

THINK:

Consider the expression *Equality of Sacrifice* and see if it applies in your link.

REFLECT:

Work closely with your partner to ensure a joint agenda and developing a framework which challenges assumptions.

QUESTION:

Whether your partner really has an equal voice? How can you be sure?

Checklist:

- ✓ Have you considered equality issues within your link?
- ✓ Would your partners say that they have an equal voice?
- ✓ Have you tried to discover the values and priorities of your partner community?
- ✓ How are you addressing material inequalities which might exist within your link?
- ✓ Have you considered how your assumptions may be affecting your link?
- ✓ Are you aware of the pressures and demands the link may be imposing on your partners?
- ✓ Have you considered changes that are needed within your community and to which your partners could make a contribution?
- ✓ Are you using your link to address social cohesion within your own society?
- ✓ Have you understood the sacrifices your partners are making on behalf of the link?
- ✓ Are your sacrifices equal?

Next steps:

- Review equality issues within your link.
- Look at your Partnership Agreement and if you don't have an Agreement develop one.
- Consult with your partner and ask for their views on the issue.
- Try to learn more about your partner community.
- Think how language may affect the equality of your link.
- Consider ways to improve learning the language of your partner.
- Consider how you can share your learning with the wider community.
- Contact the diaspora, or expatriate, groups from the country with which you are linked.
- Make effective use of organisations which can help to facilitate the link.
- Prioritise benefits to both communities: if you are fundraising for your link, consider the effect this may have on perceptions of your partners.

Equality

Equality is about equal worth; being treated fairly without prejudice and discrimination.

Prejudice exists in all societies with people being discriminated against because of their race, sex, religion, disability or other characteristics. Our assumptions may lead us to discriminate against people in our actions and language. Such discrimination may be intentional, or unintentional, but the result for the recipient is the same.

Prejudice is prejudgement and is linked to stereotyping and labelling of individuals and communities.

For equality to exist we need to recognise people as individuals with the same needs, rights and worth as ourselves. We can achieve this by reflecting on our own thoughts and the consequences of our actions, and by developing our skills for:

- Empathy
- Understanding
- Raised awareness
- Sensitivity
- Desire to be fair
- Relating to others

Linking provides an opportunity to challenge stereotypes and to break down barriers to enable all participants to have a real and equal voice. This is an easy concept to state, but an extremely difficult task to undertake and achieve.

Within linking, equality is reflected in the way that we:

- Value partners
- Jointly frame the agenda
- Consult
- Act inclusively

Linking directly with another community provides us with the opportunity to gain understanding of, and insight into another way of living. Through our links we can explore issues together and reflect on the implications of sharing an interdependent global agenda in which we need to address economic, social and cultural rights.

The relative lack of material resources frequently found in their partner communities is a challenge to communities within Western societies with their focus on a more individualistic consumer society. However short term efforts to try and redress the balance through fundraising are not constructive in the longer term. The financially better-off community may feel satisfaction through raising funds, but without examining the causes of that inequality and raising awareness of the issues they will achieve little of lasting value. Material inequalities between countries cannot be changed without changes at an international level, but raising awareness and taking action in different ways can help to contribute to that process.

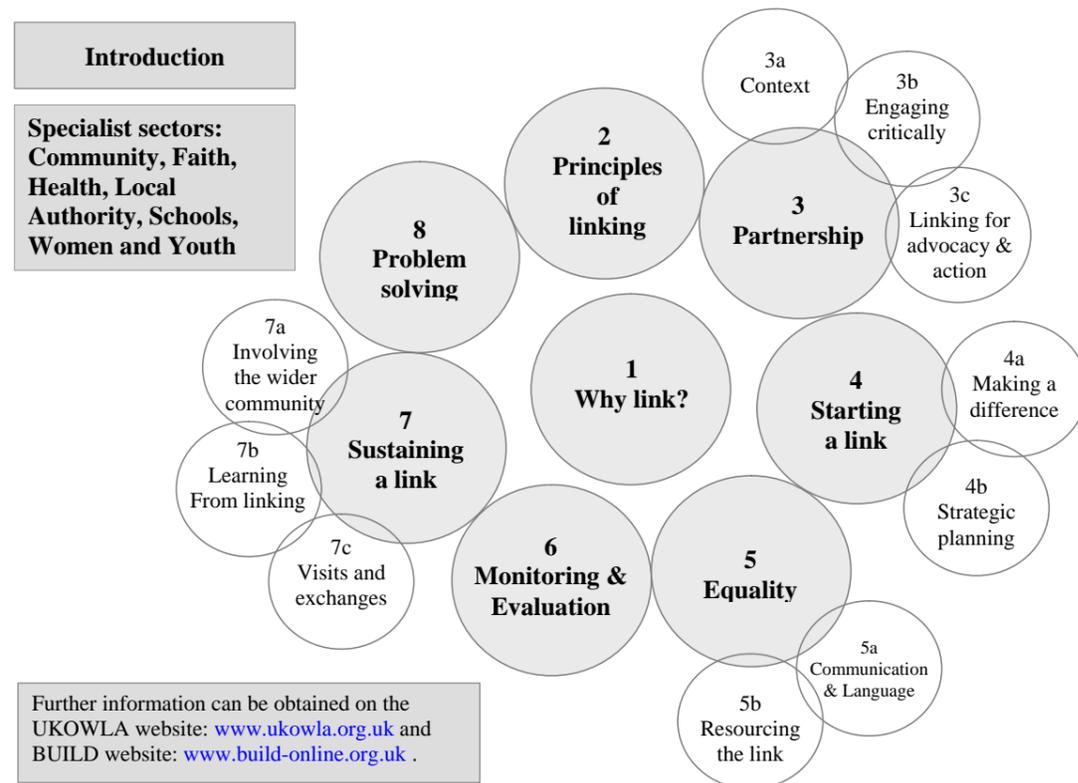
How can an equal partnership evolve when one partner is the recipient of charitable giving from the other? True partnership means that both partners are changed by the relationship. Within linking the term *Equality of Sacrifice* has been introduced to help participants recognise the value systems which operate in different societies. Time is a currency that should be recognised within the balance of contributions. A focus on financial elements can lead to a financial dependency that colours the relationship.

One problem that can affect partnerships is the lack of acknowledgement and recognition of the demands and pressures that may be affecting the other's performance.

Equality can be based on sharing a vision, for example, of sustainable development. All communities should be seen as equal partners in exchanging knowledge rather than a 'source of information' or 'object to study'.

Real knowledge is to know the extent of one's ignorance.
Confucius

Toolkit for Linking leaflets



Further information can be obtained on the UKOWLA website: www.ukowla.org.uk and BUILD website: www.build-online.org.uk.

What others say

The racism which denies people equal rights in Britain is part of the same structure which pushes people into poverty in the South. *Sarbjit Johal, UK*

The most important thing is that the South is recognised as having a contribution to make to the North. *Peter Kisopia, Kenya*

We are fed up with being the recipients of charity. *African participant, UKOWLA conference 2001*

The disadvantaged position of the Southern partners has given them a feeling that they are not really partners, but rather aid recipients.
Professor Jossy Materu, Zimbabwe

... Northern partners always want to tell (us) what to do and (do) not listen to (our) ideas and suggestions on how to solve local problems. *Participant, Africities Meeting, Abidjan, 1998*

In One World it is not just what we do abroad that will contribute to positive change for other people: it is as much what we do, or don't do, at home that is important. *Peter Nyoni, Oxfam, Zimbabwe*

The role of women in the South has been given very little significance, whilst in essence they are the backbone of the economy. Women must be consulted and given a chance to talk about issues affecting them. Men should start listening and allow them their opinions without dominating them.
Stroud Consultation report, 1988

If the interpreter is a man I cannot imagine we will necessarily find out what women think because they will not always tell a man many things. *Margot Brown, UK*

How genuine are the feelings of the British towards the people of the South while the ethnic minorities from the South feel so grossly discriminated against in the UK?
Stroud Consultation report, 1988

Issues of Equality

Finance: See also Resourcing leaflet
A focus on monetary wealth within a link can:

- exacerbate stereotypes;
- foster reliance;
- increase inequalities;
- lead to patronising attitudes.

A focus on finance may negate other concepts of wealth, which value family, collaboration and the communal sharing of resources.

Wealth: Money versus Time:
The value of Time should be explored and Time as a currency acknowledged and valued equally.

Resourcing the Link: See also Resourcing
Mutuality is important in maintaining and sustaining a link: contributions other than monetary ones need to be considered.

Issues of equality include:

- charitable giving and its effects on development and perceptions;
- needs and wants of partner communities;
- inadequate recompense;
- sustainability;
- joint initiatives;
- raising funds together;
- visits and exchanges;
- acknowledging non monetary contributions.

Commitment:
Equality of commitment in linking is vital. The process will inevitably have difficulties along the way.

- Review the reasons for linking: Why link?
- Start small.
- Consider implications of short term versus long term activities.

Human rights and Gender
If not properly addressed, linking can disadvantage women by:

- Disregarding their particular wants and needs;
- Undermining their efforts to implement change;
- Tolerating discriminatory practices justified by reference to traditional, historical, religious and cultural attitudes;
- Listening only to men and not seeking out and encouraging women's participation.

Be aware that English is now so widely used that native English speakers tend to underestimate the advantage this gives them.

Language: See also Communications & Language leaflet
The importance and effect of language within links is often not recognised. A rarely asked question is 'Whose language'?

Language used may:

- undervalue, or disregard, the mother tongue of the partner community;
- fail to acknowledge the importance of language to identity;
- fail to ensure an open dialogue;
- affect understanding at the development stage of the link;
- be inappropriate;
- be racist;
- contain difficult terminology;
- assume levels of comprehension.

Note: Partners should write first drafts in their own language, and then get someone else to translate it into the agreed language of the link.

Communications: See also Communications & Language
Good communications are vital to successful projects and partnerships. Key elements are:

- allowing time for different rates of working;
- understanding partner context;
- welcoming honest feedback;
- encouraging and developing confidence to talk both ways.

Practical communications issues are also important and consideration should be made of access to, and cost of:

- Postal services;
- Email;
- Telephone and fax machine;
- Technical equipment and support.

Support

Some countries have developed support networks for linking groups. Many communities however do not have access to such benefits, which may include:

- access to linking organisations;
- funders and funding streams;
- training opportunities;
- access to advice on beginning, maintaining and ending a link;
- institutional support;
- exchange of ideas and learning from others;
- promotion of community involvement;
- planning;
- cluster groups;
- finding and chasing partners if necessary.

Critical literacy

Learning to live together in a 'global', independent, diverse and unequal society involves the development of skills that can support learners to negotiate and cope with change, complexity, uncertainty and insecurity in different contexts.

Critical literacy helps learners analyse the relationships amongst language, power, social practices, identities and inequalities, to imagine 'otherwise', to engage ethically with difference and to understand the potential implications of their thoughts and actions. It leads to more responsible practices/actions.

The combination of critical literacy and independent thinking, which is the basis for innovation and change, develops learners' capacity to learn, to analyse their contexts and to make better informed and accountable decisions.

OSDE, Open Spaces for Dialogue and Enquiry, is a methodology developed by an international group of educators, academics and social actors, with a set of procedures and ground rules to enable learners to develop critical literacy and independent thinking. www.osdemethodology.org.uk

Reciprocity

Communities in the North often focus on the lack of material wealth in their partner community in the South. In order to participate in a link, the partner community may need financial assistance

One conference delegate said 'I wanted to know what was happening in the world and I was offered aid.' However, as Cecilia Obuya states: "Sharing resources among friends is common in many less affluent communities. Where there is an identified need which, if met, will enable the community to move forward in their own development projects there is no reason why meeting it should create dependency."

And for Johannes Mallah in Sierra Leone: "We like to give our love, to give to strangers. So if in turn a stranger wishes to give us aid or charity, there is nothing wrong with that."