



# Bringing the World into Church Schools

Report at the end of Year 1



Commissioned by BUILD

Building Understanding through International Links for Development

Written by Stephen Lyon and Andrew Watts



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# *Background* by Nick Maurice, Director of BUILD

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*This report was commissioned by BUILD (Building Understanding through International Links for Development) a coalition of 45 international agencies committed to the development of community-based linking partnerships between communities of all kinds in UK, (schools, towns, local authorities, hospitals, faith, diaspora and youth groups, corporates etc) with counterparts in the Global South (developing countries).*

*All 44 English Church of England dioceses have partner dioceses in the Global South representing well over 150 links in total. The Church of England's Diocesan Boards of Education are responsible for the education of 1 million children and young adults in 4,450 primary schools, 210 secondary schools and 12 academies with another 18 Church of England academies planned in the future. This report addresses the issue of developing further cooperation between the Boards of Education and the Diocesan International Links.*

*The Methodist Church also has a significant involvement in primary and secondary education as well as in international linking.*

*Both the Government's Department for International Development and Department for Children, Schools and Families are committed to and support global school partnerships as part of their strategies for support for development and for global education in schools.*

*This report comes at the end of the first year of two year's work by consultants to BUILD, Stephen Lyon and Andrew Watts who have spent time in discussion with Diocesan Boards of Education, Diocesan Links and schools in those dioceses and with the Methodist Church.*

*Our hope is that this work will enable more Church links to find the way to introducing their schools to partner schools in the South so that young people at both ends will have a clearer understanding of the global context in which they live and will through friendship and learning across the world become concerned, active, global citizens.*

*BUILD is immensely grateful to Stephen and Andrew for their work so far and to the Jerusalem trust for funding the research that they have undertaken.*

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# Consultation – March 17th 2010

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The *Interim Report at the end of Year 1* of the project was explored by a wide-ranging group of people on March 17th 2010<sup>1</sup>. These included representatives of most of the dioceses visited during the first phase of the project. In the light of this, the report as it now stands is a revised version of the interim draft.

The only authority the report possesses is derived from the weight of the argument it seeks to expound. However, the participants in this Consultation have contributed to what follows. Having said that, all conclusions reached in the report and the suggested recommendations (Section 6) are those offered by the authors.

There were two major criticisms of the report that came to light at the Consultation. The first was the absence of any case studies illustrating the benefits that schools derive from links; the second, that there are no Southern voices in the report. We have sought to address the first by including information for accessing a large number of case studies in Appendix B. The second, while understandable, does not fit quite as well into the rationale for the study itself. Its primary purpose was to look at what was happening in relation to partnership links within English and Welsh dioceses and the Methodist Church. While these will affect Southern partners, and hopefully be shared with them, their voice was not sought for this particular study<sup>2</sup>.

Following from the March 17th Consultation two other brief additions have been made to the report:

- Where to look for further information i.e. resources that support linking (Appendix C)
- Future work to be undertaken (Appendix D)

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1 See Appendix A for participants in this Consultation

2 During the discussion of southern involvement in the report it was pointed out that sometimes the language we use to describe a particular relationship gives clues to the nature of that relationship. Some participants disliked simply terming these relations as “links” and rather used the terms partnership or companionship. The reason being that it was felt that these terms better expressed relationships of equality, reciprocity and mutuality that were being aimed at in school-to-school partnerships.

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# Introduction

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This project has barely skimmed the surface of what is happening in relation to schools' linking in faith schools. However, in listening, however briefly, to the stories of 10 dioceses and, within them, the experience of up to 15 schools a picture is emerging. The picture identifies common elements of what might be called 'good practice' – i.e. things that have worked in a number of different settings and are therefore noteworthy. It also identifies a number of common challenges that both seasoned and aspiring linkers have faced. Finally, the emerging picture has been punctuated by a number of vivid examples of creative and innovative ways to stimulate the ethos that lies behind linking<sup>3</sup>.

This report will seek to draw this picture in words and suggest a number of ways by which what is emerging might be taken on a step further. But first, by way of introduction, a number of general points to bear in mind as you read the report.

- When asked if a school has a link an affirmative answer may be describing anything from occasional monetary support for a small community project in Africa to a fully planned, curriculum based, inter-dependent relationship between two schools that offers added educational value at both ends. Our view is that both – and all stations in between – have value but movement towards the latter is a realistic goal for an organisation whose core business is education.
- It is very clear that there is more linking – of whatever description - than anyone has mapped or possibly can map. All the dioceses we visited supported the idea of linking and some had structures that took responsibility for a diocese-wide strategy, while others presented a more piecemeal picture. Our view is that while mapping might be useful, what matters is realising the potential this amount of linking has for mutual support and learning within a diocese or district.
- Diocesan and church links can and do provide a platform for schools' links in many places but in others disparity of educational provision by the link churches does not make this possible. Our view is that while in some places a diocesan or church link might be a potentially desirable driver for schools' links in other places any strategy will need other drivers only one of which might be the existing church link.
- Throughout this report we speak of two distinct but inter-related types of links. The first is the diocese or church linking with a diocese or church in the global south – these are diocesan or church links. The second is the school-to-school links. Part of the purpose of this study is to address the question of how these two kinds of links might mutually enrich and support one another.

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3 For Church Schools part of that ethos is expressed in its theological understanding of these partnerships. This ethos cannot be an 'added extra' but must be part of the overall educational philosophy that provides the foundations for Church Schools. Future work on a theological understanding on school partnership links is being undertaken in the next phase of the project – see Appendix D.

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## Section 1 Good practise: diocesan perspective <sup>4</sup>

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### Setting up links

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The common thread in all four dioceses was that the schools' links were greatly enabled by the existing relationships that had been built up through the diocesan links. This meant that key personnel were already known (e.g. Bishops, Directors of Education); the schools' links would be part of a wider network of links in the same region; channels of communication already existed; and trust had already been built. The result of all these factors was that, once set up, the school link would have a wider ownership within both the local and church communities that went beyond just the school and offer a greater chance of long term sustainability.

At the English end, all dioceses were able to cluster or network schools at similar stages in the linking process. Some went on group visits to their prospective partners; others worked together on funding applications; and in all dioceses small support networks emerged.

All four dioceses made good use of the passionate expertise they drew on from retired heads and teachers who, while working, had been involved in setting up links; staff and resources from their local Development Education Centre (DEC); diocesan staff with knowledge of the link country; and the enthusiasm of others drawn into linking from another school or community.

A final common thread was that all four dioceses are committing considerable diocesan resources – mainly in the form of staff time – to schools' linking. This raises the profile of linking across the diocese and offers informed support to schools wishing to link via the diocese. It did appear to us that the greater the degree of central coordination or advice the greater the likelihood that the links created would be of high quality. However, there was also evidence that the number of links would probably be capped by the time commitment this approach necessitates. This capping effect was mitigated by two other factors: the first was the use of 'voluntary experts' e.g. retired heads who were seen as diocesan employees; the second was the close working relationship with other supportive organisations, for example in Bath and Wells between the diocese and the Development Education Centre, GLADE, located in the diocese.

### Oversight and support of links

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Diocesan involvement in the oversight and support of schools links follows directly from the comment above. Each of these dioceses offered specific practical support for things like grant applications as well as more general help with communication and travel.

Perhaps the most important role played in three dioceses by diocesan staff and in the fourth by the DEC was in the area of the links mutual educational purposes. Helping to find answers to

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<sup>4</sup> This section is based on the experiences of four dioceses we visited – Bath and Wells, Chelmsford, Chichester, and Ripon and Leeds. We have tried to distil common elements and only cited a diocese by name where we felt they had a unique contribution to make to the discourse.

questions like – why link? what are links for? how do links, in the words of a Zambian teacher, “bring enrichment to both sets of students”? These were questions seen by these dioceses as ones that needed to be addressed as the links were set up and not as an afterthought later in the process. It seemed from the experience of these four dioceses that this was a role they could undertake on behalf of all schools in the diocese.

## **Embedding the link in the life of the school and the diocese**

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Once links were up and running the next challenge was to embed them in the life of the school and diocese. Visits, in both directions, were seen as crucial in establishing the links. They built emotional attachment, put faces to names and achieved in a few days what E-mails (if possible) and letters might at best take months to achieve, but more likely will never achieve.

In the English school all dioceses stressed the need to involve the whole school with one diocese encouraging the appointment of a governor to hold the international brief so as to ensure the link always featured on their agenda. The links ‘visibility’ in the life of the school – through inclusion in the school prospectus, a place on their website, displays around the school, influencing educational resources and the use made of visits – helped this process. A small number of schools visited had a post of responsibility for an International Links Co-ordinator.

The development of the link through joint curriculum work was seen as vital not only for embedding the link but also for its sustainability over time. In Chelmsford Diocese there are regular reports on schools links made to the Board of Education.

All four dioceses have produced ‘link specific’ resources from packs on the link country to lesson designs. Ripon and Leeds Diocese has produced an excellent resource Every child of God matters everywhere – Global Education in Church Schools. This offers not only ideas of ways of bringing the global dimension into the classroom but also provides both a rationale for this that is soundly educational and acknowledges the faith school ethos. [See also the recommendation in Section 6]

## **Impact of the links**

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The main impact of schools’ links is felt in the schools themselves, as we will see in the next section of this report. However, it was also clear that the benefits gained by schools from the pre-existing diocesan link (outlined above) were repaid to the diocese by the schools themselves as the links became established. Ripon and Leeds Diocese spoke of the schools links revitalising the diocesan link. The other dioceses spoke of the positive effect of widening the base of existing relationships by adding the educational dimension to them.

These effects are more clearly seen in dioceses where the church and the school serve more integrated and identifiable communities so that the link involves people who belong to different parts of the community. This is more likely to be the case in a rural market town than in an inner-city urban setting.

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## Section 2 Good practise: school perspective <sup>5</sup>

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### Setting up links

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Personal relationships were key in all the schools visited when it came to setting up a link. For some the existing diocesan link enabled this, for others it was more serendipitous – for example, a local authority visit to another part of the world, a personal link with a previous head, a holiday that included visiting a school. In all cases these initial introductions were followed through and a formal link established.

In most cases the initial contact was established by the head teacher but where this was not the case bringing the head on board was significant to the link's future. The smaller the school the more important it was to have the enthusiastic backing and involvement of the head teacher.

### Embedding the link in the life of the school

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The evidence seems to suggest the following: the smaller the school (usually primary) the easier it is for enthusiastic staff members to make the link a significant part of school life. With reciprocal exchanges the impact of what become high profile visits made by teachers from the link school reinforces the link's importance. Primary schools can incorporate aspects of the link – geography, culture, arts, food etc – into their curriculum with relative ease again giving it a high profile. However, with a small staff the responsibility for such developments can be burdensome and a period of staff turnover might remove the critical mass necessary to keep the link story alive. Also, throughout all this embedding process it is the staff alone that generate the enthusiasm.

Conversely, the larger the school (usually secondary) the more difficult it is for even a handful of enthusiastic staff to make the link a significant part of the school life without careful strategic planning. Staff involved in reciprocal visits can be lost in a large school and incorporating the link in single subject teaching is far more challenging. However, in a larger staff room responsibilities for international links might be shared, room may be found in a bigger overall budget for financial resources and staff turnover can be handled more easily. Also, if pupils themselves become involved and see the benefits of linking they become advocates in this embedding process.

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<sup>5</sup> This section is based on the experiences of visits to or conversations with the staff of about 15 schools in the 10 dioceses we visited in England and Wales and the Methodist Church. These visits and conversations represented the experience of both primary and secondary schools. Again, we have tried to distil common elements and only cited situation by name where we felt they had a unique contribution to make to the discourse.

## Impact of the links

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Every school we heard from spoke of the positive impact of their link. The impact was multi-dimensional and at every level within the school. It ranged from better ‘knowledge’ of a different school, culture or country; better ‘understanding’ of diversity and difference; as something that ‘adds value’ to community cohesion; as evidence that ‘someone cared’ (a Zambian teacher visiting during one of the visits); and as ‘making the outside world a reality through real people’.

The impact experienced was not entirely positive (e.g. the burden of keeping the link alive, the time commitment in arranging visits or applying for grants, the frustration of less than perfect communication) and while all those we spoke to would do it again there was a sense that some links were entered into with unrealistic expectations of the time and energy required. The areas where these schools might have had their eyes more widely open are explored in the next section.

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## Section 3 Challenges that face potential links

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### Why linking?

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**The Methodist Church education web site<sup>6</sup> that has considerable useful and accessible information about schools’ links also carries this note of caution:**

“Linking with a school in the global south can be an exciting way of bringing Global Citizenship issues to life. Equally, there are some important factors to consider in order for a school partnership to be equitable, sustainable and positive and it should not be undertaken lightly.”

Few of those we talked to would disagree with these sentiments and all the schools we visited would say – sometimes with the help of hindsight – that it is no light undertaking. The point we would want to make is that linking may not be for everyone despite the pressure for every school to have one. One diocese did suggest that, in their experience, a bad link is worse than no link at all. Size of school, lack of wider community support, finance, time and energy needed and possible contacts with other schools may singly or together make linking at this point ill advised.

However, we believe that it is possible for any school to find a way in which to answer the challenge of “why link?” within the school’s curriculum and life. How can the educational, social and communal agenda that linking seeks to deliver be achieved? Section 5 offers a number of examples of how these questions have begun to be answered before thought has been given to establishing a link.

## Diocesan and Church responsibilities in linking

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The clear message from all those we visited was that there were growing financial pressures on diocesan and national church staffing levels and therefore on work they could accomplish. What therefore are the possible roles they can fulfil in relation to linking?

- (i) The Methodist and Anglican Churches at both a national and diocesan level are well placed to disseminate information and engender enthusiasm for initiatives such as schools' linking. They may not have the expertise within their own staff in all areas but have the capacity to draw it in. They can therefore act as gatekeepers pointing to others who have the particular expertise or information required.

If, as this project is suggesting, there could, in many cases, be a closer beneficial relationship between the Diocesan Boards of Education and those responsible for diocesan links it will require open communication. Some dioceses have been able to move further on in this process than others.

- (ii) As we suggested in the introduction to this report, there are probably, in all dioceses, more schools' links than we realise. These will represent a fund of knowledge and experience that others might helpfully draw upon. Can dioceses provide a conduit or market place for the sharing of such experiences?
- (iii) While it is recognised that staffing levels are under pressure and delivering the statutory requirements at both a national and diocesan level is a priority, are there more flexible ways of working that might offer some extra capacity for initiatives like linking? One diocese, for example, uses part of its staffing budget for short-term consultancy assignments that are time limited and task focussed. Could this be a way forward if, for example, a number of schools wished to explore the possibility of establishing a link?
- (iv) There was the argument put forward with some force by one diocese that 'central planning' is less preferable than more local initiatives on the grounds of cost and ownership. Such an argument would suggest that schools themselves should take the lead as this is where the energy and enthusiasm are likely to be. While this has considerable force there is also the danger of local initiatives 'reinventing the wheel' (e.g. each school working together in the process of applying for Global School Partnerships' grants independently) and not possessing some of the specialist knowledge necessary (e.g. sufficient knowledge of the country where a link is being sought). This again points to the need for careful thought as to what contribution can be made by national and diocesan bodies.

## Funding questions

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Schools' links need not be costly until, of course, you come to reciprocal visits. Visits though are seen as crucial in the establishment of the emotional attachment that provides a foundation upon which the link can develop. Few school budgets can accommodate the high costs of visits (e.g. airfare to Sierra Leone plus additional costs is budgeted by Chichester Diocese at £1,200 per person).

There are however grants available through *Global School Partnerships Reciprocal Visit Grant and Global Curriculum Project Grant*<sup>7</sup>. If successful a single school would receive funding over a four year period to fund reciprocal visits (under certain conditions), to establish the link and its curriculum development. While these grants are greatly valued our discussions did raise two important questions. The first was what schools did to continue the relationship when the money ran out. The second was the possible reactions of the partner school when visits to the UK became more problematic<sup>8</sup>.

The first concern was beginning to present a challenge to schools that have started their links from 2004/05 onwards. While the terms of the grants are clearly known life in many schools starting and sustaining a link is so hectic that little forward planning has been given to the implications of no further funding from these sources. This raises two fundamental questions for us:

- Is the Church in a good position, due to its rich diversity of links and its national networks, to undertake some creative and coordinated thinking about how links can be sustained once this initial funding for reciprocal visits comes to an end?
- Does this point to the need for more thought to be given to the question of sustainability in link planning?

We would say that our experience leads us to answer both these questions in the affirmative and we have addressed this in our recommendations.

## Links beyond a diocesan link

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While this project was particularly set up to explore how diocesan links could better engender schools' links we knew that in some cases disparity of educational involvement would make this impossible. Two examples would be Liverpool Diocese's link with a single Nigerian diocesan and Oxford's with a small South African diocese. In neither case would more than a handful of church school links be possible with the English diocese, overwhelming their southern partner if any school's linking initiative on the back of the diocesan link really took off.

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<sup>7</sup> Details of these can be found at <http://www.britishcouncil.org/globalschools-grants-cp.htm>

<sup>8</sup> It must be stressed that the Global School Partnerships programme offer support beyond simply questions of funding.

There are a number of websites like Global Gateway that seek to put schools in touch with one another. This offers “details of more than 12,000 schools on it. (So) a ... potential partner school can also look at your details and approach you. You can refine your search by country, age range, curriculum subjects and other criteria.” While this is helpful, school’s links within the context of wider church links do have the huge strength of being set up on the back of existing relationships.

The diocesan link, while useful in many dioceses we visited, was only one kind of contact or means of introduction. Others were more personal – a teacher knew someone – or serendipitous – a head teacher went on a local authority sponsored visit. A third possibility is to link through a Diaspora group in this country with strong ties to both a local community and communities here in the UK and to one or ones in the global south. This would not only provide a personal link it would at the same time widen the involvement in the link (school, Diaspora group and possibly wider local community) while at the same time giving access to those with local knowledge of the link community.

## Communication

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Communication, in its widest sense, was a challenge that faced almost all the dioceses and schools we visited.

- (i) For some it started with language. In common with many international relationships that include UK citizens the ability of the partner to understand and speak English is crucial. While a great deal of education in the global south (perhaps especially in countries of the British Commonwealth) is conducted in English the capacity of those involved to fluently use the language varies. This variation applies not only between different countries but also within them. So two head teachers in Sierra Leone or Sri Lanka may have a very different grasp of English depending on where in the country they were born, educated and work. This means that some of the links in Chichester and Ripon and Leeds schools struggle far more with language than others. This affects overall communication, curriculum development and teacher exchanges to name but three issues.

Realistically, no matter how much you want to stress the ideal of equality, other than learning a few words or phrases, schools’ links between UK schools and global south will usually be conducted in English. Where this is challenging, greater patience is required and greater care needed in the use of language to ensure communication is clear.

- (ii) While electronic communication, especially via E-mail, is almost the default method in the UK this is not as easily or universally accessible in the global south. Where E-mail contact is possible issues of proximity of access (in the school or via a ‘local’ internet café which could be 2 hours walk away); electricity supply security (intermittent supply); and age of the communications systems (can they access attachments especially large files like pictures?) can make electronic communication challenging. This can lead to frustrating silences in communication or an inability to share all that each partner

would wish to. However, there was also evidence from schools and dioceses that improvements in IT provision could be swift.

- (iii) The issue of communication re-emerged as a challenge as schools looked beyond the time when annual face-to-face contact might no longer be possible. On the one hand face-to-face contact allowed time to patiently ensure communication was clear yet on the other hand electronic communication, especially involving pupils, was a possible way to sustain a link and to move it into the period when visits might be less frequent. There are websites that aid this kind of contact (e.g. Rafi-ki<sup>9</sup>) in a controlled and safe environment but they do require the ability to communicate electronically with sufficient ease. [See also recommendations in Section 6]

### Processes of reinvention

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Conversations about links in Bath and Wells and at St Bede's School in Redhill, Surrey raised the further challenge of renewing or reinventing a link with the passage of time. Links will have their troughs and peaks as they go on – changes in key personnel, getting into a rut or uninteresting routine, a break in communication, misunderstandings at either end or a multitude of other reasons – can put a damper on their vitality. Part of this is simply like life itself and we have to live with light and shade. However, on occasions a renewing or reinvention of the link is needed. Partnership Agreements can play a vital role in this process if they are treated as living documents, revisited on a regular basis by both partners, and are always asking the question as to whether the link is still 'fit for purpose'.

In some cases it may be a matter of finding a new project that both schools can be involved in or a new approach to acknowledging the benefits of the link at both ends. In other cases it might be by expanding the number of links so that the established links are not ended but adding a new relationship that may, in turn, generate energy that can be fed into the existing link. This latter option is only likely to be possible in larger school (maybe only secondary school links) but the common principle is that no link will develop in a uniformly positive way and troughs in the relationships need to be expected and responded to if not actively planned for.

## Section 4 Support to schools

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All of the above leads us to ask what kind of support could be provided for schools which wish to be involved with school-linking. The diocesan education teams we visited were to a greater or lesser extent a means of providing such support. Our contention is, however, that this support could be more fully provided if dioceses could more easily learn from what happens in other areas.

One obvious way in which linking could be supported would be to ensure that knowledge about linking is disseminated, so that schools know about the resources and experience that are available to them in their own area. These resources and experience are held by a wide variety of people and organisations – Development Education Centres, British Council, Local authorities, Oxfam, other schools, retired teachers who have been involved in linking, other organisations who promote linking (e.g. UKOWLA) or are themselves involved in linking (e.g. local churches).

One school in South Wales mentioned a consultant who had set up her own business offering support to schools which wish to develop their international work: [www.globally-minded.com](http://www.globally-minded.com)

In addition to these resources and experience the kind of support that is given to schools by the diocesan education teams that we visited already includes the following:

- (i) The support given by existing diocesan links with particular countries in which school links can be set up. Some of these diocesan links have been developed over many years, and so schools' links can benefit where the diocesan structures are similar in each country. In some, the Diocesan Secretaries in link countries are involved in sustaining the work. Where they are embedded, the school links form a part of the agenda for visits by Bishops and other clergy and parishes, as well as for visits by teachers and students.
- (ii) The diocese can bring schools that are involved or wish to be involved in linking together. One diocese that we visited had an officer who visited the schools that had links and helped them to keep up-to-date with the work involved.
- (iii) Schools are anxious about the amount of time it takes to apply for grants, such as those available through the Global School Partnerships . Diocesan Officers in some dioceses have this experience already and help schools, reassuring and supporting them in the process. Again, schools that have already applied for grants can share their experience with those wishing to apply.
- (iv) How the link is to be embedded into the regular school curriculum is a question which all schools will be keen to answer. We saw good examples of this, and it is clear that

schools which have planned this integration already will have valuable experience that they can share with those who are still to do it.

- (v) Leading on from the above point, schools might share ideas for specific linking activities, which have worked. For example, we heard of one school which organised its sports day to take place on the same date as the link school's sports day, so that the results could be shared after the event.
- (vi) When setting up an overseas visit there is a great deal of practical advice that can be considered, some of it from schools which have had to find their own way and learn by experience. Again, a central agency like the Diocesan Education Office can assist schools to get in touch with those who can help them in this way. It was made very clear to us that the arranging of visits overseas is a very time-consuming activity, and therefore anything that would make the work lighter would be appreciated. (At the same time, all those who have experienced them referred to the value and beneficial effect of such visits.)

A number of specific areas were raised where support is particularly needed and diocesan or church education departments are in the good position to offer it:

- Governance support
- Educational support
- Financial support

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## Section 5 Schools, dioceses and global citizenship

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During our project visits we came across a number of examples of activities that schools had set up which acted as ways into delivering the global citizenship agenda. They could all be seen as possible 'starter activities' that might lead on to linking and stimulate thinking as preparation for setting up a school-to-school link. We highlight five such activities in this report but recognise that there must be numerous other examples that could have been reported.

### Youth Worker placement – Salisbury Diocese

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Salisbury Diocese has a long-standing diocesan link with Sudan. As part of the link, from 2003, Salisbury has received two youth workers on placement for a 6-month period. The project has been repeated at two-year intervals.

The choice of youth workers is made in Sudan on an invitation from the Bishop of Salisbury. The two chosen need sufficient English and Salisbury's experience suggests that unmarried participants of the same gender works best.

Salisbury sets a budget of £8,000 for the project; 50% given by the diocese and the remainder made up of grants from local trusts. This budget covers the cost of flights, transit costs (visa applications, internal travel etc), pay of GBP5/day for the visitors; a fee to a Salisbury based organisation working in schools who provide orientation and supervision, and other costs such as visits, festivals etc

On arrival the visitors spend the first month in orientation together. This includes preparation for working in schools, child protection training etc. The remainder of their time is spent on monthly placements, individually in different parishes across the diocese.

Once in the parish they are offered hospitality in two homes and work under the direction of the parish priest. They spend most of their time in schools talking about Sudan, sharing in other activities and being available as a resource to the school. They also visit other youth organisations e.g. uniformed groups, youth groups and take part in the Sunday services. While in the UK they will also take part in events like the Greenbelt and Soul Survivor festivals.

The project itself is managed and supervised by a working group of one of the Diocesan Link sub-committees. From time to time they are offered financial gifts from parishes or individuals and there is an agreement that these are for youth work in the dioceses from which they have come.

*Comment – this kind of project seems to offer the possibility of using the diocesan link to bring an international dimension into the classroom for sufficient time to make a real impact. This might offer a ‘taster’ for a formal link or be a way of complementing other global dimensions in a school’s curriculum. The project also offers invaluable experience to the Sudanese youth workers. Of the past participants one is now a bishop in his early 30’s and another is undertaking medical training.*

## **Guildford Diocesan Awards for Religious Education (DARE)**

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The DARE provides students throughout Key Stage 4 and 5 (secondary school pupils aged 13-16 years old) with the opportunity to explore the practical application of Christian teachings and values. The awards require students to draw on their knowledge of the Christian faith from their Key Stage 3 Religious Education (RE) and to extend this learning through further study and practical work within a range of communities. The awards provide the possibility for skills to be developed in line with the national curriculum “personal learning and thinking skills” (PLTS) framework. An award may be completed in order to enhance a student’s knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith, to support work for an RE GCSE where the religion studied is Christianity or the award may be used on its own to fulfil the statutory requirements for R.E.

Any pupil wishing to engage with DARE will work together with the teacher to identify a practical response related to their theme, which they are going to plan and deliver. The task that the students identify will need to be decided based upon the award that they are aiming to achieve:

- **Bronze Level:** The practical project is school based and will apply the Christian values of beliefs in such a way as to benefit the school community
- **Silver Level:** The practical project needs to involve the application of Christian values of beliefs in such a way as to benefit some aspect of the community local to the school. This project should be done in conjunction with the local churches. For Church Schools particular links should be made with the parish church.
- **Gold Level:** This practical project needs to involve the application of Christian values or beliefs in such a way as to engage students with communities beyond their immediate location. This may involve work in other counties or in other countries. At this level it may be that the work of the award is completed in conjunction with the work of other existing Christian organisations.

## Archbishop of York's Youth Trust <sup>10</sup>

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The overall aim of the Trust is “to support, nurture and develop young people in their desire to transform their local communities in the North of England ..... using their faith as a basis for transforming society”. One of the areas of the Trust's work – the Discipleship Award Scheme for Schools – has similarities to the Guildford DARE programme above:

“Through the Youth Trust, young people are encouraged to make a positive difference; to develop essential personal life skills and an opportunity to see processes through from start to finish. The Discipleship Award scheme is a three-year programme, intended for Schools and youth groups. It offers an accreditation scheme, with awards for actions of ‘Faith’ during the first year, ‘Hope’ and ‘Charity’ for the following years.” [The Archbishop of York Youth Trust Awards 2009 programme brochure]

A school in Chester diocese that we visited is involved in the scheme and received an award in 2009. The head of RE at the school says that links with schools overseas fit into it well. Work on the award is built in to their Year 8, 9 and 10 curriculum. The students have to do projects as part of the award, e.g. there is a hospice locally and students can do some fund-raising work for that. Projects also arise from the overseas links that the school has. The curriculum has benefited from these links in terms of richer teaching materials and understanding of what life is like for children overseas.

## African Children's Choir

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A number of schools are linked with this particular choir which tours regularly with a changing group of African children. [There are also, we believe, other choirs that undertake similar programmes] The children in the choir are hosted by parents with children the same age for up to three days and live among them, carry on their own education programme within the English school as well as performing. The English hosts are asked to minimise exposure to ‘western toys’ – game boy, video games etc and the impact of a simpler life style for the English children is considerable.

## “Oscar ceremonies” in Battersea and Durban

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This activity was part of an existing link between Addington Primary School in Durban, South Africa and Christ Church Primary School in Battersea, London. But the creative possibilities of the idea led us to include it in this section of the report.

Each of the schools, at the end of the school year, nominates pupils for achievement awards in six categories:

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<sup>10</sup> Fuller details of the work of the Trust together with contact details can be found at [www.archbishopofyorkyouthtrust.co.uk](http://www.archbishopofyorkyouthtrust.co.uk)

- Creative achievement
- Citizenship
- Perseverance and determination to achieve
- Contribution to the life of the school
- Academic achievement
- Other achievement

In Battersea these nominations are given to the governors who select the winner in each category but it is kept secret – even from the head – until the ceremony itself. The Durban teachers bring their nominations with them when they visit (this has been annually since the link began) and the ceremony in Battersea is a central event during this visit.

The ceremony in Battersea takes place one evening, all nominees and their parents are invited, ‘Oscars’ are presented by local people with insights to offer the children in each category (e.g. a local author), all nominees receive a medal with the winner taking home the ‘Oscar’. Alongside the Christ Church nominees their Addington partners are also celebrated. The South African ceremony takes place soon after the visiting teachers return with Battersea nominees and winners also being celebrated in Durban. The evening is a grand affair with guests dressing up and enjoying a formal meal as a culmination to the ceremony.

The head at Christ Church spoke passionately about the link and the ceremony. The ceremony itself grew out of a desire to demonstrate and value the similarities there are in the variety of achievements within the life of the two schools. In Battersea, its international flavour due to the presence of the Durban teachers as guests of honour, acts as a further reminder of the link the school has.

## Section 6 Recommendations for future action

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### Recommendation 1:

#### **Clusters of dioceses working together**

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There was considerable evidence that the regional cluster meetings of Diocesan Boards of Education – through their Directors and other staff – are a means by which regional cooperation and collaboration takes place.

We recommend that:

- (a) these groups be invited to discuss this report at a future meeting;
- (b) that the clusters be asked to consider taking collaborative action to encourage schools linking in their dioceses, perhaps beginning with exploring together ways to maintain links beyond the period when Global School Partnerships grants are available; and
- (c) that, where appropriate, Methodist Schools representatives be invited to be part of these discussions.

### Recommendation 2:

#### **Developing support for schools**

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Section 4 of the report identifies examples of support that already exist for school-to-school links.

We recommend that:

- (a) Diocesan Boards of Education review their support of schools' linking in the light of the examples of diocesan good practice;
- (b) dioceses exchange experiences of giving a school adviser, or other member of staff, specific responsibility for school linking;
- (c) dioceses consider how they might make greater use of key linking organisations beyond the diocese;
- (d) schools consider how they can use diocesan networks and communication to explicitly share good practice of practical ways of delivering the Global Citizenship agenda; and
- (e) that the role of the National Society in supporting school linking be clarified for Diocesan Boards.

### **Recommendation 3: Basic link related information**

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In the light of the fact that a number of diocesan education staff and head teachers were not aware of basic information on organisations and initiatives that could support linking:

we recommend that:

- (a) a simple database of key organisations (e.g. Development Education Centres, UKOWLA and others) and initiatives (e.g. Global School Partnerships grants, professional development and advice) with contact details, websites etc be constructed, publicised across Church Schools and made accessible from a number of key websites.
- (b) the possibilities of gaining support for school linking from those involved in global education and inter-faith work should be explored;
- (c) training should be sought which supports schools in the governance and leadership of school linking.

### **Recommendation 4: Coordinated web presence in relation to faith schools linking**

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A number of dioceses have considerable resources that support schools' linking; the Methodist Church has created its website that supports global education; the National Society has plans to reengineer its website; British Council's Global Gateway offers extensive help to schools working on the global agenda.

We recommend that:

- (a) work is undertaken at a national level to link existing websites;
- (b) serious consideration is given to finding external funding to help the continued development of the Methodist education website and to update (if necessary) and put on the web the material produced by Ripon and Leeds Diocese in their Every child of God matters everywhere publication;
- (c) an appropriate website might be found in which there is a membership space where other documentation and resources could be made available more widely e.g. curriculum plans, link agreements etc;
- (d) the plans for the renewal of the National Society website might take the above into account;
- (e) the experience of schools using IT to facilitate links with schools overseas might be disseminated and reflected on.

## Recommendation 5:

### **Work on sustainability of school links**

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It has been emphasised that external funding for linking is usually only for a period of three years or may not always be necessary and that some schools run their linking activities without external support, having raised money themselves to support the link. However, in the light of the funding questions raised in Section 3 of this report:

we recommend that:

- (a) the issue of the financial sustainability of school links be highlighted in the support materials mentioned in these recommendations. Those going in to linking need to find advice on how to take into account the long-term plan for their project;
- (b) the regional clusters of dioceses (with Methodist representatives) be asked to explore how links might move into the post Global School Partnerships grant phase; and
- (c) with those responsible for the oversight of the Global School Partnerships grants programme explore if the concerns raised are valid and, if so, whether the programme can be adapted in any way.

## Recommendation 6:

### **The next phase of this project**

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This report comes at the end of Year 1 of a two-year project.

We recommend that:

- (a) in the light of the clear enthusiasm for taking these explorations further that the second phase of the project is commended;
- (b) that work needs to be done on describing for schools the reasons for linking in terms of the distinctiveness of church schools and of their values of global justice and sustainability; and
- (c) a copy of the report, amended by the March 17th, 2010 consultation, be sent to all Diocesan Boards of Education and their equivalents within the Methodist Church.

## Appendix A those involved in contributing to this report

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This report comes in the name of the two consultants who undertook the study – Stephen Lyon and Andrew Watts.

However, at the March 17th Consultation, the conclusions reached and recommendations made were positively received, as expressed in this report, by those present. While this group can take no overall responsibility for the details of this report it does come with their enthusiastic support. In reaching these conclusions we wish to place on record our thanks to all those who gave of their time, energy and enthusiasm to share their experience and insights in schools' linking with them. Any passion for linking that the report might have captured is only a reflection of what we encountered in these visits.

In the period from September to December 2009 we visited the following dioceses and talked with over 30 diocesan staff responsible for both education and the wider diocesan linking, head teachers and other school staff, serving and retired, in each of them:

Bath and Wells, Chelmsford, Chester, Chichester, Ely, Guildford, Liverpool, Llandaff, Ripon and Leeds and Southwark. We also visited the Assistant Education Secretary at Methodist Church House.

Within these dioceses and the Methodist Church we either visited or spoke with staff from a number of schools:

*The Academy of St Francis of Assisi, Kensington, Liverpool*  
*Holy Trinity School, Crawley*  
*Swanmead Middle School, Illminster*  
*The Archdeacon John Lewis C/W Primary School, Brackla, Bridgend*  
*Curry Mallet VC Primary School*  
*Boothstown Methodist Primary School, Salford*  
*Bury CofE Primary School, Cambridgeshire*  
*Christ Church Primary School, Battersea*  
*St Peter's, Leeds*  
*Thorner School, Yorkshire*  
*Shire Oak School, Headingley, Leeds*  
*St Augustine's Primary School, Scaynes Hill, Sussex*  
*St Bede's School, Redhill*  
*Sir Thomas Boteler CofE High School, Warrington*  
*St Brides Major Church in Wales Primary School, Bridgend*

We also spent considerable time with the staff at GLADE (The Centre for Global and Development Education) in Illminster.

Without the help of all those we visited this report would not have been possible.

***Stephen Lyon and Andrew Watts***  
*February 2010*

## Appendix B Case Studies of schools' links

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Sometimes the best way to obtain a true picture of what linking might offer a particular school is by reading a number of case studies of actual school-to-school links. Global Gateway offers a large number of case studies that can be accessed in a number of ways: by subject or theme e.g. art & design, global citizenship; by region or country e.g. China, India, Zambia; or by programme e.g. e Twinning, Language Assistants. These can be found at: <http://www.globalgateway.org.uk/default.aspx?page=2417>

## Appendix C where to look for further information and help

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### **Global Gateway** [[www.globalgateway.org.uk](http://www.globalgateway.org.uk)]

One stop shop for educational partnerships.

### **Methodist Education** [[www.methodisteducation.co.uk/course/view.php?id=8](http://www.methodisteducation.co.uk/course/view.php?id=8)]

Aims to support schools in developing a whole school approach towards Global Citizenship at curricular, extra-curricular and policy levels from a Christian perspective.

### **Development Education Association** [[www.dea.org.uk/members/decs.asp](http://www.dea.org.uk/members/decs.asp)]

Umbrella body for development education centres in the UK

### **UKOWLA** [[www.ukowla.org.uk](http://www.ukowla.org.uk)]

Umbrella body for community (eg, schools, health, faith etc) links.

### **Rafi.ki** [[www.rafi.ki](http://www.rafi.ki)]

An online learning community for schools across the world. Rafi.ki has four main elements which make international learning easy and fun:

- Finding partners around the world – more than 1450 schools from more than 113 countries
- Educational projects and resources – more than 30 projects covering all areas of the curriculum
- Interact safely with students and teacher across the world through video, audio conferencing, email, instant messaging and forums
- Online pupil safety

### **BBC World Class** [[www.bbc.co.uk/worldclass](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldclass)]

BBC World Class is an initiative bringing the benefits of international school linking to schools across the UK. The website is a central resource for its partner organisations which facilitate and support school linking. BBC World Class organises themed events in which linked schools can participate and it publishes a monthly e-newsletter.

### **Link Community Development** [[www.lcdinternational.org](http://www.lcdinternational.org)]

LCD is a family of nine partner organisations working to improve access to quality education in sub-Saharan Africa. This is mainly done through school linking.

**Global School Partnerships [www.britishcouncil.org/globalschools]**

Supports partnerships that promote global education through the curriculum. Support and guidance is provided to teachers and grants to schools to make the most of a school partnership as a learning tool. Funding is available for visits between partner schools to enable them to develop curriculum projects together based on global themes.

**Eden Project Gardens for Life [www.edenproject.com/ourwork/people/gardens for life]**

Promotes partnerships between schools, children and teachers to share all the learning that can come from gardening and growing food across the communities, cultures and countries.

**SoundAffects [www.soundaffects.org.uk]**

Links children across the globe through the unexploited medium of high quality audio and gives them access to a powerful and intimate line of communication.

## Appendix D future work to be undertaken

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Future work will be undertaken in a number of areas building on the recommendations made and conclusions reached in this report as well as other suggestions made at the March 17th Consultation. These include:

- Distributing the report to all Diocesan Directors of Education and through the Methodist Church Schools network asking that they consider those recommendations appropriate to their sphere of influence.
- Distributing the report to other 'interested parties' in international school partnerships.
- To explore arranging 4-5 Regional Information Days in autumn/spring 2010/2011 about schools linking for Church education staff, head teachers and governors with representatives from British Council and Development Education Centres present to stimulate interest in developing school-to-school links as one way of delivering the Global Citizenship agenda.
- To explore external funding to develop the web-based information about Global Citizenship and schools' linking.
- To commission work to be undertaken on a theology of schools' linking.
- To engage in conversations with the Roman Catholic Church to learn from their experiences in this area and explore possible collaboration.

For further information about these developments or other aspects of the report contact:

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*A PDF copy of this report is available on the BUILD website [www.build-online.org.uk](http://www.build-online.org.uk)*





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