the children drew could be identified as stereotypical. The children appear to have particularly noted the differences between life in India and their reality. As experts in their own lives, children's own lived experience appears to provide the initial basis against which they have made comparison with the lives of others. They appear to notice differences first. Many children noted different animals found in India and differences in food, transport and housing were also a feature. Few children appeared to make any reference to similarities between their own lives and those of people in India. This could have been a result of the presentation of the task or the result of learning experiences the children have had.

There was significant reference in many of the children's pictures to inequality and images of poverty, lack of money, water and resources were frequent. These elements could also be identified as differences from the children's own lives in the same way as many identified different animals etc., but whilst these 'interactions with diversity' (Hunt 2013, p10) do show a level of appreciation that life is different for others, the focus on what others are lacking may be evidence of the unintentional confirmation of stereotypes suggested by Tallon (2013). Many of the children noted that people in India were either very rich or very poor with 'not many people in the middle' (Child R).

A number of the children developed their own understanding of inequality further by portraying the 'rich' in a negative way. Child I explained that the rich person in his drawings was 'selfish' and 'only cares about himself' and this idea of the selfishness of those who were wealthy was featured in the drawings of a number of the children. This 'sense of injustice' (Oxfam 2007, p2) with little understanding of the reasons behind it, does suggest that the children were aware of inequality within the country, not just between their own country and India. Whilst there was no reference made to the need for Western aid to solve these problems in the paternalistic and postcolonial way suggested by Martin and Griffiths (2012), images which portrayed wealth often depicted more Westernised elements such as McDonalds and more traditionally Western style buildings.

Whilst, as Andreotti (2006) suggests, this type of 'soft' global citizenship education represents a major step towards developing an understanding of the world extending beyond children's own lived reality, it does appear that through our project, we may be developing the idea amongst pupils that successful development in India would be becoming more like countries in the Global North. Many of the views the children appeared to hold focused on identifying differences between their own lives and those in India, particularly in terms of inequality. It was pleasing to see that some children appeared to understand that not everyone in India lived life in the stereotypical way which may be presented by the media and may have been assumed following our own representations of India to the children, but it was also noticeable

that the children made little reference to positive elements of Indian society such as the rich culture, successful enterprise or world leading industry and innovation.

There is no doubt that our project has raised awareness of some of the issues in India and appealed to our school communities 'humanitarian principles' (Oberman, 2014 p10), but it appears that little consideration has been given to the project beyond the identification of difference and the need to help. It is quite possible that the project is unintentionally reinforcing and reproducing beliefs and practices which are detrimental to those we actually intend to support.

Implications for our project

This study has provided an interesting insight into our children's perceptions of India. The thematic analysis of the children's drawing was successful in identifying a number of common themes and although the reasons behind these perceptions have not been explored, in combination with the literature, the results have prompted questions as to whether our international school link is fulfilling its initial intentions as we strive to develop our pupils as critical global citizens.

Whilst the majority of teachers involved in the project are aware of the need to provide a balanced view of India and other countries in the Global South, as Pickering (2008) suggests, the lessons teachers plan and the way they teach relies largely on their own experiences and assumptions which may themselves never have been challenged in a critical way. Unsurprisingly, our pupils have learnt what we have taught them. The perceptions they have developed are consistent with our representation of India and as such, if we want to develop a more critical approach amongst our pupils, we need to first develop a critical approach to our own system of beliefs and ideas. If our project aims to go beyond the 'soft global citizenship' suggested by Andreotti (2006), consideration must be given to the global citizenship education our own teachers receive.

This has been a very useful piece of research both for my own school and for the wider link project in which we are involved. The results have made it clear that in order for our pupils to develop as true global citizens, with the ability to challenge paternalistic attitudes and stereotypes, the teachers who are guiding their learning may first need to investigate and interrogate perceptions of their own. This has significant implications for the training we provide to our staff and other teachers involved in our link project. This in itself is not a straightforward process, but the acknowledgment of need provides a first step for further thought and investigation.

I hope that by sharing my findings with colleagues, other teachers involved in our link project and teachers involved in projects of this sort, I will encourage reflection on what it is they really intend to achieve by developing a school link, and how critically reflecting on their own perceptions can help them achieve this - encouraging critical engagement with global learning which goes beyond traditional stereotypes and charitable views.

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Appendix 1: Pilot Study

The pilot study took place in school at a time during the pandemic when only the children of key workers, children classed as vulnerable, and some children in Year 6 and EYFS were in school.

The children were asked to draw images to represent their thoughts about the United States of America and where appropriate provide written details to explain these. The USA was chosen because it was a country that I expected the children to have some experience of which was different to the UK.

7 children took part in the pilot. 5 of the children were in the Junior class and 2 children were Infants. The stimulus for the activity was provided though an online video in which I explained what I wanted the children to do. The children then drew their images onto a map of the USA and space for annotations was given on the back of the worksheet. The work the children created was analysed using NVivo to look for themes. This allowed me to practice using the programme before working on the final data set.

A number of issues arose as a result of the pilot which meant I made some small changes before conducting the final piece of research. Firstly, as I was the teacher in the Infant classroom whilst the activity was taking place, I could very quickly see that the very youngest children (age 5) found conceptualising a country of which they had little experience too abstract. One child drew a picture of his family which has no relation to the USA (Image A). This could have presented a problem in the final data set however, I decided to continue as planned because whilst the same could happen, I did know that the children had spent time learning about India and so perhaps the final activity may appear less abstract.

I also made a number of practical adaptations before the final piece of research.

- The outline image of a map onto which the children drew appeared to add little to the data and limited the space the children had to draw. The map was removed in the final project.
- Rather than annotations to aid interpretation, the writing the older children did appeared to simply repeat in a written from what they had drawn. Whilst this could have been useful if it had been clearer which drawing linked with which image it was difficult to decipher and so the children were asked to annotate onto their drawing in the final project and blank lines were left at the bottom of the page for further writing for junior children to use if required.
- It became clear during the analysis of these images that great care had to be taken with practical management of the data to allow effective analysis such as the naming files, the addition of demographic data and the orientation of images.
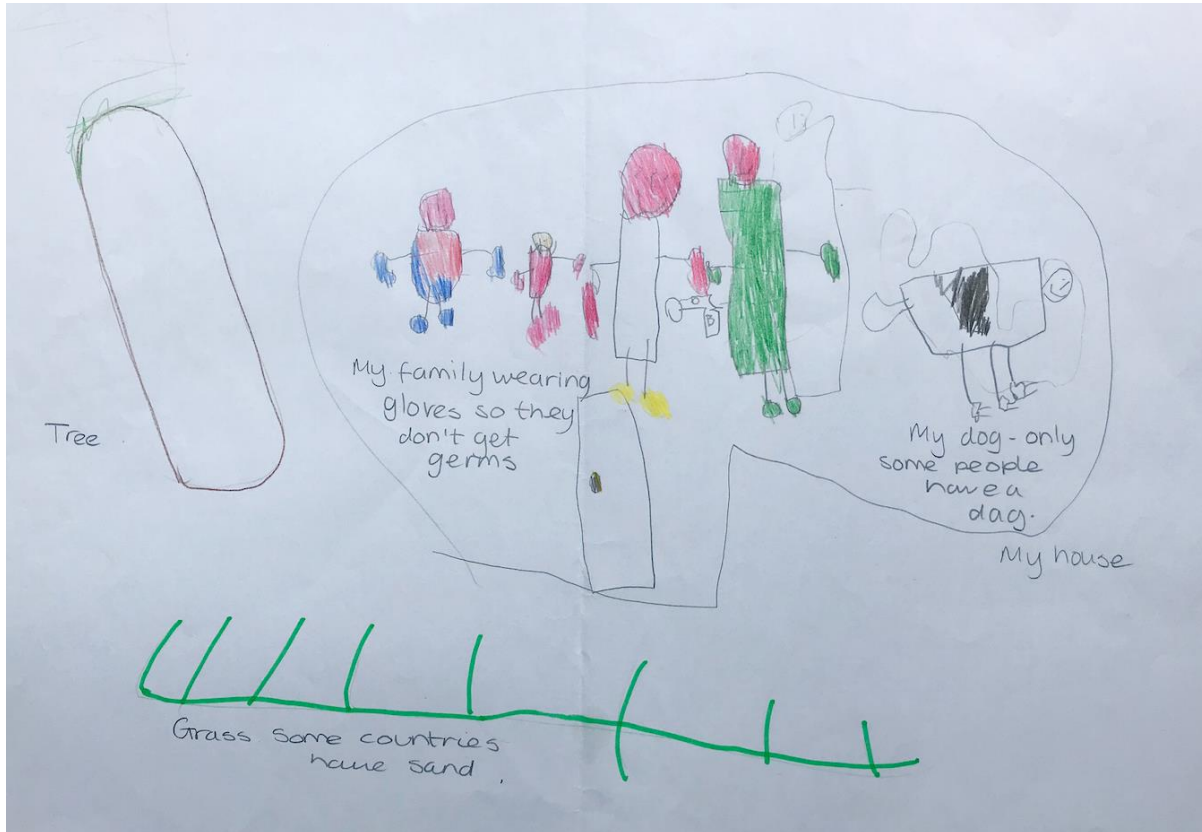
Image A: An Infant child's drawing of their own family with little awareness of the USA
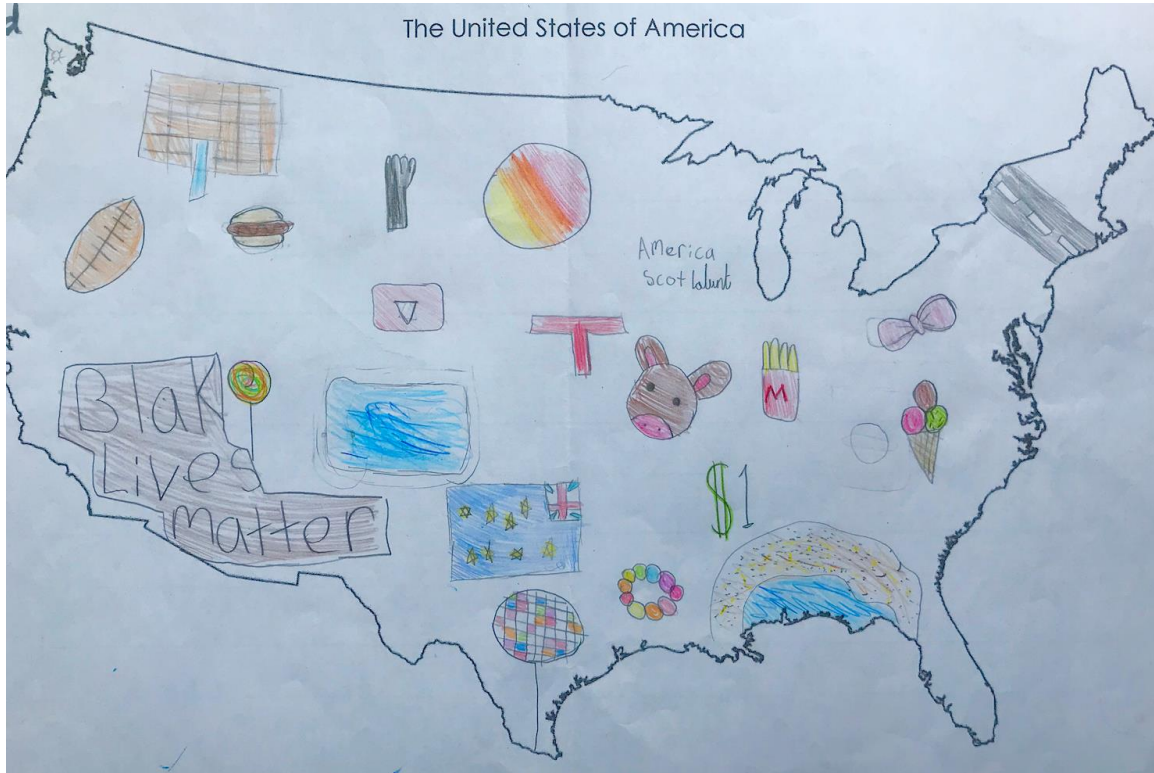
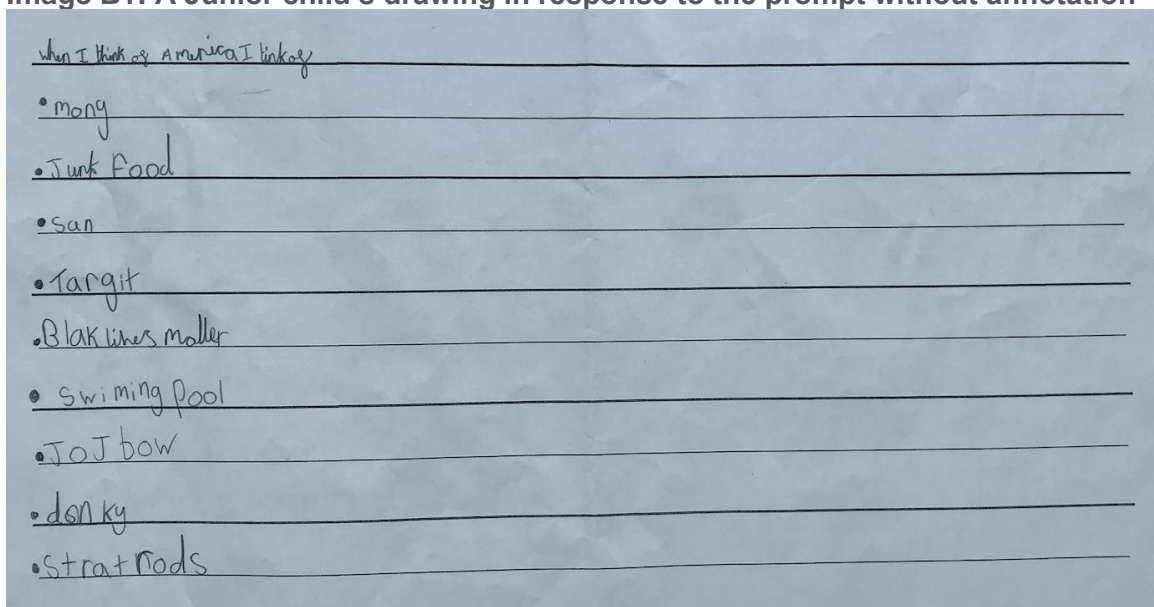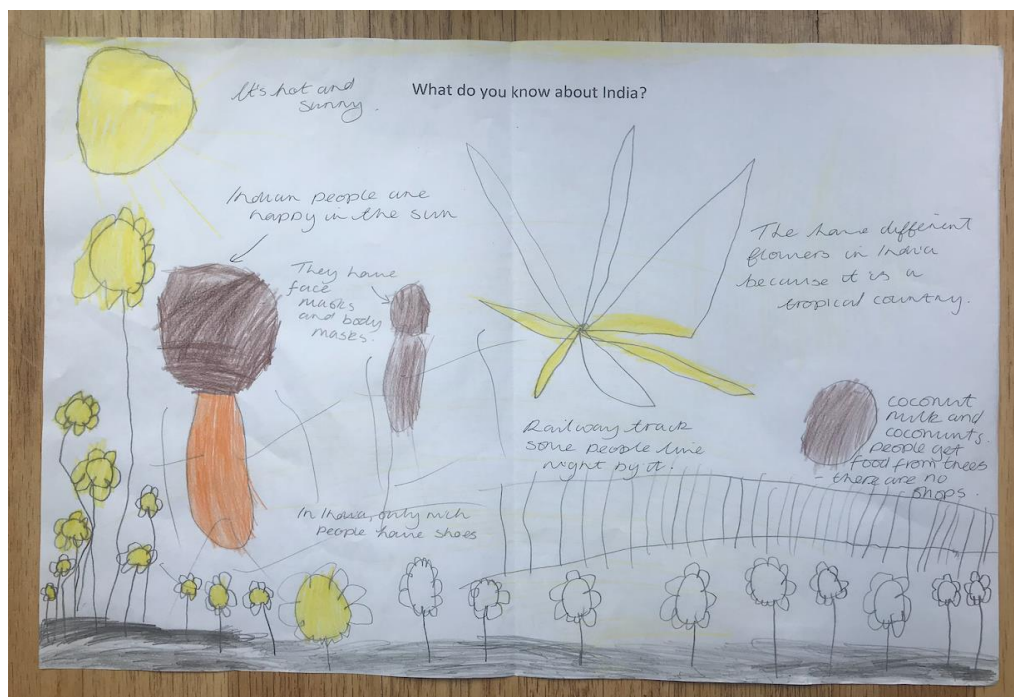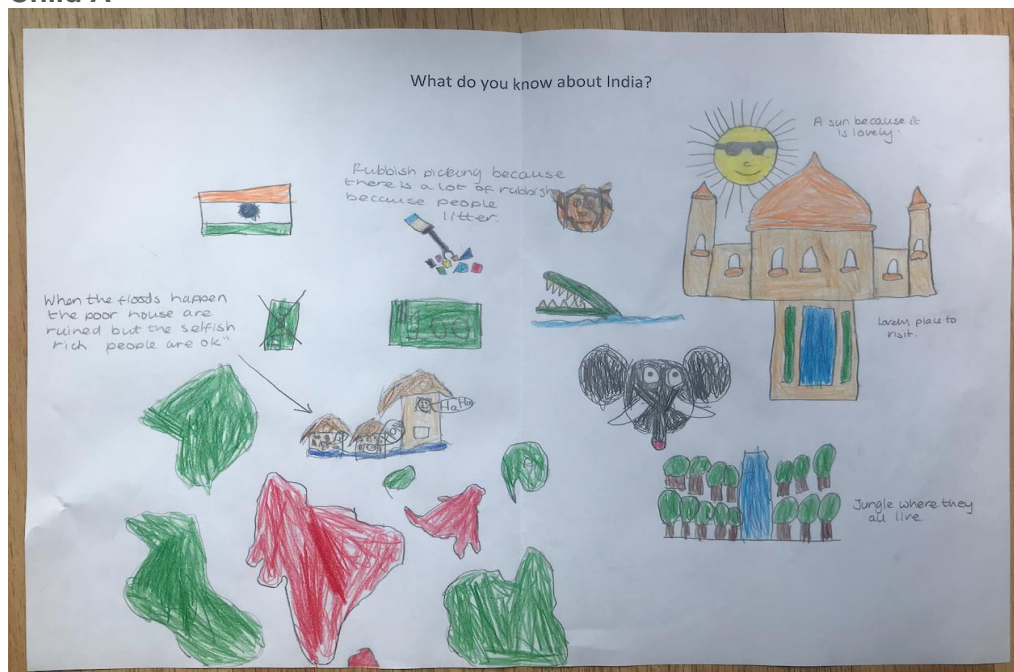**Image B1: A Junior child's drawing in response to the prompt without annotation**

Image B2: The annotations from the same child appearing to list the drawings on the other side of the page
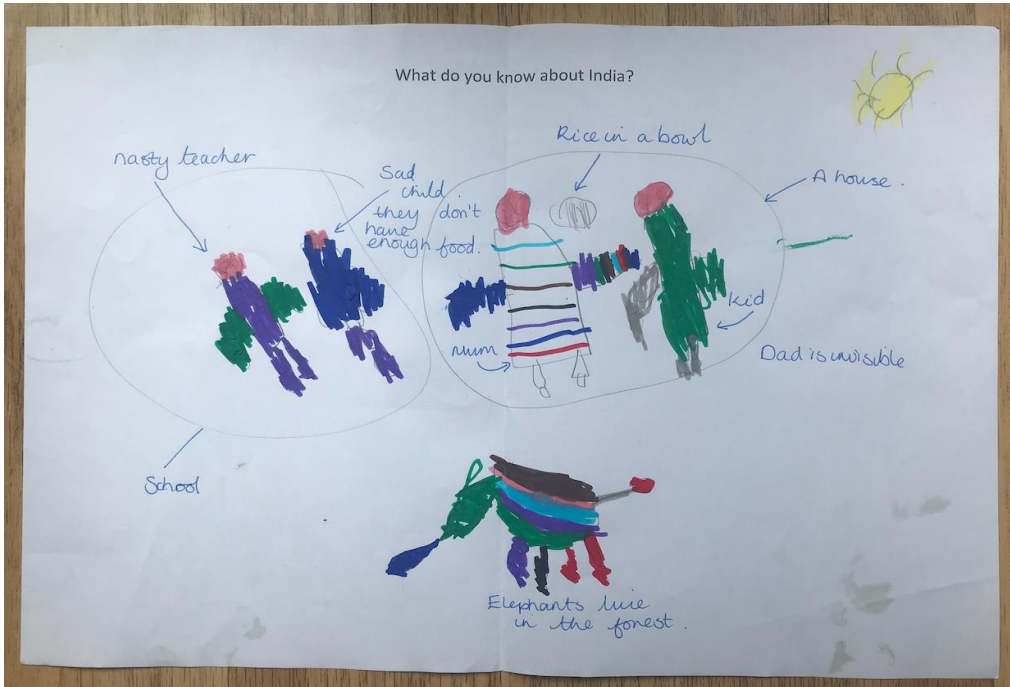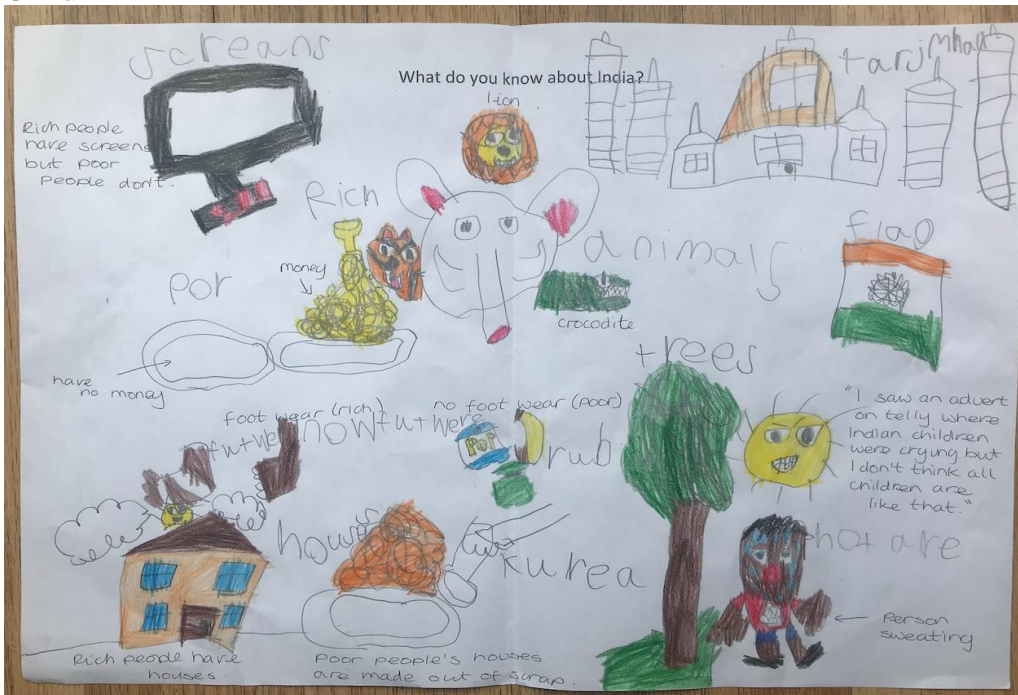
Appendix 2: Sample of visual data

Child A

Child E

What do you know about India?

nasty teacher

Sad child. they don't have enough food.

Rice in a bowl

A house.

mum

kid

Dad is invisible

School

Elephants live in the forest.

Child K

What do you know about India?

screens

Rich people have screens but poor people don't.

Rich

Lion

tarimhal

money

animals

flap

Por

crocodile

have no money

trees

foot wear (rich)

no foot wear (poor)

Por

rub

"I saw an advert on telly where Indian children were crying but I don't think all children are like that."

house

kurea

hot are

Rich people have houses.

Poor people's houses are made out of scrap.

Person sweating

Child L

Appendix 3: Thematic Analysis Process

Code	Working definition	Relevant theme or themes	Outcome
Animals	Animals pupils identify with India	Wildlife including plants	Code remains
Appealing clothing	Positive aspects of clothing worn in India	Traditions and customs	Combined into 'customs'
Covid-19	Reference to current pandemic in an Indian context	Daily life	Combined into 'population proximity' as all references refer to potential lack of social distancing
Customs	Traditional customs associated with India	Traditions and customs	Code remains
Family	Images of family settings	Miscellaneous	Code removed – limited correlation (i)
Food	Food pupils identify as being eaten in India	Daily life	Code remains
Maps, flag etc.	Images showing factual knowledge, map, flag, currency etc.	Geographical knowledge	Code remains
Happiness	Images with positive references to life in India	Positive outlook	Code remains
Hot climate	Images referring to hot temperatures, sun, lack of snow	Geographical knowledge	Code remains
Inequality	Images referring to difference between the rich and poor in society	Inequality	Code divided into financial inequality and other inequalities
Jobs	Images showing employment	Inequality, daily life	Removed – limited influence and images feature under other codes (a)
Miscellaneous	A collection of 5 images which are unrelated and do not appear to correlate with other images	Miscellaneous	Code remains but will not form part of final analysis

Monetary poverty	Images suggesting some of the population have little money	Inequality	Code merged with subdivision of inequality – 'financial inequality'.
Monetary wealth	Images suggesting some of the population have a lot of money	Inequality	Code merged with subdivision of inequality – 'financial inequality'
Monsoon	References to the monsoon season	Geographical Knowledge	Code combined with hot climate into 'climate'
Physical environment	Images relating to the landscape	Geographical Knowledge	Code remains
Plants	Plants pupils identify with India	Wildlife including plants	Code remains
Pollution	Images relating to pollution – mainly rubbish	Geographical knowledge, daily life	Code remains
Population proximity	Images which refer to high numbers of people often living close together	Daily life	Code remains
Poor housing	Images of housing associated with 'poor' people	Inequality	Code merged with subdivision of inequality – 'other inequality'
Poverty - material	Images showing lack of material possessions associated with 'poor' people	Inequality	Combined into 'other inequality'.
Poverty - sadness	Images showing negative emotions caused by poverty	Negative outlook	Combined with 'sadness'
Religion	Images with religious association – cows as holy	Traditions and customs	Removed – no correlation (b)
Sadness	Images associated with negative emotion	Negative outlook	Code remains
School	Images relating to school	Daily life	Code remains
Selfish rich	Single image showing a rich, selfish person	Inequality	Combined into 'other inequality'
Taj Mahal	Images of the Taj Mahal	Geographical Knowledge	Code remains

Shopping	Single image of shopping on the street	Daily life	Removed – no correlation (c)
Transport	Images showing various modes of transport	Daily life	Code remains
Water – lack of	Images showing problems with water (dirty water / enough water)	Inequality	Code remains
YouTube	Single image of YouTube logo	Not applicable	Code removed – no correlations(d)

Justifications for code removal

a – This image showed a family in a house with dad being invisible. Whilst this may infer additional meaning which has not been identified, the child who drew this image also completed the pilot study (Image A) and appeared to not yet have developed the ability to conceptualize images much beyond their immediate experience.

b – The code referring to religion contained only two images, both of cows, and one of which included the annotation 'cows are holy'. It was felt that this was not a significant enough collection to justify inclusion in the final analysis and no other images relating to religion were drawn by the pupils.
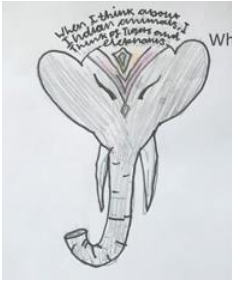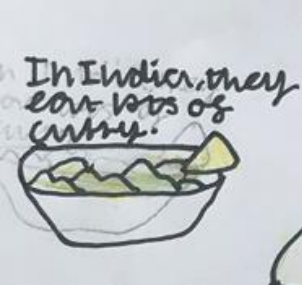
c – This was a single image and so was removed on account that there was no correlation with other images.
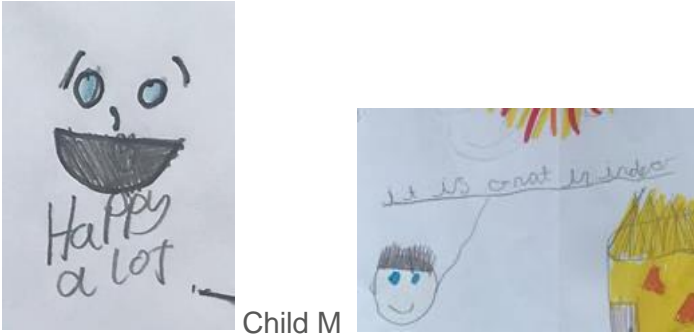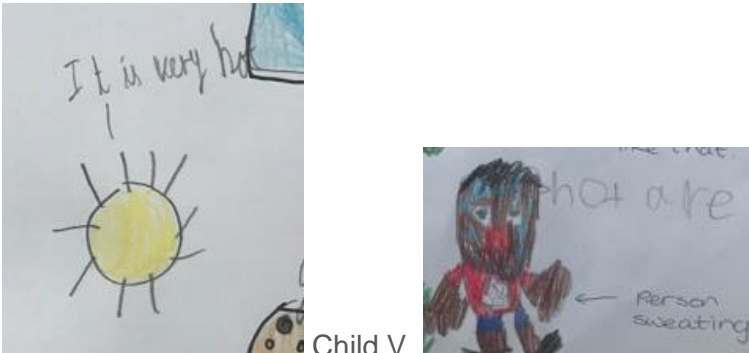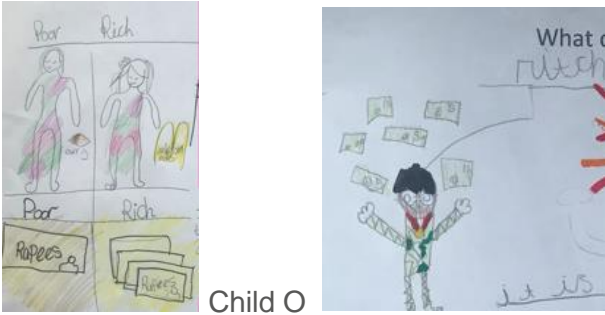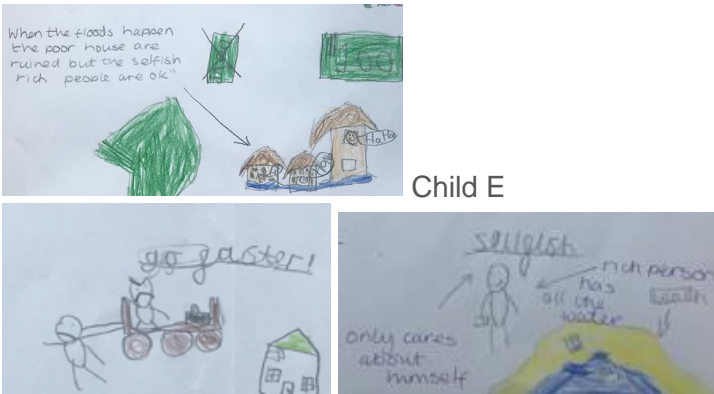
d – This was a single image of the YouTube logo. As the intention behind this could not be established, it was no annotated and there was no correlation with other images, this code was removed.
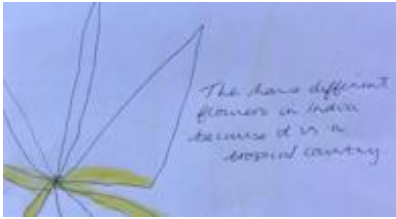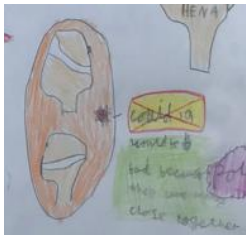
Appendix 4: Developed Themes
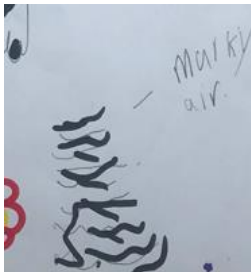
Theme	Meaning	Codes
Inequality	Images identifying inequity between 'rich' and 'poor' people in terms of money, material goods, housing, food and access to clean water.	Water Financial inequality Other inequalities
Daily life	Various aspects of everyday life including food, methods of transportation, schools and the population proximity (eg people are too close together to social distance)	Population density School Transport Food
Geographical knowledge	The physical environment (eg jungle, swamp, forest), pollution, landmarks, general geographical knowledge (flag, map etc)	General knowledge such as maps etc Physical environment Taj Mahal Pollution
Climate	Hot weather, sunshine, monsoon	Hot climate Monsoon
Wildlife including plants	Animals found in India, plants	Plant life Animal life
Positive outlook	People portrayed as happy, positive images, joyfulness, India as a happy welcoming place	Happiness
Negative outlook	People portrayed as sad, images where characters are sad	Sadness
Traditions and customs	Decorated elephants, rangoli patterns, bindis, henna	Customs
Miscellaneous	Unrelated images, images which appear to show a misunderstanding of the prompt	Family Other miscellaneous

Appendix 6: Post checking – final codes with illustrative images

Code	Illustrative image
Animals	Child B Child Q
Customs	Child V Child D
Food	Child S Child N
Map, flag etc.	Child E Child Q

Happiness	Child M Child C
Hot climate	Child V Child H
Financial inequality	Child O Child C
Other inequalities	Child E Child I

Physical environment	Child E Child I
Plants	Child F Child H
Pollution	Child G
Population proximity	Child N Child D
Sadness	Child L Child S

School	Child K Child O
Taj Mahal	Child V Child E
Transport	Child F Child G
Water	Child C Child M

Appendix 6: Letter to parents

Dear Parents,

As part of my doctoral studies at the Institute of Education, I am currently undertaking a project to find out what perceptions and ideas children in our school have of India. I am writing to you to ask permission for your child to be included in the research, I hope this is possible.

My intention is to introduce an activity through the class blogs which will ask the children to draw and label pictures to represent what they think of when they think about India and in light of what they have learnt though our school partnership. I hope that my findings will help us to more effectively plan lessons around global citizenship in the future and I intend to write a report for the British Council who are a major facilitator of school partnerships in the UK.

The activity is entirely optional although I would very much like your child to take part.

In line with normal procedures at all universities, the work the children produce will be anonymised and stored securely. Only I will have access to the children's work. My final report may include some of the images the children produce but neither the school nor the children will be identifiable.

I will send a letter to all children who have been given permission to take part during the week beginning **********. The letter will include a template onto which the children can do their drawings and a stamped addressed envelope in which the pictures can be returned to me at school. If your child has already returned to school, they will have the opportunity to complete the activity as part of normal provision in the classroom although if you do not wish them to take part or they choose not to an alternative activity will be provided.

If you would like to know more about my research or if you have any further questions, please feel free to email me and if required, I will arrange an online information session to which you would be very welcome.

If you are happy for your child to take part and for me to use the images they produce as part of my report, I would be very grateful if you would reply to this email and give your consent.

I hope to post the activity on the blogs on the **********
I very much appreciate your support.

Kind Regards,

Appendix 7: Demographic data

Pupil Code	Age	Gender
A	5	M
B	5	F
C	8	M
D	9	M
E	9	M
F	9	M
G	8	F
H	7	F
I	7	M
J	7	M
K	7	M
L	5	M
M	5	M
N	7	F
O	10	F
P	11	F
Q	10	M
R	9	M
S	10	F
T	10	M
U	7	F
V	9	M
W	11	F

About the Author

Aimée Tinkler is Head of School of in small primary school in rural Derbyshire and has been a teacher for over 16 years. She introduced and led global learning in her school through a school partnership project with a slum school in India and has subsequently led yearly teacher training sessions for teachers in slum schools across Kolkata. Aimée is currently studying a professional doctorate with the UCL Institute for Education where her research interests include accessing the voice of the child through visual methods and the development of global learning in primary schools. Contact Aimée on Twitter @aimeetinkler.

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