

The Influence of North South School Partnerships

Examining the evidence from schools in the UK, Africa & Asia

Final Report | Executive summary and full report

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**THE INFLUENCE OF
NORTH SOUTH SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS:**

**Examining the evidence from schools in the United Kingdom,
Africa and Asia**

2009

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A NOTE FROM OUR MANAGEMENT GROUP

As education systems continue to evolve worldwide in order to provide a twenty-first century education for our learners, so too do the means of delivery similarly evolve in order to meet the constantly changing and increasingly complex needs of the students.

One of the emerging requirements for schools in the UK is to manage the demands of globalisation. In particular they need to develop in our learners the social skills and awareness of difference so that they can engage in effective inter-cultural dialogue both internationally and in their own communities and be equipped to work in a global environment. School partnerships can be an innovative and effective vehicle for delivering global education.

In order to prepare a skilled workforce for a global economy an international strategy “Putting the World into World Class Education” was launched by the then Department for Education and Skills (2004). It declared that every school and college in England and Wales should have, by 2010, a partnership with a similar institution somewhere across the world. This set in motion countless school partnership initiatives, some of significant value and others that resulted in detrimental relationships with their partnership institution.

We believe that unless global learning is incorporated into the everyday learning experiences of our young people through different curriculum areas, education is not going to help to bridge the cultural and economic divides that are prevalent today. As the gap between rich and poor widens within and between countries it is also starkly apparent that learners from poor backgrounds achieve less through education. Developing global citizenship through mutually beneficial school partnerships, we believe, is one way of bridging the divide and looking forward in the 21st century.

But we are also aware that partnerships do not always meet their objectives. Consequently it is vital to identify the ingredients for successful partnerships so that these can be propagated in other schools.

We need to understand the impact of the partnership on teachers, learners and the wider community in schools at both ends of the partnership, and to explore what the non-UK partner schools think of their relationships with their UK partner.

This research explores our questions.

Angela Cook
Cambridge Education Foundation

Nick Maurice
UKOWLA

A NOTE FROM THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Leading a multi-country research study can be an adventure at the best of times. When you are developing instruments and methods related to a relatively new topic of research interest, it becomes even more of a journey.

Our first year of research was challenging, complicated and rewarding. In many ways, via our efforts to develop partnerships with our Management and Advisory Groups as well as our research and professional colleagues across the countries, we have been experiencing and demonstrating the challenges and opportunities that many schools working on their own partnerships are facing. Through our research on partnerships between schools, we have learnt about the very nature of international partnership.

This report marks the conclusion of our two years of study. In the first year, we conducted surveys to understand more about the landscape of partnership across schools in the African, Asia and the United Kingdom. We invited school partnership leaders to complete surveys on their perceptions of how their partnerships started, evolved and influenced (or didn't) various outcomes within their schools. We present the data in summary form and pose some policy related questions.

Here, we present the cumulative findings from our two years of research. We focus, however, on the second year findings from our 55 school-level studies across the 5 countries in Africa, 3 countries in Asia and 4 countries of the UK. The data herein presents some interesting implications for organizations supporting partnerships, policy makers, practitioners and researchers!! We hope, this report will renew and continue many of the interesting debates and discussions.

Finally, we would like to thank Alex Isabirye, Headteacher at Nakanyonyi Primary School in Uganda, for allowing us to visit his school during the first and second year of the research. We were introduced to Alex via Ike Garson of Oxfordshire who had heard of our research through the development education grapevine. When Ike heard we would be in Uganda, he suggested by text, even before we had ever met in person, that we visit Alex and his colleagues. We jumped at the opportunity and had an amazing day at the school.

We thank Alex and colleagues because the picture on some copies of the front of this report is of the staff room at Nakanyonyi. It was deliberately built in the middle of the schoolyard so that the teachers and students could be in contact all the time. When we visited, the teachers were busy marking in the staff room but students felt no hesitation in entering and asking questions or for help. The picture, for us, symbolizes the serendipitous nature of many partnerships and of the connections and relationships that lead to partnerships. However, more importantly, it also symbolizes the value of what we can learn from each other when we are willing to offer our connections and support or build something in a new way.

We look forward to your feedback and questions on this report, so please be in touch.

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THE INFLUENCE OF NORTH SOUTH SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS: EXAMINING THE EVIDENCE FROM SCHOOLS IN THE UK, AFRICA AND ASIA

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2009

Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

In this report, we present the findings from the second year of our two-year international school partnerships Department for International Development (DfID) funded research study. Our research mandate was to explore the perceived impact of these partnerships on schools, leaders, teachers and students. We were also tasked to develop a better understanding of the types of schools that were engaging in partnerships, their characteristics and implementation and leadership strategies.

As the title of this research suggests, we were specifically interested in partnerships between the North (United Kingdom) and the South (Africa and Asia). In the North, we explored partnerships in the United Kingdom (UK) including England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. In Africa, we collected data in Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, The Gambia, Uganda and Zambia. In Asia, we worked in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

During the first year of our research, we explored the landscape, practice and impact of partnerships in the UK, Africa and Asia, using a survey designed for Partnership Coordinators in 800 UK and 800 African and Asian schools. The findings from our first year of research¹ are based on responses to our survey from schools across the UK, Africa and Asia. In the second year of the study, our sample was drawn from schools located in all four countries of the United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales), five countries in Africa (Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa and Tanzania) and three countries in Asia (India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka). Due to national and local-level challenges, our final sample included 17 pairs of schools and 55 school case studies.

We recognise that there are many different organisations that support schools partnerships. However, our purpose in this study is not to explore the different types of supporting organisations or to compare the support provided. Our primary goal is

¹ Copies of the first year report can be obtained by emailing Karen Edge (k.edge@ioe.ac.uk) or from the IOE, University of London website at <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/lcll/current/IOE-Edge08-SchoolPartnership-Report.pdf>.

to understand more about how partnerships work and their influence on participants. We have deliberately avoided comparing programmes and approaches, and have instead rooted our work within the partnerships themselves. We hope that our findings will provide organisations working to support partnerships and schools with the evidence they require to accelerate their work.

THE REPORT

Although we have combined the findings from the first and second years of our study into this report, and highlighted the cumulative lessons from our work, we rely mostly upon the data from our second year of work. This summary follows the structure of the full report and is presented in six sections. First, we present the overarching **conceptual framework** that guided our work. While our primary task was to explore the influence of partnerships on the different stakeholder groups, we also wanted to understand the factors that influence those partnerships that are perceived to be moving ahead quickly with their implementation and are perceived to be having a significant influence on their leaders, teachers and students. Our **methods** section details how we conducted our second year research. As we have previously discussed the methods we used in our first year in other publications, we focus here on the details of how we conducted the school case studies in the second year of our research. In turn, we focus on what we have learnt about the **influence of partnership on teachers and students**. Within the report, we highlight our findings related to communities as well. Next, we present the distilled lessons from a set of partnerships that we believe are generating the most significant influence on their leaders, teachers and students. We have called these '**high momentum partnerships**' and we believe that the experience of these partnerships will be of value to individuals, schools and organisations involved in partnerships. Finally, we present our **conclusions and recommendations**. Due to the large volume of data we collected and analysed throughout our work on this project, we have included a summary of additional resources within the Appendices that will soon be available on our website and from our research partners.

THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR OUR RESEARCH

The complex nature of school-level work and the high number of simultaneous school-level policy interventions make it impossible to isolate how international school partnerships directly influence school- or individual-level change. However, we believe it is possible to understand how individuals view the influence of the partnership by using a range of factors associated with whole school and individual performance, learning and understanding.

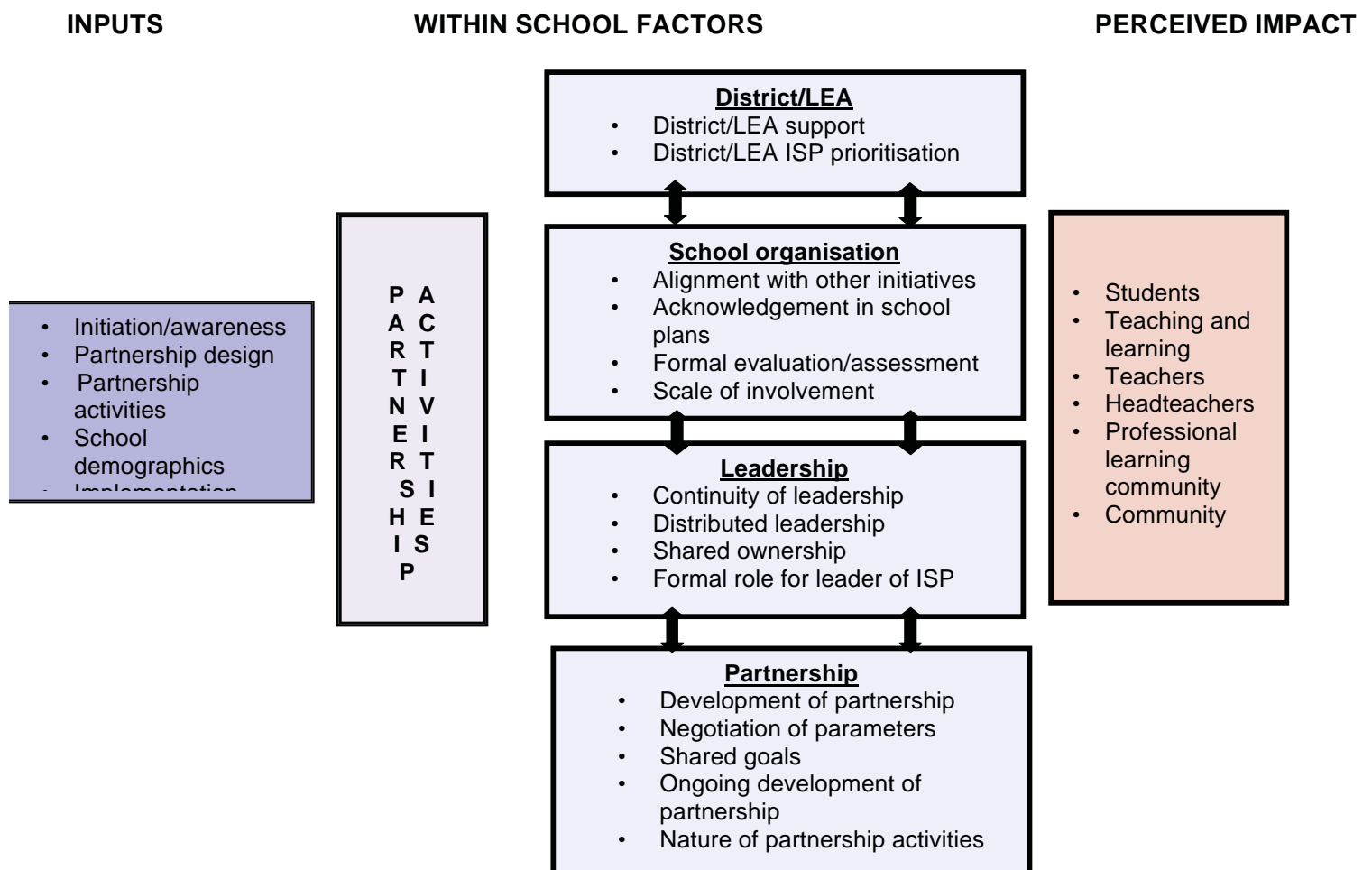
At the same time, simply framing this research with the question: 'What is the impact of the international school partnership on various elements of your school and individuals?' would have only generated a simplistic picture of how participants perceive the influence of their partnership activities on students, teachers and whole schools. We would have been unable to attribute any perceived partnership success or failure to any factors and/or conditions that exist within and between schools that support healthy and productive partnerships.

There was little previous research exploring international school partnerships. As such, our conceptual model for this research is based on what we know about factors that influence successful school-level reform and partnerships, including: leadership,

school effectiveness and improvement, reform implementation and partnership theory. In turn, we set about building a model that would not only allow us to examine the perceived impact of school partnerships but also to identify additional factors that may be influential. The model supported the design of the survey and analysis and provided us with three distinct sets of data: **inputs**, **in-school factors** and **perceived impact**. Based on our reading and synthesis of previous research and findings, we developed the following framework for the research.

We are most interested in understanding how survey participants feel that their partnerships have impacted on their school and teaching and learning. However, without being able to make some statements about the factors that have led to that impact, our research would not have provided a robust enough picture of the partnership landscape to contribute sufficiently to the policy and practice of partnerships within the UK and beyond.

Figure 1. Our conceptual framework for the NSSP research



Input factors. We gathered three types of information from survey and school case study participants. The first is the **basic demographic information** about each partnership school. The second is the **implementation information** detailing how the school became aware of, entered and designed their partnership. The third is the between and within-school **partnership activities**.

In-school factors. Much of the research literature on school improvement and leadership suggests that changes within schools and implementation of new initiatives are more likely to occur when certain conditions are met. These conditions include prioritising the initiative, alignment with other initiatives, consistent leadership, and deep and wide embedding of the initiative within the school. To explore the possible relevance of this information for partnerships, we gathered four types of information related to factors that may influence the perceived impact of a partnership. The first is related to the support that schools receive from their ***district/local authority-level colleagues.*** The second is ***leadership.*** We were particularly interested in who is leading the partnership, the recognition of their role, how it is prioritised within the school, and the stability of leadership within the school. The third is the ***organisation's characteristics.*** This area of inquiry should provide some information related to how schools are working to align the partnership with their other work in the school as well as other related issues. The final category related to ***partnerships*** in general

Perceived impact. The end goal of this research is to assess the perceived impact of international school partnerships on schools, leaders, teachers, students and communities. As previously discussed, assessing the impact of any one initiative within this very complicated and congested reform climate is nearly impossible (Anderson, 1991). Based on the model presented above, we constructed a set of measures that contribute to the success of initiatives in other contexts. As such, we developed a model that would not only gather feedback on the perceived impact of partnerships but also on the factors that influence impact.

OUR METHODS

The first year of our research focused on learning more about the landscape of international school partnerships between Africa, Asia and the United Kingdom. In our first year report, we detailed our process for gathering survey data from 1600 schools in 16 countries in Africa, Asia and the United Kingdom. Due to a very low response rate from Northern Ireland and Wales, the results in our first year report were based on a 21% response rate from England and Scotland, and a 59% response rate from Africa and Asia. Although these response rates represent a good first attempt at building an understanding of the reality of partnership in these regions, they are not statistically significant because of the relatively small number of responses from schools in some countries. However, in combination with our second year data, we now feel confident we have developed a more robust picture of partnerships and their influence.

In the second year of our research, we embarked on an ambitious journey to gather more detailed qualitative data on partnerships from 55 schools in 12 countries. We explored how schools are engaging in partnership and the perceived impact on students, teachers, schools and communities in the UK (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales), Asia (India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) and Africa (Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda).

School selection. Across the sample and within each country, we were looking for schools that represented a balance of country/regions, location (urban/rural), phase (primary/secondary/all age), gender (single/mixed) and status (faith and special needs). Even though we were not comparing different partnership programmes, we wanted to ensure that different programmes were represented. Advisory Group

members also recommended five schools they felt displayed what we defined as ‘interesting partnership practice’. These recommendations allowed us to have a small number of ‘recommended’ partnerships in each country, producing a stratified random sample. To maintain the anonymity of schools, we do not share their names here or anywhere in the report. However, we are in the process of gaining permission to identify schools in our technical papers and school resources.

Table 1: Final school/country selection breakdown

| Continent | Country | Primary | Secondary | All Ages | Total cases |
|---------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|
| Africa | Ghana | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| | Kenya | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| | South Africa | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| | Tanzania | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| | Uganda | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Asia | Pakistan | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| | India | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| | Sri Lanka | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| UK | England | 6 | 10 | 1 | 17 |
| | N. Ireland | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| | Scotland | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| | Wales | 2 | 3 | 0 | 5 |
| Total | 12 countries | 21 | 22 | 11 | 54 (+1)² |

We recruited a team of international colleagues in 14 different countries. Members of our team spent one day in each participating school, conducting interviews with school and partnership leaders, leading focus groups with teachers and facilitating activity workshops with students. For each school, we have developed a 6–10 page case study outlining its own unique approach to partnership. In each case, we present information using the same categories that guided our first year survey. As such, each case study includes sections on:

- School background and demographic information
- Partnership development: formation, support, training, leadership and policy alignment
- Partnership in practice: objectives, communication, involvement and curriculum initiatives
- Monitoring and evaluation: internal and external methods of evaluation
- Perceived impact: students, teachers, leaders and community
- Challenges and opportunities: improving the partnership, advice for schools.

In turn, we conducted pair-analysis of participating schools and their partners as well as continental cross-case studies to gain a better understanding of emerging trends related to the experience and impact of partnerships in Africa, Asia and the United Kingdom.

Access challenges. We experienced significant challenges in recruiting schools for this research – more than we had anticipated. Within the UK, we were successful in collecting data in 28 schools. Based on our original sample, 20 of the 32 schools

² We mention throughout the report that we conducted 55 school studies. We note here that one study was not included in the final write-up due to several issues related to the circumstances of the data collection.

were eager to participate in the study. We were surprised at the challenges we faced in securing the remaining 12 schools and have identified the following reasons for their decision not to participate: partnership is no longer active; school claims to be 'too busy'; Partnership Coordinator has left the school; change in Headteacher; and the school cannot afford the necessary supply cover. As a result of the challenges in the UK, we also faced challenges in other countries. However, when we encountered access issues in Southern countries, researchers reported security and conflict as the main issues for resistance to participation. For example, in Pakistan, resistance to participation was directly related to conflict and insecurity in the school's vicinity. In Sri Lanka, schools were also in the midst of national and local-level crisis.

Our research team. Our research explores the influence of international North-South school partnerships on schools, leaders, teachers and students. As such, we wanted our research team to echo all of these elements of our work. So while we were conducting research on partnerships, we were also developing our own partnerships with researchers around the world. We were not immune to many of the challenges our school colleagues face when building partnerships. We were actively seeking our partners, developing new relationships, communicating about important issues, and dealing with issues of funding, among many other challenges. We would like to think that, like our 'high momentum' partnership schools, we have turned these challenges into opportunities for learning, and that our research has gained from our collective perseverance and experience. The product of our collective efforts is presented within the summary and the full report. We hope that the research partnerships we have developed throughout our partnership research will continue in the future.

Our data collection and analysis teams. The data collection teams were responsible for arranging their school visits, conducting all in-school data collection and preparing their final school-level case studies. In the United Kingdom, our data collection team consisted of colleagues from the IOE, University of London including: Sonia Ben-Jaafar, Jodi Coats, Meli Glenn, Dr Rob Higham, Khatera Khamsi, Neil Gillbride, Marie Lall, James Lawrie and Victoria Showumi. We also had the pleasure of working with Elaine Lam (Bath Spa University). Our data collection and analysis colleagues in Asia include: Dr Marie Lall (IOE, University of London) and Dr Mallica Misra (Mata Sundri College for Women, India), Kulsoom Jaffar and Nilofar Vazir (Aga Khan University, Pakistan) and Fazna Ahmad (Sri Lanka). In Africa, we worked with Viet Cooke (IOE, University of London, working in Tanzania), James Lawrie (IOE, University of London, working in Kenya), Nicanor Ogolla (Maseno University, Kenya), Connie Ssebbunga Masembe, David Kabugo and Charles Kyasanku (Makerere University, Uganda), and Everard Weber and Mathramuthu Pillay (University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa). Our analysis team was led by James Lawrie and included: Fazna Ahmed (Sri Lanka), Michael Clements (UK), Katherine Descours (Canada), Keren Frayman (Israel), Khatera Khamsi (Switzerland), Heather McCuaig Edge (Canada), Elaine Lam (UK/Canada), Shaun Phillips (UK), Bronwen Robertson (UK/New Zealand) and Melissa White (UK/Canada).

Our advisory group. In addition to our extensive team of research colleagues, we had two sets of colleagues providing instrumental support. Our Management team, Angela Cook (Cambridge Education Associates) and Nick Maurice (UKOWLA and BUILD), were responsible for the finance and contracting of the project. We were fortunate to work with an excellent advisory group throughout the process. The group assisted in the definition of the research, designing of the tools and feeding back on drafts and process. These colleagues include: Shirley Addies (DFID); Angie Cook (Cambridge Education Foundation); Lynn Cutler (UKOWLA); Diana Dalton (DFID); Mary Dawson (LCD); Sandy Docherty (DFID); Bob Doe (Independent); Andy Egan

(British Council-DGSP); Ann Harper (DCSF); Stephen Harvey (LCD); Judith Hemery (British Council); Andrea Mason (British Council -DGSP); Nick Maurice (UKOWLA and BUILD); Ruth Najda (British Council-DGSP); Ann McCabe (VSO); Marie Niven (DCFS); Manisha Prajapati (DFID); Sue Schirmer (LCD); Brenda Sole (British Council -DGSP); Olga Stanojlovic (British Council); Nikki Stoddart (DFID); Helen Young (DEA); and Leena Vadler (VSO).

In-school data collection. During our one day of data collection in each school, we employed four distinct data-gathering tools to support our work with leaders, teachers, other staff and community members (where possible) and students. Our UK research team designed the tools and then tested them in Uganda and, in turn, Ghana. During our visits, we conducted interviews with school and partnership leaders. We conducted a teacher focus group with those involved as well as those not directly involved with the partnership. Within each school, we conducted two student workshops to explore their experiences, knowledge and enjoyment of their partnership activities. Based on funding constraints, this data has been briefly examined but not fully analysed for inclusion here.

Data analysis. We conducted our data analysis in three distinct phases. ***Phase one*** occurred at country-level and was completed by the researcher responsible for collecting the data. Based on the interviews, focus groups and observations within school, a 6–10 page case study was developed. Our international team worked across all 55 case studies to identify the emerging trends related to partnership initiation and development, leadership and management and recommendations for future development. ***Phase two*** engaged our team in conducting specific analyses that led to the development of continental and phase-based analysis. Within this strand of work, we developed the following distinct analysis summaries: UK-Primary, UK-Secondary, Africa-Primary, Africa-Secondary, Africa-All Age, and Asia-All Age. ***Phase three*** involved our team in examining the perceived influence of partnerships on teachers, students and whole schools. To explore the influence of partnerships on students, we re-analysed all 55 cases to understand more about student development of ‘knowledge’, ‘skills’ and ‘understanding.’ We also focused on student enjoyment. We also wanted to know more about the influence of partnerships on teachers and explored the content, depth of skills development. We used more general analysis categories in the ‘influence on communities’ section due to limited information available here.

Data presentation. Throughout the remaining sections of this summary, and in the main report, we present introductory findings from our first year surveys. However, we focus our attention on the second year school case study data. The remainder of this summary focuses on three core strands of our findings: ***influence of partnership participation on teachers; influence of partnership participation on students;*** and ***factors contributing to high momentum partnerships.*** This summary concludes with recommendations for policy makers and organisations that support partnerships and schools.

INFLUENCE OF PARTNERSHIP PARTICIPATION ON TEACHERS

Teachers’ professional development is an important part of personal and school improvement strategies. Within partnerships, teachers and leaders involved in the partnership activities consistently report learning new things as a result. Students are not the only participants who gain new knowledge, skills and understanding as a result of their partnership work. Based on our findings, teachers believe they gain a

wealth of knowledge and skills from the activities. In this section we present more detailed findings from our first and second year data.

Survey findings: Highlights from Year 1 report

Our understanding of professional learning communities and the evidence that productive professional relationships between teachers can enhance their overall motivation and skills inspired our interest in exploring if partnerships influenced teachers' relationships within schools and within partnerships. We were also partially motivated by our assumption that gathering evidence on a specific teacher's skills and knowledge development would be difficult using a survey instrument that was being completed by the leader of the school or partnership. As such, we focused our questions on whole-school and teacher collaboration as a proxy for the conditions that traditionally inspire teachers' development of knowledge, skills and understanding. Several key findings are summarised below; the complete findings can be found in our first year report.

Teacher collaboration. In the North, **69%** of schools compared to **85%** of schools in the South agreed or strongly agreed that the partnerships had had a positive impact on teacher collaboration and skills development.

School involvement. When reporting how they perceived their partnership's influence on school involvement, **72%** of Northern respondents and **89%** of Southern respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the partnership positively influenced involvement of students, teachers, the whole school and the community around educational issues and improvement.

Influence of partnerships on teachers: Summary of school case findings

In this section, we summarise our findings from all school cases studies from across Africa, Asia and the UK. We describe the five core themes that emerged during our analysis, including: **partnership influence on teachers' skills; pedagogic changes; teacher's general knowledge development; teachers' understanding;** and **teachers' enjoyment.** These different elements of how partnership participation influences teachers are drawn directly from the data. It is important to reiterate that we did not rely on existing structures or theory to constrain our analysis of the data.

Partnership influence on teachers' skills. In order to explore the depth and breadth of teachers' skills development through their partnerships, we examined our data from across all 55 schools to identify the skills that teachers are developing as a result of their participation in partnerships. These skills can be grouped into six categories, including: **teaching skills; interpersonal skills; leadership skills; planning and management skills; creativity;** and **ICT skills.**

Partnership influence on pedagogic changes. Across our participating schools across Africa, Asia and the United Kingdom, teachers often profess changes to their teaching practice as a result of their participation in their international school partnership. Specific pedagogical changes can be grouped into six categories, including: **behaviour management; delivery of lessons; greater range of resources to support learning; different teaching methods based on fewer resources; lesson planning;** and **other.**

Partnership influence on changes in pedagogy. As teachers clearly indicate, many have changed their pedagogies as a result of the partnership. Based on our conversations in schools, there are four main catalysts for changes in pedagogy,

including: **exchanging ideas and mutual learning between partner schools; borrowing teaching methods; reflecting on teaching and learning practice; and other.**

Partnership influence on teachers' general knowledge development. As we know that pupils are learning about their partner countries, we were specifically interested in the influence of the partnerships on the acquisition of knowledge by teachers. Upon reviewing all of our school case studies, we discovered that teachers' general knowledge development can be categorised in the following four groups: **global issues; their partner school's country; school management and organisation in their partner country; and school management and organisation in their own country.**

Partnership influence on teachers' understanding. During our time in schools, we asked questions of teachers and leaders about the type of skills and knowledge they were developing. However, during our analysis, information about teachers' understanding (including understanding of different cultures) permeated elements of our school case studies. Three distinct categories of understanding emerged: **differences and similarities between cultures; challenging their preconceptions and stereotypes; and developing their understanding of other cultures.**

Partnership influence on teachers' enjoyment. Students enjoy their participation in partnership. We believe that the teachers' enjoyment of partnership is an important factor in how students experience their partnership. As such, we wanted to mine the data in our case studies to explore if and how teachers are enjoying their partnership. Teachers and leaders experience the partnership, specifically in terms of their levels of enjoyment of different activities, can be categorised as follows: **personal connections; learning about other cultures; management or organisation of projects or activities; learning different teaching methods; increased student learning and/or motivation; and other.**

INFLUENCE OF PARTNERSHIP PARTICIPATION ON STUDENTS

What is the impact on students of participating in a school partnership? More specifically, what is the influence of partnerships on students' knowledge, skills and understanding? Throughout both years of our research, we focused on learning more about the influence of partnership participation on students. Based on our data, students develop knowledge, skills and understanding through their participation and this is especially true in well-developed and high momentum partnerships. The different types of knowledge, skills, understanding, enjoyment and motivation have been identified as recurring across all three regions. In the full report, we specifically describe the predominant outcomes in the particular context of Africa, Asia and the United Kingdom. In the full report we also, highlight any specific issues related to the outcomes of primary, secondary and, where appropriate, all age students. However, before moving to our second year school case data, we want to review key findings from our first year survey research.

Survey findings: Highlights from Year 1 report

Student development and context knowledge and student outcomes. Data from the first year report shows that partnership leaders in both Northern (**91%**) and Southern (**85%**) schools perceived the partnership to have a positive influence on students' development of content and context knowledge. In terms of student

participation and engagement, **66.7%** of Northern schools and **88.6%** of Southern partnership leaders agreed or strongly agreed that the partnership has had a positive influence. Specifically, these findings show that in schools in the South (Africa and Asia) the partnerships seem to have more strongly influenced student outcomes, behaviour and learning than in the Northern schools.

Changes in students' academic and social behaviour. In response to their perceptions of the partnership's influence on students' achievements, academic and social behaviour, and learning, responses from participants in the South were twice as positive as those in the North. When reporting how they perceived their partnership's influence on changes in their students' academic and social behaviour, **49%** of Northern schools and **85%** of Southern schools agreed or strongly agreed that the partnership had had a positive influence.

Influence of partnerships on students: Summary of school case findings

Based on interviews with teachers and leaders, focus groups and, in some cases, analysis of student activity data, there was a strong belief that partnership participation has an influence on students. It is important to note that within each theme, the different elements of how students are influenced through partnership participation are drawn directly from the data. We did not rely on existing structures or theory to constrain our analysis of the data. The five themes include: **partnership influence on students' knowledge; partnership influence on students' skills; partnership influence on students' understanding; partnership influence on students' enjoyment; and partnership influence on students' motivation.**

In this section we present summary findings from all case studies across Africa, Asia and the UK. Within each theme (students' knowledge, skills, understanding, enjoyment and motivation), the different elements of how students are influenced through partnership participation are drawn directly from the data. It is important to reiterate that we did not rely on existing structures or theory to constrain our analysis of the data.

Partnership influence on students' knowledge. Looking across all case studies in all countries, we found that students often develop three core areas of knowledge in relation to their partnership work. While knowledge acquisition is evident to different degrees in different schools, partnerships appear to influence student learning related to knowledge of the **partner country; knowledge of their home country; and knowledge of global issues.** Often, when discussing what they have learned about their partner country, students and teachers believe they have developed knowledge related to the climate, culture, education systems and food of their partner country. Knowledge of their own home country often relates to exploring their national traditions, heroes and events. Students' knowledge of global issues often relates to climate change, fair trade and other issues affecting countries around the world.

Partnership influence on students' skills. When we examined our data related to students' skills development, eight distinct categories of skills emerged, including: **ICT; leadership; literacy; numeracy; interpersonal; creativity; planning and management; and analytical.** Any skill that fell beyond these categories was grouped in an '**unspecified skills category**'.

Partnership influence on students' understanding. We wanted to identify areas of student learning, and of specific knowledge and skills developed as a result of partnership participation. During our research, it became clear that students'

understanding – beyond knowledge and skills – is an important outcome of partnership participation. As we analysed the school cases with an eye to capturing information on students' understanding, we found that students develop an **understanding of others** through **exploring similarities and differences between cultures; challenging preconceptions and stereotypes; and learning about other cultures.**

Partnership influence on students' enjoyment. We were interested in learning more about students' enjoyment of partnerships and partnership-related activities. This was inspired by our belief that students who are enjoying a particular subject and/or activity are more likely to pursue their learning and develop deeper understanding. Based on our research, four categories of student enjoyment emerge from the data, including: **personal connection; learning about other cultures; assistance in the management or organisation of projects or activities; and other.**

Partnership influence on students' motivation. While pupils in our participating schools clearly enjoy the partnership, we were interested in exploring how partnerships may influence their motivation to learn. Although during our interviews we did not ask a direct question about whether pupils' motivation for learning increased with the link, motivation to learn emerged consistently as an outcome of students' partnership participation. Looking across all of our participating schools, several themes emerge from the data related to students' motivation, including: **opportunities to develop personal connections; learning about other cultures; assistance in the management of projects or activities; and other.** In African schools, we identified several sources of motivation: **interest in global issues; financial benefit; building friendships; and learning English.**

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO HIGH MOMENTUM PARTNERSHIPS

Students and teachers are clearly influenced by their participation in partnerships as evidenced by our first and second year findings. Based on our desire to know more about the types of school partnerships that were most likely to produce these sorts of outcomes, we developed a strategy for re-examining all participating pairs of schools in our study. During this process, six partnerships emerged as having strong evidence of momentum, including: **mutually beneficial partnerships; enthusiasm among the majority of the school; and a commitment to maintain and support the partnership.** In this section, based on our analysis of these partnerships, we present the factors and conditions we believe are necessary for well functioning and high momentum partnership.

Partnership formation. In order to understand the detailed nuances of the factors that contribute to the formation of high momentum partnerships, we examined how these schools began their partnerships. We found that **early exchange experiences**, or exchanges during the actual initial development of the schools pairings, are more prominent in all the high momentum partnerships. Other fundamental factors to laying the foundation for high momentum partnership include: **a personal connection; whole school involvement in the decision making process; a clear purpose; supportive leadership; and a support organisation's assistance.**

Support and training. Well functioning, high momentum partnerships have all received some form of financial support for their partnerships. Five of the six

partnerships have received **core funding support** from a common organisation. However, this funding comes in different formats. Most high momentum partnerships are receiving **other organisation funding; local community support; local authority support**, and **non-governmental organisation non-financial support**. In two of our six partnerships, two are using their own funds to maintain and support the partnership. This is particularly with respect to funding student exchanges. Our high momentum schools also highlight training as an important component of their development.

Leadership and management. At the heart of each high momentum partnership is a strong and committed leadership and management structure that support and nurture partnership development. In all cases, a **strong leader, active school leadership support** and **staff support** emerge as important factors in partnership success. Another important factor, which directly relates to the extent of engagement in the partnership across the school, is the role of **teacher, student or parent partnership committees**, and **extracurricular clubs** to support the ongoing development of the partnership.

Connection to school structures. Our high momentum partnerships demonstrate that their partnerships are closely tied to the overall work and priorities of the school. Also, the partnership serves to enhance the overall work of the school and, in some cases, relates directly to school improvement. One common and strategic way to ensure that partnerships are embedded within schools involves connecting it directly to the school's development plan. In other countries, where nationally required school development plans are not part of normal school practice, these schools also create links between the partnership and the school structure by including the partnership in their overall objectives. Both strategies point to the value of creating a formal and recognised strategy for positioning the partnership within the school's priorities and plans. There are, of course, other methods for connecting partnerships to school structures in our high momentum schools, including securing cooperation from Governors and/or linking it to other significant documents and priorities within the school.

Partnership objectives. All of our high momentum partnership schools are pursuing a **variety of partnership objectives**, which suggests that one clear, unified purpose between both partner schools is unusual. High momentum partnerships appear to design their partnership objectives to meet the overall needs of the school. It appears that our high momentum partnerships are those that are using the partnership to fulfil the true interests, ambitions and needs of the school. In addition, these partnerships have focused on any of the following objectives including: **broadening horizons/global citizenship/exploring cultures; student and teacher learning; school improvement;** and **fundraising/charity**.

Communication between partners. Across all of our high momentum partnerships, schools use a **variety of different communication methods**. Each pair of schools uses **more than one method** to communicate with their partner. Telephone communication is the most prominent; however, it appears to be used as a last resort when other forms do not work. Four schools mention using both fax and email. Post and email are used by four schools. Two schools also report active text messaging. Other important communication-related lessons from our high momentum schools include: **students' emails/texts/letters; minimum monthly communication;** and **overcoming the limitations of a weak Internet connection**.

Staff and student involvement. All schools in our high momentum partnerships, except one Southern school, have participated in and endorse the value of **teacher**

exchanges. Just as early exchanges are fundamental to the growth of a high momentum partnership, continued teacher exchanges appear to be equally as valuable. Teacher exchanges motivate and offer professional development opportunities for staff, as well as renew and refresh the important personal connections developed in the partnership. **Student exchanges** take place in all the partnerships in our high momentum category and appear to be important factors in motivating students to get involved in the partnership and in creating a more tangible partnership experience for them.

Curriculum initiatives. There is evidence of shared curriculum initiatives within each of our high momentum partnerships. All schools include the partnership in a number of subjects, with two schools having curriculum projects in a number of subjects involving all students. In all but one school, these in-lesson activities are also combined with extracurricular whole-school events. In addition, curriculum work across schools is supported in our high momentum partnerships by **shared teaching of lessons; subject inclusion; and special events.**

Challenges and opportunities. Without exception, challenges arise in all partnerships. What differentiates these six partnerships from others is how they approach resolving these challenges. In all six of our high momentum partnerships, the morale of the participants and whole school community sustains their partnership success. The actual challenges are varied and include: **communication; funding; commitment and time; leadership; and government involvement.** However, they are seen as inconveniences, not barriers to success!

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our adventure in researching international school partnerships has also become our own adventure in developing international research partnerships. The many months we have spent leading and facilitating this project have allowed us to build our collective knowledge about how schools can make their international school partnerships into exciting and meaningful contributors to the growth and development of both schools and individuals. We are aware that there are many different audiences for our findings. To simplify the lessons from our research and to provide the greatest access to our conclusions and recommendations, we present them below for leaders and teachers of partnership schools, for supporting organisations and for policy makers. As many of the recommendations apply, however, in slightly different ways to each group, we highly recommend that each group extend their reading beyond those recommendations specifically geared to them. In the near future, our team will be creating a resource for each group to support their usage and work with the findings.

Prior to moving onto the final conclusions and recommendations, we want to highlight how the findings related to our original conceptualisation of school partnerships. The model comprised three distinct, yet overlapping categories: **input factors; in-school factors; and perceived impact.** This summary and the full report focus much attention on the perceived impact of partnerships in schools and on teachers, leaders and students. We have also touched on the importance of the input and school-level factors that can enhance partnership participation. These include, but are not limited to:

- Engaging teachers and leaders from across the school in deciding to embark on

- the partnership
- Sourcing available start up funding
 - Creating incremental partnership development strategies that build on ongoing work
 - Ensuring widespread teacher and student involvement in the partnership
 - Distributing leadership of the partnership to ensure its sustainability within the school and ensuring it is manageable and attractive to teachers and leaders
 - Embedding the partnership within the structures and planning infrastructure of the school to ensure it becomes an integral part of the work
 - Integrating the partnership into capacity building and school improvement plans
 - Creating an emphasis on generating supports for sustainability as a forward planning mechanism in anticipation of the discontinuation of funding.

While these issues are explored in more depth within the full report and within the recommendations and conclusions, we will be creating additional resources based on these observations as well as the final conclusions and recommendations over the coming months. An additional paper mapping the findings onto our initial model will also be available to support ongoing partnership design, implementation and development.

Recommendations for teachers and leaders to enhance partnership influence

Based on our two years of research, we have developed a robust sense of how international school partnerships work within schools and what school leaders can do to support the development of high momentum partnerships. We would refer anyone interested in the characteristics of high momentum partnerships to our full section on the topic in the report. However, we do have some specific recommendations from the wider sets of data on how schools can make the most of their partnership. We are in the process of preparing several resources on leading partnerships for school leaders. These will provide more specific detail on the design and implementation of partnership and will be available on our website within the next few months.

Based on the evidence from our research, we have identified several core themes for leaders and teachers to consider as they design and implement their partnerships. The themes, presented below, include: **designing for school development and partnership implementation; building leadership for sustainability; promoting learning opportunities; and promoting intercultural dialogue and global awareness.** Within each theme, we draw conclusions from our research and set out recommendations we believe will support the ongoing success of our high momentum school partnerships.

Designing for school development and successful partnership implementation

Nurture exchange visits for school improvement and capacity building.

Professional – and often personal – development results from direct contact with overseas colleagues. When teachers travel overseas, they reflect on their role as a teacher, learn new knowledge, skills and understanding. Often, they have life-changing experiences and bring back their learning and transformation into their classrooms. To enhance the value of exchanges, we recommend that school-based partnership leaders and teachers:

- use their partnership as a vehicle for advancing a culture of staff learning and positive attitudes towards personal and professional development

- consider how an individual's experience as participant in an international school partnership can contribute to changes within the school, its strategies and follow through so they can share their experience in a safe and positive way to contribute to the overall learning of all teachers
- encourage staff exchange participation among those who would benefit from developing confidence, and leadership and communication skills
- harness the observations of other schools' strategies and structures to reflect on internal school issues, including behaviour management and teacher–student relationships within their school
- build opportunities for professional development into exchanges by encouraging all travelling members of the partnership to teach in each other's schools as a means of initiating and developing professional capacity and student learning.

Start with meaningful units of partnership. Building sustainable educational change, including partnership, is a challenging endeavour. We also know that all educational changes start with a small group of impassioned supporters. Based on our evidence, as well as the larger body of educational change theory, we believe that partnerships may be stronger when they are initiated by a small group of individuals. In secondary schools, this could take the form of a linked department – English or Geography, for example – rather than the whole school. This would concentrate resources, ensure suitable teachers from both schools are initially linked and provide a focus for activities within both schools. Thus the objective of the partnership is clear and focused, its scope is narrow, and there is a greater likelihood that it will be linked to the curriculum. The partnership could, over time, grow to include a greater number of staff and possibly become a whole-school endeavour.

Building leadership for sustainability

Develop leaders (and the partnership) by distributing leadership. The role of the Partnership Coordinator(s) within a school is far from straightforward. However, being a Partnership Leader is an excellent opportunity for teachers and leaders to deepen their skills as is leading the partnership by embedding an initiative, incentivising school-wide collaboration and generating staff buy-in. Furthermore, visiting an overseas partner enables individuals to observe and learn about school leadership in a different context. In order to foster interest in the partnership and broaden the number of individual champions within the school, we recommend that leaders be encouraged to ensure that there are multiple leaders that can take on responsibility if the initial Partnership Leader moves on to another school.

Promoting learning opportunities

Organise partnership activities within and beyond the curriculum. Partnerships provide an avenue for teachers and students to gain knowledge about their partner countries. They also create opportunities for examination of comparative and local issues related to the countries and regions involved. Issues can be explored through the curriculum and linked to specific national curriculum objectives. Equally importantly, knowledge can be nurtured through informal activities such as assemblies, discussion with visiting teachers and whole-school events. We recommend that schools use the partnership in a variety of forums to facilitate the widest possible access to opportunities for teachers and students to develop their knowledge and awareness of issues related to their partnership and global issues.

Promote interactions to develop skills. Our findings show that teachers and students are more likely to develop skills when they are interacting directly with

others from their partner schools or their partner school country. We recommend that schools work at generating multiple opportunities for person-to-person interaction, whether in everyday lessons or through special clubs or events, to support the development of skills such as literacy, interpersonal and ICT.

Promoting intercultural dialogue and global awareness

Encourage visits from partner school to develop student's understanding.

Hosting teachers from a partner school has a greater influence on students' understanding of others (in terms of breaking down stereotypes, understanding other cultures and so on) than having their teacher visit a partner school. This is because students have direct contact with the visitors, rather than simply receiving feedback from their own teachers. We recommend that policy and programmes should ensure visits are balanced, with a similar numbers of staff and, in some cases students, going in each direction.

Coordinate opportunities for participants to deliberately engage in challenging stereotypes.

When interactions between teachers and students and their colleagues from their partner schools are facilitated to support the sharing of perspectives on global issues and exploring of stereotypes, students develop a richer understanding of the global context and their role in the world. In some cases, stereotypes are challenged which may lead to a deeper level of cultural sensitivity. By identifying preconceptions among students, teachers may be able to challenge these directly by designing activities that provide them with information about the other country. Pupils should be encouraged to ask partner pupils questions about their culture. Through interest and inquiry, pupils are often able to develop a stronger understanding of the other culture and process new information that will help them challenge stereotypes. There is some evidence that remote communication has supported this learning, but evidence from the case studies indicates that face-to-face meetings have a significantly greater impact. We recommend that leaders and teachers create these opportunities for their students and colleagues at all stages of partnership development.

Foster development of global knowledge and awareness. Partnerships enable both those directly and indirectly involved to develop knowledge about the partner country, its education systems and global issues. Whole-school learning and development is particularly influenced by high profile events. We recommend that UK schools consider how their partnerships can be used to deliver cross-curricular themes with a strong emphasis on developing the Global Dimension.

Facilitate student-to-student collaborations. An international school partnership can be a launch pad for students to develop a greater interest in global issues and other cultures. The key feature of UK partnership schools that motivates students is the opportunity for them to develop a personal connection with their counterparts in other countries. In African and Asian schools, partnership activities mostly take place in the classroom. In these countries, the more socially motivated outcomes such as building relationships with students overseas and communicating with tourists may not be seen to be as important as the traditional academic motivation to achieve higher grades. However, for UK students, the personal connection is an important aspect of their personal growth and development. It appears that students become motivated and enthusiastic about learning based on their friendships with partner pupils. We recommend schools place an emphasis on fostering connections between students as this will likely lead to a greater interest in global issues. However (as we

are sure all educators in partnerships currently do) we emphasise that the issue of student protection is given high priority and monitored throughout activities.

Conclusions and recommendations for supporting organisations

Based on our findings, several simple suggestions have emerged. We encourage support organisations to consider carefully those elements of the recommendations for schools above as this could enhance their current work process. We are, as previously stated, developing a resource tool for support organisations based on our findings to provide an evidence-based guide for supporting and nurturing high momentum partnership. We believe that support organisations have a key role to play in ensuring partnerships are meaningful to all participants. The following should be prioritised:

Ensuring programmes are building on current evidence. Across the UK and around the world, there is little research evidence on what makes a successful partnership in terms of meaningful teaching and learning. This research, thanks to the funding from DFID and the support of our Advisory Group partners and international research team, makes a considerable contribution to what is known about high momentum partnerships. However, others in the UK are working on the issues and more evidence will be coming to light in the next year. We recommend that support organisations and policy makers both draw on the evidence when designing and supporting international partnerships, and ensuring that schools have access and the opportunity to read, debate and reflect on the evidence and its implications for their own work.

Supporting multimodal communication and engagement between partners. Our evidence suggests that high momentum partnerships use different forms of communication to engage with their partners. We recommend that support organisations ensure that their schools are encouraged to work in this way and facilitate, where possible, their ability to do so.

Gathering evidence and sharing knowledge. Schools new to partnership want to learn from those with experience. Mid-partnership schools want to learn from those farther along their journey. Partnerships at the end of their funding want to learn from those partnerships that have been successful in generating opportunities and resources that will ensure their partnership is sustainable. We recommend that support organisations create innovative and meaningful ways for their partnerships to develop robust examples and evidence of their partnership. This evidence should be designed to support learning between schools but also to promote open access to knowledge gained and developed by schools. This will create a firm foundation upon which other schools can examine, reflect and act upon the successes and challenges experience by others. This recommendation also holds for all groups.

Providing school-level guidance on leadership and exchanges. Teachers participating in exchange visits report these to be the greatest influence on their knowledge, skills and professional development. We also found that distributing leadership not only builds capacity but also enhances sustainability. To further support distribution of responsibility and experience, exchange opportunities should be shared among teachers and leaders and should not remain the exclusive domain of a few. We recommend that clear guidelines for schools that encourage that different individuals are encouraged to make trips and host visitors as well as other points highlighted throughout the recommendations. Similarly, we recommend that

support organisations also provide schools with evidence of the benefits of and strategies for distributing leadership responsibility across several members of the school.

Devolving expectations to schools and leaders for design and exchanges. The activities associated with exchange visits and their anticipated learning outcomes are difficult to predict. Rather than place expectations that schools should do x or y, support organisations should encourage schools to plan their own objectives, examine their processes and disseminate their experiences to other schools. Furthermore, the central focus of partnerships should be on sharing practice with colleagues and students. Many programmes require high levels of monitoring and evaluation to support their own internal accountability regulations. We strongly recommend that schools use these systems where required but also ensure that they are also creating their own strategies for providing meaningful evidence of their learning.

Conclusions and recommendations for policy makers

As above, we would like to suggest strongly that the recommendations and conclusions above for schools and support organisations are also considered during the policy development and analysis process. However, below we present the conclusions and recommendations from our research that we believe are of highest relevance for our colleagues in policy making.

Facilitating learning rather than prescribing content. The range and types of knowledge being formed by UK students varies. Based on our evidence, we believe it would be unwise for policy makers to prescribe the specific knowledge schools should be developing. We recommend policy makers focus on supporting organisations which facilitate partnerships that enable teachers to provide learning opportunities relevant to their school, their students and their international partnership.

Fostering widespread sustainable student involvement. Our findings indicate that students, above all else, benefit from and enjoy direct contact with teachers and students from their partner school. We recommend maximising resources towards supporting exchange visits, with a focus on wider student involvement. We also recommend that policies promote student involvement at all levels of the partnership both in relation to exchanges and throughout the curriculum and beyond. As mentioned above, opportunities to interact with students overseas are also an important component that should be considered when funding support organisations, and those programmes that support multi-method communication and dialogue between teachers and students should be a priority.

Investigating strategies to support exchange visits. While this research did not set out to compare programmes that provide face-to-face support with those that do not, our findings indicate that opportunities for face-to-face learning have enhanced the development of partnerships within our sample. Partnership programmes should enable direct communication between colleagues, as learning and improvements in practice happen when teachers meet each other. There is limited evidence of learning or change involving teachers who have only a minimal level of contact. We recommend that resources be focused on these visits and, importantly, post-visit activities. Exchanges are the cornerstone of partnerships and the turning point for

learning and engagement. We recommend policy makers consider ways to ensure that partnerships are able to take advantage of those opportunities.

Developing a knowledge base of outstanding practice in partnership. We believe there are many valuable resources for schools interested in initiating and enhancing their partnership work. However, at times, accessing and understanding this complex landscape of resources is confusing for those working in schools. We recommend that policy makers continue to support the development of evidence about partnerships and continue to create opportunities for support organisations to share their experience as well as contribute to easily accessible and decipherable resources for schools to support high momentum partnerships across all programmes.

Managing competition and developing outstanding practice among support organisations. As mentioned above, the landscape of support organisations is a complex one with many support organisations receiving funding centrally to support their work. Throughout our data collection process in the UK, it was clear that many schools are confused by the funding sources available and how to best meet their own needs for school development and student learning. While we do not have a specific recommendation to make about the funding of partnerships based on our data, we strongly encourage policy makers to ensure that the competition for central partnership funds for support organisation does not interfere with the development of meaningful partnerships.

THE INFLUENCE OF NORTH SOUTH SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS: EXAMINING THE EVIDENCE FROM SCHOOLS IN THE UK, AFRICA AND ASIA

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SECTION 1:

INTRODUCTION

In this report, we present the findings from our two-year international school partnerships research study funded by the Department for International Development (DfID-UK). Our research mandate was to explore the perceived impact of these partnerships on schools, leaders, teachers and students. We were also tasked to develop a better understanding of the types of schools that were engaging in partnerships: their characteristics, and implementation and leadership strategies.

As the research project title suggests, we were specifically interested in partnerships between the North (United Kingdom) and the South (Africa and Asia). In the North, we explored partnerships in the United Kingdom (UK), including England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. In Africa, we collected data in Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, The Gambia, Uganda and Zambia. In Asia, we explored partnerships in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

First year research surveys. Our year 1 surveys served as a preliminary piece of research on the landscape, practice and impact of partnerships in the UK, Africa and Asia. During our first year of work, we explored these issues using a survey that we designed for Partnership Coordinators in schools involved in partnership. Our survey was distributed to approximately 800 schools in the United Kingdom and 800 schools in selected African and Asian countries.

The findings from our first year of research are based on responses to our survey from schools across the UK, Africa and Asia. The results reported here are based on a 21% response rate from England and Scotland and a 59% response rate from Africa and Asia. Although these response rates do represent a very good attempt at building an understanding of the reality of partnership in these regions, in some cases, they are not statistically significant because of the relatively small number of responses. However, in combination with our second year data, we are building a robust picture of partnerships and their influence on schools, leaders, teachers and students.

Second year school case studies. In the second year of the study, we intended to work with pairs of schools engaged in partnership. These schools were selected to

ensure a cross-section of schools representing primary and secondary, mixed and single-sex, urban–rural, state funded and private, and special needs. Our sample was drawn from schools located in all four countries of the United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales), five countries in Africa (Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa and Tanzania) and three countries in Asia (India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka).

Our team. Dr Karen Edge of the London Centre for Leadership in Learning (LCLL) at the Institute of Education (IoE), University of London is the Principal Investigator of this research. Keren Frayman and James Lawrie, also of the IOE, have served as Lead Researchers in the UK. Dr Sonia Ben Jaafar has guided and supported much of the quantitative analysis on this project. Dr Connie Ssebunga Massembe, Dean of Education and Professor, Makerere University in Uganda, has collaborated with our team as the Southern Lead Academic on the first year of the research. Michael Walimbwa, also from Makerere, was the Lead Quantitative Researcher during the first year of the study.

Angela Cook of Cambridge Education and Dr Nick Maurice of the UK-One World Linking Association lead our Management Group. In addition, our Advisory Group has also supported this research with their insight into the policy and practice landscape of international partnerships:

Our advisory group. We were fortunate to work with an excellent advisory group throughout the process. The group assisted in the definition of the research, designing of the tools and feeding back on drafts and process. These colleagues include: Shirley Addies (DFID); Angie Cook (Cambridge Education Foundation); Lynn Cutler (UKOWLA); Diana Dalton (DFID); Mary Dawson (LCD); Sandy Docherty (DFID); Bob Doe (Independent); Andy Egan (British Council-DGSP); Ann Harper (DCSF); Stephen Harvey (LCD); Judith Hemery (British Council); Andrea Mason (British Council -DGSP); Nick Maurice (UKOWLA and BUILD); Ruth Najda (British Council-DGSP); Ann McCabe (VSO); Marie Niven (DCFS); Manisha Prajapati (DFID); Sue Schirmer (LCD); Brenda Sole (British Council -DGSP); Olga Stanojlovic (British Council); Nikki Stoddart (DFID); Helen Young (DEA); and Leena Vadler (VSO).

Important considerations. We recognise that there are many different organisations that support schools partnerships. However, our purpose in this study is not to explore the different types of supporting organisation and to compare the support provided. Our primary goal is to understand more about how partnerships work and their influence on participants. We have deliberately avoided comparing programmes and approaches, and have instead rooted our work within the partnerships themselves. We hope that our findings will provide all organisations working to support partnerships and schools with the evidence they require to move their work to the next level.

This report. We have combined the findings from the first and second years of our study and highlighted the cumulative lessons from our work. The report is presented in six sections. First, in **Section 2** we present the overarching conceptual framework that guided our work. While our primary task was to explore the influence of partnerships on the different stakeholder groups, we also wanted to understand the factors that influence those partnerships that are perceived to be moving ahead quickly with their implementation and are perceived to be having a significant influence on their leaders, teachers and students. **Section 3**, Methods, details how we conducted our second year research. As we have previously discussed the methods we used in our first year in other publications, we focus here on the details of how we conducted the school case studies in our second year of the research. In

Section 4, we present our findings on student, staff and community involvement. In **Sections 5 and 6**, we focus on what we have learnt about the influence of partnership on teachers and, in turn, students. **Section 7** of the report presents the distilled lessons from a set of partnerships that we believe are generating the most significant influence on their leaders, teachers and students. We have called these 'high momentum partnerships', and we believe that the experience of these partnerships will be of value to individuals, schools and organisations involved in partnerships.

Additional resources. Due to the large volume of data collected and analysed by our international team over the last two years, we have more data than we can possibly report here. As we cannot include all data and summaries in the report, we are in the process of finalising a series of technical papers that summarise the research findings in a variety of ways. The goal of this series of technical papers and resources is to provide policy makers, practitioners and academics with the opportunity to explore segments of our findings in more detail. These papers will present the overall findings within three bundles, including charting the landscapes of different sections of the data; analysis of partnerships between schools; and sample school-level cases. These papers will be available shortly on our website. We believe this to be the best way to make the most of our collective knowledge on the subject of international school partnerships in order to ensure that our data assists those in partnerships to learn from the experience of others.

SECTION 2:

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As previously discussed with DfID and members of the Advisory Group, given the complex nature of school-level changes and the high number of school-level policy interventions that occur simultaneously, it is important to recognise that it is impossible to isolate the extent to which an international school partnership (ISP) is the sole influence in school- or individual-level change. However, we believe it is possible to understand how individuals view the impact of ISPs on a range of factors associated with whole-school and individual performance.

With that in mind, to construct the overarching model for the research, the Research Group undertook a review of the academic and professional literature to examine previous work related to international school partnerships. Our conceptual model for this research is based on existing factors that influence successful school reform implementation, including leadership, school effectiveness and improvement, reform implementation and partnership theory. The model supported the design of the survey and analysis and provided us with three distinct sets of data: **Inputs**, **In-school factors** and **Perceived impact**. The following section summarises our model and presents a brief look at the literature review that contributed to its development.

As the literature review and conceptual framework development was not funded by the original contract with DFID, it was independently funded and undertaken by the IOE Research Group as a necessary piece of work. As such, this section of the report represents the work of the IOE external to this contract.

Literature review. Our team faced two challenges when working towards reviewing the literature and building a model for this research. There is little – in fact, no – research literature on international school partnerships, and it was therefore necessary to look at several wider areas of research and theory to develop the conceptual framework to guide this research.

We reviewed a wide range of literature to support the development of our conceptual framework, including educational change and reform; school improvement and school effectiveness; leadership; school district/local authority reform; North South partnerships (in general); and partnership/networking. In turn, we set about building a model that would not only allow us to examine the perceived impact of school partnerships, but also to examine some additional factors that may be influential.

To frame this study, it would be easy to simply ask, ‘What is the impact of the international school partnerships on various parts of your school and individuals?’ We would, however, generate a simplistic picture of how our survey participants perceive the impact of their partnership activities. This would also not allow us to attribute any co-relational factors to the perceived success or failure of a partnership within a school. It would also not enable us to draw any conclusions about the factors between schools that support healthy and productive partnerships.

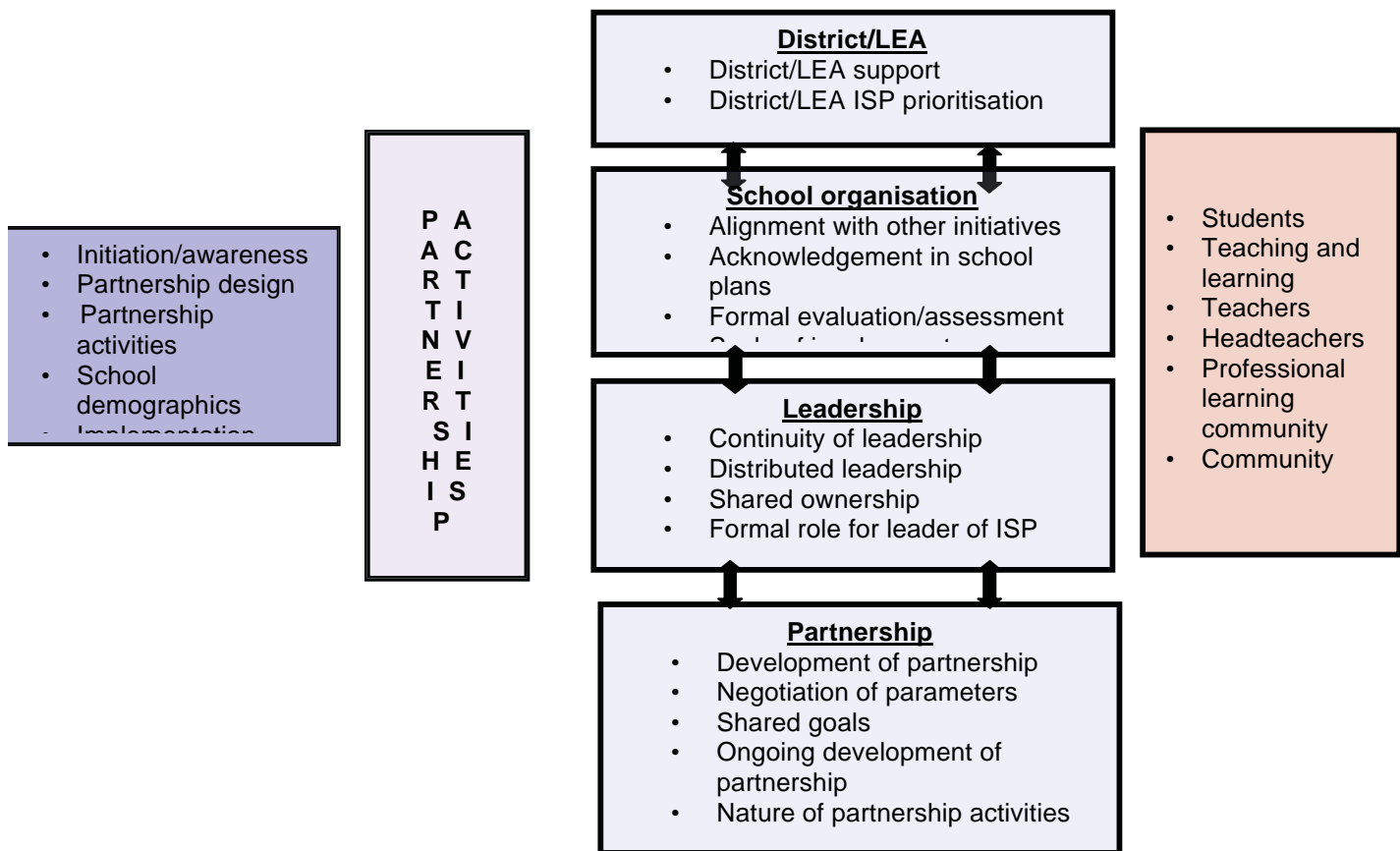
Based on our reading and synthesis of previous research and findings, we have developed the conceptual framework for the research as presented below.

Figure 1. Our conceptual framework for the NSSP research

INPUTS

WITHIN SCHOOL FACTORS

PERCEIVED IMPACT



Unpacking the Components of our Conceptual Model

Input Factors

What we wanted to know. This category of the model is designed to gather three types of information from survey participants. The first is the **basic demographic information** about each partnership school that completed the survey. The second is the **implementation information** detailing how the school became aware of and entered the partnership. The third is the **partnership activities** within the school.

Rationale. Our rationale for the **Input** category is our knowledge that the initiation (House, 1974) and sustainable implementation of change processes (Fullan, 2003) are often predicated upon building collective support (Hopkins, 1995) and making shared decisions about participation in the initiative (Datnow and Castellano, 2001). Therefore, we are interested in whether schools reporting on specific input factors would express any relationship with the perceived impact of the partnership. We are also interested in whether the school's demographic factors influence perceptions of impact of partnership participation.

We anticipated that the emergence of possible trends in the data that would suggest that particular partnership development strategies lead to more positively received partnerships. In addition, we also wondered if certain types of schools had more

positive experiences of partnerships. These questions were explored in more depth throughout the research.

In-school Factors

What we wanted to know. The in-school category is designed to gather four types of information related to factors that may influence the perceived impact of a partnership. The first is related to the **support** that schools receive from their **district/local authority (LA) colleagues** as research shows that initiatives that receive support from the district/LA are more likely to succeed (Edge, 2005; Harris, 2002; Resnick and Glennan, 2002). We are aware that this is not technically an 'in-school' factor; however, we decided to place it within this section as it is most closely linked to the structural and cultural supports that could influence partnership outcomes. The second is **leadership**, in order to recognise the impact that sustained, supportive and distributed leadership (Frost and Harris, 2003; Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach, 1999) play in successful school implementation of reforms. We are particularly interested in who is leading the partnership, the recognition of their role, how it is prioritised within the school and the stability of leadership within the school. These are all factors that have been proven to influence the success and stability of reform initiatives. The same may be true of international partnerships. The third are the **organisational characteristics**. It is known that new initiatives are often difficult to embed within schools or organisations but that certain factors influence their successful adoption (Fullan, 1999; Fullan, Bertani and Quinn, 2004). This area of inquiry should provide some information related to how schools are working to align the partnership with their other work within the school as well as other related issues. The final category of information we are seeking is related to **partnerships** in general, which summarises current research and thinking on the characteristics of positive partnerships between Southern and Northern organisations (Ashman, 2001; Fowler, 1998; Johnson and Wilson, 2006). We explored several questions, drawn from this literature, to examine if the same factors influence the success of international school partnerships.

Rationale. Much research literature on school improvement and leadership suggests that changes within the school and implementation of new initiatives are more likely to occur when certain conditions are met. These conditions include prioritisation of the initiative, alignment with other initiatives, consistent leadership, and deep and wide embedding of the initiative within the school. These findings from previous research have influenced our design of this category of the conceptual framework. We are most interested in understanding how survey participants feel that their partnerships have impacted on their school, and teaching and learning. However, without being able to make some statements about the factors that have led to that impact, our research would not provide a robust enough picture of the partnership landscape to sufficiently contribute to the policy and practice of partnerships within the UK and beyond.

Perceived Impact

What we wanted to know. The end goal of this research is to assess the perceived impact of international school partnerships on schools, leaders, teachers, students and communities. We specifically wanted to know what the individuals completing the survey feel has been the impact of their partnership.

Rationale. As previously discussed, assessing the impact of any one initiative within this very complicated and congested reform climate is nearly impossible (Anderson,

1991). Based on the model presented above, we have constructed a set of measures that contribute to the success of initiatives in other contexts. As such, we are developing a model that will not only gather feedback on the perceived impact of partnerships but on the factors that influence impact as well.

SECTION 3:

METHODOLOGY

The first year of our research focused on learning more about the landscape of international school partnerships between Africa, Asia and the United Kingdom. In our first year report, we detailed our process for gathering survey data from over 1400 schools in 16 countries. Our survey was distributed in 16 countries in Africa, Asia and the United Kingdom, gathering information from over 500 schools in those countries. The lessons from this research (Edge, Frayman and Jaafar, 2007) have not only informed our second year work, but have led us to develop a preliminary understanding of the landscape of partnerships in Africa, Asia and the United Kingdom.

Armed with this knowledge, we continued our work and embarked on an ambitious journey of gathering data on partnerships from over 50 schools in 12 countries. The results of our work are 54 school-level case studies that explore how schools are engaging in partnership and the perceived impact on students, teachers, schools and communities. In the end, perhaps not surprisingly, our adventures in qualitative research proved even more ambitious than the quantitative research of our first year.

During our current year of data collection, we focused on detailing the experience of schools engaged in partnership. To this end, we spent one day in each of 55 schools in 12 countries to gain a better understanding of how partnerships begin, evolve and engage all members of the school community. To accomplish this goal, we recruited a diverse team of international colleagues in 14 different countries and, for the past 12 months, they have been working in 55 schools in three Asian, five African and four UK countries.

Our intended goal was to produce 64 individual school case studies of two pages each as well as a mini-exploration of the partnership pair. In the end, we gathered data in 55 schools and the resulting 55 school-level case studies. The final school case study reports also expanded to 6–10 pages in length as we realised it was the only way to capture the essence of what we were learning in schools.

In each participating school, members of our team spent one day conducting interviews with school and partnership leaders, leading focus groups with teachers and facilitating activity workshops with students. For each school, we developed a 6–10 page case study outlining their own unique approach to partnership. Within each case, we present information using the same conceptual framework that guided our first year survey. As such, each case explores:

- School background and demographic information
- Partnership development: formation, support, training, leadership and alignment to policies
- Partnership in practice: objectives, communication, involvement and curriculum initiatives
- Monitoring and evaluation: internal and external methods of evaluation

- Perceived impact: students, teachers and leaders, community
- Challenges and opportunities: improving the partnership, advice for schools.

In turn, we conducted pair-analysis of participating schools and their partners as well as continental cross-case studies to gain a better understanding of emerging trends related to the experience and impact of partnerships in Africa, Asia and the United Kingdom.

This section highlights our process of designing and conducting the qualitative research during the second year of the study. We detail how we selected schools, conducted the research and went about building 54 school-level case studies of partnership. In this section, we provide ample detail for those interested in the nuances of our gathering and analysis approach. However, for those interested in even more detail, we encourage you to contact us directly (k.edge@ioe.ac.uk) or review any of our upcoming methodologically focused technical papers. In this section, we present the following categories:

- Country and school selection: how we chose our participants
- Recruiting researchers
- School visits: how we collected our data
- Data analysis: how we interpreted the data
- Lessons from the methods

Country and School Selection: How we chose our participants

In Spring 2008, our research team selected 64 schools to participate in our second year of research. We set out to select 32 pairs of schools, which had been working in partnership, to participate by hosting our researchers and to share their experiences and perceptions of partnership. Sampling pairs was a priority because, in addition to creating individual school-level case studies, we wanted to learn more about the similarities and differences between schools engaged in partnership with each other. To this end, we began our sampling process.

Country selection. The first phase of work in our sampling process was to select the countries that would participate in the research. We engaged our Impact Assessment Advisory Group (IAAG) in this process. It was a given that we would be working with the four counties of the United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales). In Asia, we had previously worked in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka and it was decided we would continue to work in those three countries for the second year of the research. The final decision rested in which African countries would be included in the study, as we could not include all eight that we worked with in the first year. The decision-making points for African countries rested in the following criteria: priority status among participating organisations; number of partnerships; English language; and, dominant faith groups. Collectively, we selected Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, The Gambia and Uganda. Midway through data collection, it became clear that access to a researcher in The Gambia would be difficult. Also, the Lead Researcher was going to be in Ghana for another project and would be available to conduct research. Based on these decision-points, we substituted Ghana for The Gambia in our final sample. This was to be the only country in our sample for which we didn't have quantitative data from the first year to build on.

Criteria for school selection. We engaged in a participatory process with our IAAG to develop the final list of school-level criteria for our school selection. Based on these discussions, we agreed that we needed the following mix of criteria to be represented in our sample within each country. As such, within each country, we

were looking for schools that represented a balance of regions, location (urban/rural), phase (primary/secondary/all age), gender (single/mixed) and status (faith and special needs). Even though we deliberately chose not to compare different types of partnership programmes, we wanted to ensure that different programmes were represented. We also decided that we would request that each member of the IAAG forward the name of five schools they felt displayed what we defined as ‘interesting partnership practice’. These recommendations were intended to allow us to have a small number of partnerships in each country that were ‘recommended’, thus producing a stratified, random sampling process.

Initial school selection. Using our stratified sampling strategy based on the aforementioned criteria, we set out to gather our 32 partnerships. Armed with our year one database of over 2000 UK schools in partnership, two internet-ready laptops, a roll of paper for the walls of our office, multiple packages of post-it notes and string, our team of six UK-based researchers spent five hours working towards establishing a balance between the criteria above. Balancing the demands of our country- and school-level criteria was a challenge. However, we met our goals, and selected 54 schools representing a diverse range of partnerships based on our criteria goals. To maintain the anonymity of schools, we do not share their names here or anywhere within the report.

Inviting schools to participate. The in-country researcher assigned to the school contacted each school individually. Schools were contacted by phone in the first instance and we attempted to speak with the Headteacher or Partnership Leader to provide more information about the research. This original contact was followed by an email with more information about the study and our intentions for our one-day school visit. As we did not anticipate the level of challenge in accessing schools that we were to experience, we did not rigorously track the schools’ reasons for non-participation; however, as a result of the challenges we faced, we rewrote our original sample. It became clear midway through our process that we would also have to reduce the number of partnership pairs we would visit during our research.

Issues of access. We were surprised to encounter such resistance in the UK to participating in the study and, as result, after weeks of effort to secure our original sample, we were forced to start redrawing the lines of partnership we had originally intended to explore. We have asked our researchers in each country to reflect on their challenges in securing participating schools and this is detailed in the section ‘Reasons for access challenges’ below.

Adjusting our sample. Both the changes in the number of schools/country and the reduction in the number of paired schools were reflected in our ‘Midstream adjusted sample’ below. The ‘Completed case studies’ numbers represent the number of schools/country we have finalised case studies from.

Table 1: Final school case study list

| Continent | Country | Original sample | Midstream adjusted sample | Completed case studies |
|-----------|---------|-----------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
|-----------|---------|-----------------|---------------------------|------------------------|

| | | | | |
|---------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|
| Africa | Ghana | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | Kenya | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| | South Africa | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| | Tanzania | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| | Uganda | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| Asia | Pakistan | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| | India | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| | Sri Lanka | 4 | 4 | 1 |
| UK | England | 16 | 19 | 17 |
| | Northern Ireland | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| | Scotland | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| | Wales | 6 | 5 | 5 |
| Total | 12 countries | 64 | 64 | 49 (+5) |

Reasons for access challenges. We want to highlight the potential reasons why we were unable to maintain our sample goals for the study. Here, we explain the process and challenges we faced in the countries in which we faced the most significant challenges: Sri Lanka, Pakistan and the United Kingdom:

In **Pakistan**, we worked with two colleagues from the Aga Khan University, Karachi. Of the schools in our original sample, only one welcomed our research team. Other schools were located in insecure areas, such as Swat. In another few cases, internal school-related issues, including staff/leadership turnover, were behind the refusal to participate. Again, we asked our team to contact all schools in the Pakistan database with the intention of securing four. However, all but two schools chose not to participate.

In **Sri Lanka**, of our four originally selected schools, only one accepted our invitation, after numerous efforts by our researcher. In order to attempt to work with four schools, we asked our researcher to contact all schools within our Sri Lankan database. Even after these efforts, we still only obtained permission from one school. Our research colleague in Sri Lanka suggested the reason government schools did not welcome the study could be to do with not wishing to be seen to be associated with a European-led venture. This stems from European-based organisations criticising the national government over their handling of the civil war.

In **Uganda**, the Principal Investigator conducted one school visit. Colleagues from the University of Makerere in Kampala, Uganda conducted the remainder of the research. Of the remaining schools, all four of the originally selected schools were changed because their UK partner school declined to participate. Three additional schools were then approached and agreed to participate in the study.

In **South Africa**, colleagues from the University of the Witwatersrand conducted school research visits. We reduced the sample from five to four in order to complete the research on time, based on the financial constraints associated with travel in the country.

In the **UK (Scotland, Wales, England and Northern Ireland)**, we were successful in collecting data in 29 schools. While on the surface this is a high success rate – reaching all but four schools – there is a layer of complexity under the surface. Based on our original sample, 20 of the 32 schools were eager to participate in the study. We were surprised at the challenges we faced in securing the remaining 12 schools. Based on the challenges we had faced in Pakistan, we were particularly keen to visit schools with a Pakistani partner. These schools proved the most difficult to access

on the UK side as well. We found that the Welsh and Northern Irish schools proved most welcoming. We estimate that we approached just over 50 schools to participate. Based on a review with our research team, we identified the following reasons for declining to participate: partnership is no longer active; school claims to be 'too busy'; Partnership Coordinator had left the school; change in Headteacher; or the school could not afford the necessary supply cover.

Recruiting researchers

Our research explores the influence of international North–South school partnerships on schools, leaders, teachers and students. As such, we wanted our research team to echo both of these elements of our work. So, while we were conducting research on partnerships, we were also developing our own partnerships with researchers around the world. We were not immune to many of the challenges our school colleagues face when building partnerships. We were actively seeking out partners, developing new relationships, communicating about important issues and dealing with issues of funding, among many other challenges. We would like to think that like our high momentum partnership schools, we have turned these challenges into opportunities for learning, and that our research has gained from our perseverance and experience. The product of our collective efforts is presented within the summary and the full report. We hope that the research partnerships we have developed throughout our partnership research will continue in the future.

Our data collection and analysis teams. The data collection teams were responsible for arranging their school visits, conducting all in-school data collection and preparing their final school-level case studies. In the United Kingdom, our data collection team consisted of colleagues from the IOE, University of London including: Sonia Ben-Jaafar, Jodi Coats, Meli Glenn, Dr Rob Higham, Khatera Khamsi, Neil Gillbride, Marie Lall, James Lawrie and Victoria Showumi. We also had the pleasure of working with Elaine Lam (Bath Spa University). Our data collection and analysis colleagues in Asia include: Dr Marie Lall (IOE, University of London) and Dr Mallica Misra (Mata Sundri College for Women, India), Kulsoom Jaffar and Nilofar Vazir (Aga Khan University, Pakistan) and Fazna Ahmad (Sri Lanka). In Africa, we worked with Viet Cooke (IOE, University of London, working in Tanzania), James Lawrie (IOE, University of London, working in Kenya), Nicanor Ogolla (Maseno University, Kenya), Connie Ssebbunga Masembe, David Kabugo and Charles Kyasanku (Makerere University, Uganda), and Everard Weber and Mathramuthu Pillay (University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa). Our analysis team was led by James Lawrie and included: Fazna Ahmed (Sri Lanka), Michael Clements (UK), Katherine Descours (Canada), Keren Frayman (Israel), Khatera Khamsi (Switzerland), Heather McCuaig Edge (Canada), Elaine Lam (UK/Canada), Shaun Phillips (UK), Bronwen Robertson (UK/New Zealand) and Melissa White (UK/Canada).

Creating collaborative systems. Throughout the research, we needed to take painstakingly small steps to ensure that all members of the team were clear about the goals of the research, were well versed in its tools and were confident in their ability to conduct the research. Based on informal discussions with our colleagues who conducted case study research in schools in a number of countries, including Kenya, Uganda, UK, Ghana and India, we produced guiding principles for members of our international research team to ensure we operate consistently and with rigour within all case study work. We requested all those working on our project to operate in a manner befitting the spirit of sensitive, ethical and investigative research work.

To ensure these goals, we needed to provide each researcher with packs of research materials as well as the electronic tools required to gather data. In order to

build our own community of researchers, we developed a Google group to support our collective work and make sure that all researchers had access to the resources they needed to conduct their work. For the purpose of sharing specific school contact information and maintaining confidentiality, contractual issues and training in instrument use, other means of communication were used as well, including courier post, telephone, text messages, conference calls and face-to-face meetings.

School Visits: How we collected our data

Introduction. Given that we only had one day in each school, we needed to make the most effective use of our limited time. In support of this goal, we designed four distinct data gathering tools to support our work with leaders, teachers, other staff and community members (where possible) and students. These instruments were developed in the UK by our research team and then tested in one Ugandan school with our colleague from Makerere University. Based on our Ugandan experience, instruments were revised and tested a second time in Ghana in three schools.

Leader interviews. This instrument was used for both the Senior School Leader and Partnership Leader interviews. These interviews took between 40 minutes and an hour per interviewee. Information gathered covered all aspects of the partnership management and the perceived impact of the partnership on students, teachers, communities and the whole school.

Teacher focus groups. The focus group was used for both the group discussions with teachers and, where possible, the support staff and community members. Information gathered includes purpose, activities and perceived impact of the partnership.

Student activities. A student workshop was ideally conducted in two classes and engaged students in sharing their experience, knowledge and enjoyment of their partnership activities. We also asked students to make recommendations on what could improve the partnership. Based on funding constraints, this data has been looked at, but not fully analysed, across the project. It will be part of a student internship programme during the 2009–10 academic year and data will be shared with DfID as soon as it is completed.

Observation checklist. An observation checklist was to be completed by all researchers during their visit and tour of the school. The checklist was designed to gather information and pictures of different artifacts and representations of the partnership across the school.

Table 2: Data gathering strategies for school study visits

This table outlines the various types of data the instruments were designed to collect from different participants within the school.

| | Demographics and school information | Partnership development | Partnership in practice | Impact on students | Impact on teachers and community | Partnership overview |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Senior Leader/teacher | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Partnership Leader | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Teachers | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Support Staff (if possible) | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Students | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Community (if possible) | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Whole School – Observations | | | ✓ | ✓ | | |

School-level case studies

Following submission of the first three school-level case studies, we developed a template to guide all researchers in preparing their school cases. It is closely tied to the interview and focus group instruments and is, again, linked to the conceptual framework that guided the overall research programme. In most cases, it was impossible to meet with the community and parents for the interviews/focus groups. As a result, the case studies are based primarily on the data gathered from the interviews with the Headteachers, Partnership Leaders, focus groups with teachers, and observations. Researchers prepared their school-level case study of between 6–10 pages in length. For each case, we have additional student activity data and photos. Photos will be included in the cases once schools provide permission for the name of their school to be placed on the case study. The sample case study template is presented below and case studies will be available for downloading as part of the student resource package as well as the technical papers.

NORTH–SOUTH SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP SCHOOL STUDY REPORT

INTRODUCTION

School profile (School population: students, staff; Location: urban, rural; School type: fee paying, non-fee paying, primary, secondary, etc.)

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Partnership formation (How was the decision taken to form partnership?)

Support and training (Logistical support; financial support; facilitation support; influence from local or national)

Leadership and management (Spread of partnership coordination throughout the school, formal and informal; committees; official posts; strategies to deal with personnel turnover or leadership transitions)

Connections to school structures (To what extent is the partnership incorporated into the School Improvement/Development Plan and departmental plans?)

PARTNERSHIP IN PRACTICE

Partnership objective (What, according to staff, is the objective of the partnership?)

Communication between partners (What is the frequency of communication between partner schools? Which staff/students communicate?)

Student/teachers and staff/community involvement (Extracurricular activities, exchange visits, after school clubs, how many staff/students, etc.)

Curriculum initiatives (Partnership linked to specific areas of the national curriculum; entry into schemes of work, lesson plans, etc.)

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

What monitoring and evaluation of the partnership has taken place?

PERCEIVED INFLUENCE

General. Learning-skills; awareness; knowledge and understanding; motivation; enjoyment

Students

Teachers and Leaders and Community

CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES (What facilitated/hindered partnership development?)

IMPROVING THE PARTNERSHIP

School's views on how partnership could be improved

ADVICE FOR OTHER SCHOOLS

Advice school would offer another school

RESEARCHER'S FINAL REMARKS

Highlight main findings in 250–500 words

Data Analysis: How we interpreted the data

Individual school study analysis template. In order to organise the large amount of data we had collected, we devised a strategy to guide our analysis of this large-scale quantitative research. This consisted of a framework for scaling the different

components of the case studies. The notion was that this would assist us in our cross-case analysis and provide some markers for the partnerships that were excelling. The result was an analysis template that stratified each component of the individual case study template based on the trends that were emerging from the case studies themselves. Within each stratification, we created three to five possible indicators. Sections for evidence and quotations were also included.

This template was piloted several times and finalised. Once the final template was agreed, an Excel spreadsheet was created and each submitted case study was analysed according to the template. Analysts were then tasked to complete the individual school-level case study templates for schools they had not previously visited. Triangulation strategies were used throughout both the template design and analysis stages.

Cross-school analysis. In order to look across the cases, we needed a strategy for breaking the large number of cases into manageable sets. Based on the feedback from the IAAG regarding what would prove most helpful and interesting, we decided to create the following subset of analysis tools. Following analysis of each case study, a master spreadsheet was created containing information from each individual analysis template. The spreadsheet was sliced into six sections to facilitate continental and phase-based analysis: UK Primary, UK Secondary, Africa Primary, Africa Secondary, Africa All Age, and Asia All Age. The table below outlines the number of schools that are included in each subset of data.

Table 3: Cross-school analysis bundles

| Continent | Africa | Asia | United Kingdom |
|-----------|--------|------|----------------|
| Primary | 10 | 0 | 11 |
| Secondary | 5 | 0 | 17 |
| All Age | 3 | 7 | 1 |

Cross-case study analysis. In our cross-case analysis of the impact of the partnerships on students, teachers and community, we read through the impact sections in the original case studies and quickly realised that it would not be possible for us to measure the **degree** of the impact as we had done with the data from all other sections of the case study. So we decided to focus on the content instead, and brainstormed a way to group the information given in original case studies, according to the emerging themes. For the **Influence on students** sections, we used the government's distinction of 'knowledge', 'skills' and 'understanding' for the grouping and added the 'enjoyment' section that was in the original analysis in the rest of the case studies. For the **Influence on teachers** section, we created a few more categories under 'skills' looking at content (what), degree (how much) in the simple sense, and reason (why), to learn more about the impact on teaching practice, which was emphasised in the way we asked the questions in the interviews. In the **Influence on Community** section, we used the same parameters to look for emerging themes and possible impact, and then we grouped these. We made no distinction between knowledge, skills and understanding, due to the limited amount of information we had to work with in this section.

Lessons from the methods

Towards the end of the preparation of this report, it became quite clear that we had amassed more data than would be possible to present in our final report. To support access to our research and to build on the momentum generated by our

collaborations, we decided to publish a series of technical papers that present detailed analysis of each stage of the data. Our list of technical papers to be published is included in APPENDIX B. In addition, we will begin the preparation of academic papers for major international education journals on our process and learning from our two-year project. The topics will include, but not be limited, to building an international team; creating consistency; and cultural challenges in international collaborative research.

SECTION 4:

STUDENT, STAFF AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN PARTNERSHIPS

Throughout both years of our research, we were interested in learning more about how schools participate in international school partnerships. We believe that the level of activity and the breadth of involvement of different groups of individuals within the schools may have an effect on the overall impact of the partnership on those groups.

During the first year, we gathered perspectives from partnership leaders from approximately 800 schools in 16 countries and developed a preliminary snapshot of what, from this limited preliminary sample, partnerships look like in action. In our second year, we spent time in over 50 schools to deepen our understanding of the range of activities that these schools are engaging in within their partnerships. This section represents a summary of the level of engagement and range of activities in our visited schools in Asia, African and the United Kingdom.

The results we present here are based on our data gathering and analysis from all schools in our sample. Throughout this section, we discuss the findings from 'schools participating in our research' or 'schools visited as part of our sample'. In order to streamline the language we are using, we refer to these schools as 'our Africa/Asian/UK schools' and/or 'Africa/Asian/UK schools'. This is not in any way designed to imply that all schools in these regions participate in partnerships in the same way. It is simply a tool to assist the reader by streamlining text.

In this section, we present three distinct profiles of partnership activity from Africa, Asia and the United Kingdom. Within each profile, we present the findings in the following sections:

- Level of pupil involvement
- Teaching staff involvement
- Non-teaching staff involvement
- Community involvement
- Degree to which partnership is infused within curriculum
 - Range of subjects
 - Range of years
- Extracurricular activities

Partnership activities: Findings from our survey research

In terms of partnership activities, the first year of our research examined how schools bring partnerships into the curriculum. We were interested in learning more about the nature of curriculum activities that schools in partnerships were undertaking within and between schools. Findings in this section are reported with means, which provide data on how participants responded to questions based on the 'strongly disagree' (low) to 'strongly agree' (high) scale. Therefore, a higher mean indicates a higher level of agreement with a particular question or set of questions.

In the first year of data collection, it made more sense from an analytical perspective to blend data from both Africa and Asia into a 'Southern' category. This was, as we have previously explained, our intention for the second year of the research as well.

However, it soon became clear that distinct patterns were emerging in the African and Asian samples, which we believe are important to keep separate. This makes it more difficult to analyse the data across the years. However, in the conclusion of the study, we will build our conclusions based on all data gathered and analysed.

Our first year data shows that the schools in the North reported a higher degree of curriculum in-class activity related to the partnership. The schools generally reported moderately higher levels of curriculum activities. This was especially prominent for the development and sharing of the curriculum and for engaging in special projects. However, there was only a very small difference between the reported practices of the Northern and Southern schools regarding shared curriculum development across the partnerships, suggesting that there is a sense of sharing from both parties.

Development and sharing of curriculum resources related to the partner's country or other international issues by individual school or partnerships.

Northern schools reported a mean of 4.74 in relation to their curriculum development, sharing and receiving. Southern schools reported a lesser mean of 3.48. One of the challenges with this grouping of questions is that both local development and sharing of resources are collated. It may well be that schools in both the North and South are actively involved in creating curriculum activities but that they are not equally involved in sharing and developing resources.

Engagement in issues-related projects. This grouping of questions indicates a larger difference in means than the other two curriculum related questions in the survey. Schools in the North reported a high mean (5.12) indicating that many schools are actively engaged in a special project, global issue or partner country work. Schools in the South were less likely (mean=3.66) to engage in this kind of work in their schools. This may be related directly to the curriculum expectations placed on UK schools and/or the interest UK schools demonstrate towards partnership as a tool for curriculum enhancement. It may be that schools in the South do not have the curriculum support and/or incentive to participate in curriculum development in this way.

Shared curriculum projects. Both Northern (mean=3.8) and Southern (3.7) schools reported medium level means for the development of shared curriculum resources. Given that these means are close to each other, it may indicate that neither schools in the North nor the South were frequently engaging in shared development. It would be interesting, in future analysis of the data, to explore if the development of shared resources is related to the length of time a school has been in a partnership. This may be one of the reasons that schools did not report high level means related to shared development of resources.

In the next section of this chapter, we explore how schools involved in our year two sample developed their partnership and embedded the partnership within the curriculum and other school activities.

Student, staff and community involvement in Africa: Findings from our school-level data

Participation in Partnership Activities

The following sections relate the findings from our data gathering in Africa. We found that participants in our African schools indicate that students and teaching staff are most often engaged in partnership activities. Where community involvement is evident, it appears to be strongest in the primary sector, although it is evident in the secondary sector as well. There is little information on non-teaching staff involvement.

Within African **primary schools**, pupils and teaching staff are the main participants in the partnership, with community involvement in the majority of schools. Non-teaching (support) staff are only involved in one of our African schools.

In the **secondary schools**, students and teachers are also the main participants in partnership activities, but the community is less involved than in primary schools. Only half of the secondary schools report community involvement. Community involvement is also not central to any school's partnership, and one school reports no community involvement at all.

In the sample of **all age schools**, community involvement is minor, appearing in one case only. Non-teaching (support) staff appear not to be involved at all.

Level of Pupil Involvement

In all of our participating African schools, pupils and staff participate in partnership activities together. In most schools, pupils from many different year groups are involved in several different mandatory partnership-related events during each school year. These activities include communicating via letters to their partner school pen pals and participating in presentations. There is, however, evidence in some schools of students planning and leading activities and events.

In the **primary schools** in our sample, pupil participation involves writing letters and stories and class presentations for within and between school sharing. As detailed in one case study, 'Partnership activities are allocated to all classes and pupils who perform best at given tasks representing the school. Pupils are thus motivated to make presentations, which are subsequently sent to partner pupils in [the partner school] (School 188).'

In contrast, one school shows high student participation in non-mandatory activities, which include drawing pictures and making objects for the partner school. One teacher shares, 'When anything comes, in case of responding to anything they have given us, all pupils participate, especially in drawing and doing handwork and writing letters (School 1119).'

Student committees are also seen as a way of reaching the students' parents and raising their awareness regarding the partnership. The level of pupil leadership roles in these committees is unclear.

In our **secondary school** sample, students and staff also work together in partnership events including pen-pal schemes and school visits. As in the primary sector, secondary school pupils from a number of different years participate in events and activities. One teacher explains, 'Students exchange letters with pen pals by post, SMS and email. They participate in the programmes of the partnership. About 320 learners are directly involved and more and more learners are participating (School 396).'

A popular activity among some of the secondary schools is the making of 'pupil passports'. These passports are booklets in which students describe and illustrate facts about themselves and their families, their hobbies, age and the local environment. One participant provides more detail, stating,

The student activities are writing passports (booklets with drawings and photographs of themselves and descriptions of various aspects of their lives, e.g. their villages, families, etc.). This activity has been carried out twice over the first two years of the partnership (School 31b).

In **all age schools**, no particular patterns emerge concerning student participation in partnership activities. In one school, students take on leadership roles in planning partnership events. In another school, students are involved by using partnership-related resources, including the library, and by attending classroom sessions. In another school, the teachers decide on and plan activities for the students.

Teaching Staff Involvement

Generally, across the African primary, secondary and all age schools, teachers work together in committees to create initiatives and plan and implement activities. In some schools, the Partnership Coordinator is solely responsible for designing activities that, in turn, are implemented by a committee or group of teachers. Teachers are also involved in partnerships via exchanges with their partner schools. However, this is much more prominent in the secondary sector and all age schools.

In three of the five **primary schools**, all teachers work together to create partnership-related initiatives and activities. In some schools, there are also committees convened for planning extracurricular activities related to the partnership. One participant explains,

The role of teachers on this committee is to initiate activities within their subject areas especially in Music, Fine Art and Craftwork and to teach and train pupils the specific activities they generate out of the themes (School 1119).

Less prominent, but still evident in our **primary schools**, are forms of teacher participation that involve one teacher designing initiatives that all staff implement or, alternatively, the partner school designing the initiatives which the teachers have to put in place. One researcher explains in their case study,

Teachers in the committee barely create and discuss potential link activities as this remains the duty of the corresponding partner school. In the words of one respondent 'the teachers come in to carry out an activity as assigned by the partner school' (School 188).

In **secondary schools**, teaching staff involvement revolves around planning activities and initiatives within schools. Teachers are also very involved in exchanges. In some schools, there is a steering committee of teachers that designs initiatives, whereas in one school the Coordinator is more involved than staff in designing initiatives. Participants report that all staff participate in partnership activities in the school. One researcher describes participation in a participant school,

The Partnership Coordinator has been active in a number of ways: in visiting the UK, coordinating activities when the two UK colleagues visiting, in linking some Geography teaching to the partnership, and through running the partnership club, which has up to 87 members... Several staff pointed out that more teachers need to become involved... during the two-week visit of UK teachers in 2006–7, a large number of staff were involved through hosting the visitors for a meal, and through informal interactions in the staff room (School 456).

In the **all age schools**, teachers work together in committees to create initiatives. In these subcommittees teachers discuss the issues related to the partnership each week and are actively involved in the decision-making process. Exchange visits increase the level of teaching staff involvement as one researcher demonstrates,

Teaching staff were very busy when the UK students visited, for example, they helped facilitate activities such as a debate. UK teachers have taught lessons at E2 and conducted some training sessions for teachers. Staff have also been involved through social interactions with the many visitors and through benefiting from some of the resources provided by the UK partner school (School E2).

Non-teaching Staff Involvement

During the data gathering for our school case studies, we attempted to meet with non-teaching staff to discuss their involvement and perceptions of partnerships. However, it was difficult to access this category of participants. Based on feedback from those we interviewed in schools, non-teaching staff are not frequently involved in partnership related activities. Only one primary school demonstrates some level of non-teacher staff involvement. In our case studies of secondary schools, there is no record of any non-teaching staff involvement. In one NGO school, however, non-teaching staff coordinate the partnership.

Community Involvement

The nature of community involvement in partnerships varies from school to school. Parents appear to be the most engaged community members. In some schools, the community is highly involved through fundraising, or committees, whereas other schools claim that there is no community involvement at all. In the primary sector, community involvement is realised generally through fundraising, whereas in the secondary sector involvement occurs through committees and attendance at partnership events.

In the **primary school** sample, community members generally participate in school initiatives through fundraising, donating goods for fairs or contributing time to school

initiatives. At one school community members are writing a cookery book related to the partnership. In another, a member of the community sits on the school management committee and is part of the partnership committee.

In some schools, the community appears to show an interest in the partnership when it directly relates to their own community development. As one researcher explains in their case study,

The community has been reluctant as it assumes that the global partners will do anything on their behalf, and yet they expect also to be helped by these philanthropists. In fact, the community appealed to the partners to help in the completion of the church building near the school (School 188).

In the **secondary school** sample, parents make up the most active group in the community involved in the partnership. They attend cultural days and, in some cases, sit on committees to learn about the partnership.

In one school, however, there is no community involvement at all as one researcher describes in their case study, 'The school partnership does not have much of an impact on the community. There is no support of the local communities, apart from the parents allowing students to attend meetings out of school time. The partnership does not directly help the community (School 31A).'

One **all age school** reports significant community involvement, and community members participate in school discussions related to the partnership. They also participate in committee meetings where partnership-related decisions are made. This level of involvement, according to participants, has improved the school's reputation within the community. Another example of community involvement has been the development of an awareness of the partnership within the community. This is primarily related to the students talking to their families and friends about their experience and by wearing a new school uniform donated by the UK school.

Curriculum Initiatives

In this section we highlight the findings from our participating African schools in relation to curriculum initiatives.

Degree to which partnership is infused within the curriculum. When we examined our case studies from Africa, Asia and the UK, it was clear there were patterns or stages of embedding the partnership within the curriculum. The degree to which the partnership is infused within the curriculum has been categorised into five options: the partnership can be an **essential** or **required** component of the school's curriculum; a **valuable** part of the school's curriculum; it can be used to **deliver aspects of the school's curriculum**; or used **to deliver key concepts** in some lessons. Alternatively, some findings showed no incorporation of the partnership into the school curriculum.

In most of our participating African schools, partnerships are being used to deliver aspects of the curriculum. It appears that this can be a challenge for almost all schools because of the strict curriculum in most African countries. Curriculum requirements and examination pressures make it challenging for schools to fully integrate the partnership into their schemes of teaching work.

In our participating African **primary schools**, partnerships are used to deliver key concepts in some lessons and deliver aspects of the curriculum. One school views the partnership as a valuable part of the school's curriculum which plays an important role in teaching students skills that can be used across subjects.

Some of these schools report that the age of the partnership affects curriculum initiatives. One school with a newly formed partnership states that curriculum links to the partnership are limited and they only share their design art pieces at this early stage. One researcher explains,

As the school partnership is still in its initial stages, curriculum initiatives are limited. In other subject areas such as mother tongue teaching and acquisition, global linking concepts are integrated in the thematic curriculum the school practices. Concepts such as cooperation, international relations, good neighbourhood and community are taught to learners although these are not directly related to the North South School Partnership (School 188).

In our participating African **secondary schools**, partnerships are most commonly led by steering committees of teachers and have proven to be a valuable part of the schools' curricula and feature in many areas of teaching. One researcher notes in their case study that it is difficult to include the partnership in schemes of work due to the examination syllabi,

Students understand the importance of examination results, and both teachers and students place great emphasis on directly focusing teaching and learning on the curriculum and examinations success. Therefore, teachers have found it difficult to integrate partnership related activities to be incorporated into schemes of work and lesson planning (School 456).

In one of **all age schools**, the partnership is seen as a valuable part of the school's curriculum, and the library that has been built with partnership resources is seen as an integral part of the students' learning and knowledge. Another school links the partnership to specific areas of the national curriculum and it is manifested in schemes of work and lesson plans. Another school states that the strict nature of the Kenyan education system means that the partnership cannot be included in the curriculum. The researcher states,

The Kenyan curriculum has a rigid focus on driving students towards academic achievement, and staff tend to teach in a traditional way. This issue was commented on by several members of staff who discussed the importance of sticking closely to the curriculum (School E2).

Range of Subjects

The schools in our African sample demonstrate that learning related to the partnership takes places informally in a wide range of subjects, even when the partnership is not formally incorporated into the curriculum or lesson plans. While schools across the South cite the rigidity of the curriculum and examination strategy of their education system as an obstacle to incorporating the partnership into the curriculum, all schools mention Geography as a subject in which the partnership can be incorporated into the lesson plans. At the same time, a wide range of subject areas use the partnership in project work for learning related to the curriculum.

Within the African **primary schools** we visited, partnerships are generally incorporated in at least three subject areas. There is evidence, to varying levels across the schools, of the partnership being included in parts of the core curriculum in History, Geography, Life Skills, Physical Education, Literacy and Numeracy in different schools.

Skills taught in primary-level partnership activities are used across different subjects. This is an indirect yet important aspect of the partnership work, as one researcher details,

They are learning about other cultures and about being better citizens. The learners are able to transfer the skills and attitudes to their immediate environment and society. Learners transfer their learning to other areas in the curriculum. The compositions and essays they write [are] based on information about their partner school. Learners have been encouraged to read the books the school received (School 1128).

Geography is the most prominent subject in which the partnership is used for learning in **secondary schools**. The rigidity of the curriculum in African schools, however, poses a problem that restricts the inclusion of the partnership. One researcher notes, 'The partnership is referred to anecdotally in Geography lessons. It was explained that the Kenyan curriculum and teaching methodology are rigid and do not offer many opportunities for school departments and individual teachers to be innovative (School 456).' One private secondary school details five subjects that are used in a joint curriculum with the partner school:

Ceramics: Students have to ask questions and always have to impress upon that you are displaying skills in creativity and design. Goods and technology: Learning to use the local ingredients, maize, and wheat. Creating in home science: Garnish to make things attractive. We also have the partnership in visual arts and French. We use language to put up performance (School 386).

In our participating African **all age** schools, partnerships are featured in lesson plans and project work in a range of subjects. Schools report that the partnership is used in a range of subject areas, including English, Geography, Citizenship, human rights, gender issues, global warming and Science. In our participating schools, it appears that Geography and English are the subjects most frequently used to incorporate the partnership in learning. At one school, the partnership has been infused with a number of subject areas, as one teacher explains,

Last year, we decide Science and English. Year 1 we had one project. Year 2 we focused on agriculture – how to produce vegetables and other things to use locally... we have a garden and a farm crop activity. Partnership is also in citizenship and geography so we can learn more about the culture of each other (School 145).

Range of Year Group Involvement

Based on our findings, within our participating African schools, it is very rare for just one year group to be involved in the partnership. In most schools, several year groups, if not all, are involved in one way or another with the partnership. In one all

age school, there are no specific year group links as the partnership is linked solely to extracurricular activities.

In two schools in the **primary school** sample, all year groups participate in the partnership work, while the other two schools report that several year groups participate in the partnership. One school highlights how students are engaged in the partnership, stating, 'The present partnership involves the staff, and learners from grades 4–6 and 9 of the three schools... All the learners at the school are involved in one way or another in the programmes (School 1176).'

In the majority of **secondary schools**, most year groups participate in the partnership via curriculum initiatives. One school embeds the partnership within a partnership club, which is open to all year groups.

Extracurricular Activities

Partnership activities are often channeled into special projects, such as gardening and letter writing events. Participants suggest these are important ways of involving the pupils, as well as the teaching staff and local community, in the partnership. Partnership clubs may also involve pupils in attending additional lessons and skill improvement activities including reading. Primary and secondary schools report that partnership clubs are one of the main extracurricular activities linked to the partnership. Participants suggest that partnership clubs improve skills as well involve the pupils in the partnership.

The **primary schools** that were visited hold whole-school events which include the pupils as well as the wider community and teachers. Letter writing events are examples of activities in which students, teachers and parents participate and to which community members are invited.

In another school, a school garden project was developed as a result of the support of the partnership. Through this project the school has its own vegetable garden and poultry farm, and the students lead and maintain their growth for their own benefit as well as that of their community. This project is an example of a partnership activity in which the whole school is involved, and which, in turn, involves the community. As the researcher explains in the case study,

As a result of the support of the partnership, the school has developed and is growing its own vegetable and fruit garden, as well as poultry – this is used to sustain the school and community needs – and is used for feeding the students, staff and community – it is run by the students. Animals and plants are also used as learning materials (School E1).

In the **secondary school** sample, partnership clubs are used as an important tool to involve pupils in the partnership. They are used to improve students' skills such as reading, or for learning about issues such as HIV/AIDS. One researcher comments on how clubs promote the development of certain skills: 'The school received materials on reading and, as noted above, a Reading Club has been established. Students write letters to pen pals and this improves language skills in English (School 369).'

Student, staff and community involvement in Asia: Findings from our school-level data

Participation in Partnership Activities

In the majority of visited Asian schools, pupils and teaching staff participate together in partnership activities. Whereas groups in the community are included in some cases, this does not appear to be the norm.

Participants suggest that the level of activity and engagement increases around the time of exchange visits for the partner school as the whole school works together to host and immerse the visitors in their culture. One school explains how the visitors are included by the whole school,

Everyone is involved. When the fifteen students and two teachers come and stay with us, the whole school is their host. In the sense that they are recognised here, they dine in the mess, they live in the hostel with the girls, boys live with boys and teachers live with teachers. They stay in the hostel as well as in the guesthouse also (School 141).

Another school highlights the immersion in culture that the visitors get from the exchange experience, as explained by the researcher in the case study,

The school makes sure that everyone is involved by acting as hosts to the UK team when they visit... 'When their delegation comes here they have the first hand experience of staying in a boarding school amongst girls (our students stay with families there)... so it is quite an experience for them... When they come here, there is very little indirect learning... it is direct learning because these kids are a part of the routine of these kids 24/7. So, I think, they are a part of the entire thing. They do things like get up at 5:30 in the morning very happily.' I think the benefits that we derive out of this partnership... surpass the benefits that they derive from this partnership (School 102).

Level of Pupil Involvement

Pupils and teaching staff in the sample participate together in partnership activities in the majority of schools (four out of five). Students in Asia are involved in a range of partnership initiatives, led by subcommittees or groups of teachers. In some schools, students provide leadership for the activities; in others, they work with teachers to plan and implement them. As well as communicating with the partner school and participating in curriculum projects, the students also plan assemblies and generally work with teachers to design activities.

Pupils are involved in their schools' partnerships in a variety of different ways and their level of involvement varies across the schools. Pupils participate in both non-mandatory activities, such as writing letters to the partner school pupils, and mandatory curriculum-based activities, such as project work. In two schools, students have leadership roles in planning partnership events, while in another, pupils and staff work together on partnership events. In one school, students lead assemblies. They also have their own club (called the 'Link Club') which plans events.

At two other schools, one participant shares the type and range of activities students are engaged in,

Writing letters, e-mailing/chatting on online social networking sites like Facebook, Orkut etc, clicking/exchanging photographs, interacting with UK teachers on their visit to India, discussing issues on environment as well as freely interacting and talking to the students of their partner school. These were activities they suggested that they liked doing and would like to continue with in future, on a more sustained basis (Schools 709 and 84).

Teaching Staff Involvement

The most recurrent finding shows a clear link between teacher involvement and participation in exchange visits. One researcher highlights that, 'Teachers who are most actively involved are those who visited the Northern School. However the principal noted that the Link club is open to any teacher who is interested (School 47).' However, in most schools, teachers are involved in planning and designing curricular activities. In general, across four of the Asian schools, subcommittees or groups of teachers take responsibility for implementing partnership initiatives. Whole-school events are highlighted as a popular way of including the teaching staff as well as the students and appear to be something that both groups enjoy. As one researcher details in their case study,

The teacher focus group revealed that many teachers were involved through the curricular projects, which had been developed as a part of the partnerships. In fact the exchange of teaching techniques, methods and lesson plans was seen as a major benefit of the partnership programmes (Schools 709 and 84).

A teacher provides an example of their whole-school approach to the partnership by explaining, 'The whole school gets involved in Global Day of Friendship... both teachers and students highlighted [this day] where the students came in coloured [clothes], sold ice creams and performed dance items to raise funds (School 47).' Another school discusses whole-school involvement during visits, 'Everyone is involved. When the fifteen students and two teachers come and stay with us, the whole school is their host... they are recognised here, they dine in the mess, and they live in the hostel (School 141).'

Non-teaching Staff Involvement

In the Asian schools we visited, non-teaching staff appear not to be involved in partnership initiatives which may indicate that interpretations of whole-school involvement are limited to teaching staff.

Community Involvement

Across the sample schools, there are varying degrees of community involvement. The degree of community members' engagement ranges from working with staff members to creating initiatives or suggesting ideas, participating in school initiatives or belonging to a board or committee where decisions are made regarding the partnership. Awareness of the partnership in the community is most prominent

among the parents and other people affiliated with the schools. These groups are kept informed of the partnership through assemblies, websites and newsletters and, in many cases, host the visiting students. One teacher explains: 'The parents get involved in taking visitors sightseeing and in the fundraising events (School 47).' This appears to be an important support to many partnerships. Finally, community members may simply be aware of the partnership. Based on our case studies, however, there is little evidence of widespread community engagement in partnerships in Asian schools. Most schools flag up their disappointment with the level of community involvement.

Despite the general lack of community involvement, there is one school that describes a far-reaching project that has penetrated the community. One researcher documents this within their case study,

The major areas the partnership focused upon is working with students from the partner school on projects like sustainable development, water etc. The students are also taken for visits to villages of India and interact with the village community where groundbreaking work has been carried out, for example, on sustainable development projects. This year the school also plans to take up a new area of study and exchange i.e. media. There is a very broad-based choice of projects and issues for presentations made during assembly, which concerns the world at large like- ozone layer, AIDS etc (School 102).

Curriculum Initiatives

Degree to which partnership is infused within the curriculum. In all of our Asian case studies, the partnership is integrated to some degree within the school's curriculum; however, the partnership is not an essential part of any school's curriculum. Three schools describe their partnership as a valuable part of the school's curriculum, and two schools explain that their partnership is used to deliver aspects of the school's curriculum.

Range of Subjects

The partnerships are generally connected to a range of three or more subjects in each school. In the majority of schools (three out of five) the partnership is connected to more than three subject areas; however, in the remaining schools, the connection of the partnership to the curriculum is more discrete. All schools highlight different subject areas that have incorporated the partnership, for example English, IT, History and Environment are among the subjects listed. One researcher comments on their curriculum initiatives,

The curriculum project reaches even further. Both the schools have jointly identified topics in subject areas like English, IT, value education, geography, history and environment that are taken up parallel with regular teaching. At the next level, teachers of both schools communicate with each other along with the students. It is largely a three-level programme (School 102).

In one case, the partnership has influenced the subjects taught in the school. Visiting teachers share new ideas, as one researcher explains,

This school continued a Geology lesson introduced by the Geology teacher of the Northern School. French teachers also got linked and coordinated the French lessons. Furthermore the cookery class students have learned 12 types of bread making as result of the student visit (School 47).

Range of Year Group Involvement

Curriculum involvement varies from school to school. In the majority of schools it is included in more than three subject areas to varying degrees; through project work to being deeply rooted in unit plans. Often additions to the curriculum come from the visiting teachers and project work on international issues. As a teacher from one school observes: 'If we can teach the same topic at the same time we could have more benefit... that's how the partnership should work (School 47).'

There are whole-school events that include all year groups; however, other than those events, year group involvement varies from school to school. While one school has only primary students and another has only secondary students, one school has included both in the partnership.

Extracurricular Activities

Almost all schools in the sample engage in a number of extracurricular activities related to the partnership. All of the schools highlight the importance of these activities and the need to prioritise the time for such extracurricular events. Whole-school events are the most prominent form of extracurricular activity in schools in Asia. Link clubs exist and community events do take place, but to a lesser extent. Schools also organise theme days, and assemblies which engage parents and members of the community as well.

Types of extracurricular activities vary across the Asian schools. The most prominent are events for the whole school, in which students are the main participants. These appear in two schools. Clubs for the partnership, assemblies for pupils in which parents and members of the community participate, and events in which students, teachers and parents participate and to which community members are invited, are also evident but only in one school respectively.

In one school, partnership activities include a wide range of extracurricular activities. A respondent from that school explains,

Partnership activities take place at classroom level, club level and whole school level. The Link Club is a major part of the partnership for many children... On Global Day different grades were assigned different countries. So the students represented their respective country's clothes, food, dances etc. One student said, 'It was a memorable experience' (School 47).

The schools in the sample emphasise the importance of increasing extracurricular activities related to the partnership. One participant states,

[The teacher exchange] brought into the limelight the kinds of extra curricular activities, additional work, planning lessons, conducting workshops, and voluntary work that teachers of the North are engaged in, besides simply teaching, and that too within the limited hours allocated by them (School 350).

Student, staff and community involvement in United Kingdom: Findings from our school-level data

Participation in Partnership Activities

In both the primary and secondary samples, pupils and teaching staff are the main participants in the partnership activities. The primary sample provides evidence of whole-school involvement as well, including non-teaching staff and community involvement. Findings show that pupils and teaching staff plan and participate in activities at classroom level and attend exchange visits.

Primary schools in our UK sample often demonstrate whole-school involvement in partnership-related activities, including that of pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff as well the community. One participant gives an example of the range of whole-school involvement, 'Every single student is involved, every single member of staff, whether they are office staff, dinner staff, parents, even our crossing patrol person because he was very generous towards visitors. It's the whole school community (School 29).'

In **secondary schools**, student and teachers are the most actively involved groups in planning and participating in partnership activities. One researcher notes,

Partnership activities take place at the classroom level. A tutor group of 30 pupils were exposed to a PowerPoint presentation on information about the Southern country. Pupils were thus motivated to collect stationary school supplies from peers, which were subsequently sent in March 2008 to partner pupils as a tutor group activity. One participant shares: It made them realise that we find it easy to find stationary to send, and how well resourced we are (School 709).

Students and teachers are motivated and enthusiastic about the partnership. This is especially true when participating in exchange visits. As one teacher explains, 'The students who visited Kenya have conducted a workshop at a neighbouring secondary school for year 7 students, and primary "feeder" schools have become involved through presentations (School E2).'

Level of Pupil Involvement

In both the primary and secondary schools we visited in the UK, students display leadership through pupil committees. Pupils who have been the most involved have either been on exchange visits or sit on committees that plan events. However, there is also student involvement at class level through activities in lessons that expose students to aspects of the partnership. In the primary schools in our sample, teaching staff have more of a responsibility for the partnership events; however, pupils remain very active.

The **primary schools** often generate pupil involvement and leadership via participation in the pupil committee. One teacher comments: 'There is also a pupil committee within the school which looks at how to promote the link and think about exchanges between pupils which they have done through letters, postcards, stories

(School 1128).’ Another school shares a similar experience, as one teacher states, ‘The school council, which is made up of pupils, coordinates activities across all year groups. All pupils are involved in partnership activities (School 473).’

Teachers spearhead the leadership of activities in some schools. Nevertheless, students still participate both in lessons and in extracurricular settings, as one participant explains, ‘Pupils participate in activities both inside and outside the classroom. Staff are heavily involved as they organize whole school events (School 29).’

In **our secondary school** sample, partnership clubs comprising pupils plan and coordinate events. In some schools, students take on leadership roles in planning and coordinating high impact, whole-school events such as sports days and assemblies, as well as exchange trip itineraries and logistics,

There is an annual week-long international fair which includes food from different cultures, parents and members of the public attend. The school council helps with these events and is comprised of pupils who coordinate activities across all year groups (School 102).

Students are also involved via work in lessons, participation in activity days and assemblies. In fewer cases, students have been given the opportunity to plan and go on a visit to their partner country. These students are seen, in some schools, to be the ones most involved in the partnerships. In many cases, these are sixth form students.

Teaching Staff Involvement

Findings from the sample show that teaching staff are highly involved in the partnership activities, especially with regard to hosting visitors and planning and leading student exchange activities in the lessons. Teaching staff involvement does not cluster in one particular subject area, rather participation is found across the board. Findings also show that teachers and students are involved in events together, either directly or via informal and formal committees.

In one **primary school**, there is increased teaching staff involvement during exchanges as they host visiting teachers in their classes. One participant explains the benefits, ‘Having teachers from Kenya visit helps to motivate teachers and students.’ As one researcher details in their case study of the same school, ‘All teachers within the school have hosted at least one of the two visiting Kenyan colleagues in their lessons. This means that all students within the school have had the opportunity to interact with the guests (School 146).’

In 11 **secondary schools**, committees of teachers are involved in creating both in and out of lesson activities involving the partnership programme. In each case, the teachers represent a range of subjects. Within most schools, this structure exists as a formal part of the school organisation. However, as the following school demonstrates, in some it is more informal, ‘A group of teachers work together on the link within an informal committee... There is an informal student committee, and a staff committee exists which comprises teachers who deliver Sri Lankan link related activities within their subject areas (School 191B).’

Teaching staff also make exchange visits to the partner school. On some occasions these are with other members of staff, but in some schools they accompany students,

Every year a group of about a dozen students in the 6th form, together with three teachers, have the opportunity to go on a Ghana visit for 10 days... a group of about six teachers are involved in the partnership from different departments, including drama, food technology, art and history (School 386).

Non-teaching Staff Involvement

In our UK schools, non-teaching staff involvement in the partnerships is much lower than that of teaching staff, pupil and community involvement. The involvement of governors is highlighted in several schools. This, however, has been categorised as community involvement rather than non-teaching staff involvement. Generally, most cases that mention whole-school involvement do not provide enough information regarding the level of involvement of non-teaching staff.

The involvement of non-teaching staff is not highlighted in ten of the eleven **primary schools** in the sample. It cannot be deduced whether non-teaching staff are not involved in planning partnership activities, or are just not specifically mentioned.

In the **secondary schools**, some schools discuss heavy involvement from the school governors and, in another case, the librarian is specifically mentioned. One participant highlights how non-teacher staff are involved in their school, 'The school governors have also been involved in the partnership from the very beginning. Three governors have been on visits to Ghana (School 386).'

Community Involvement

Parents are the most common sector of the community involved in the partnership, due to their children's involvement. Fundraising and encouragement are the most common forms of support given by the community for the partnership. Not all community involvement is positive. Overall, more community involvement could improve cultural understanding in some communities.

In one **primary school**, the community works directly with school staff to create initiatives and organise activities for exchange visitors, while in most schools the community supports the partnership by encouraging its activities. One researcher explains in their case study,

According to a member of staff the partnership's links with the local community are 'huge.' For example, the local scouts group has an established link to the same area in Kenya and have organised a number of trips. The local church, which was a significant player in establishing the link, also has links... other primary schools and the local secondary school, within the same Scottish borough, have also developed links with local Kenyan school (School 146).

In some cases, community involvement is not as active due to their limited links with the school beyond the partnership, as one participant highlights,

One problem we have is that we are not a community school; we are a church school... children travel to us by choice so a lot of our catchment is outside the local community. Lots of people travel here. I don't get a great attendance from people here who are community focused. This isn't a big part of their lifestyle; we are trying to work on that through our link to the church (School 86).

In one case, the school has encountered a lack of support from the community, based on issues that may be related to cultural (mis)understanding. The researcher writes,

The year 6 teacher added that the partner teacher was not accepted by everyone in the community. In the words of a teacher from the schools, 'She had some abuse in town as she was wearing full Islamic dress. It's a very white city, and this is considered a rural school. There are some ethnic groups, but not many' (School 86).

In the sample of **secondary schools**, community involvement is mostly through parents' involvement with their children and fundraising. One participant states, 'The community has undoubtedly become involved through parents supporting and engaging in their children's fundraising work (School 864).'

In many cases, community involvement accelerates as visits and exchanges approach. This is partly due to the planning of activities that take place in the school in preparation for the visit or exchange. A participant in one school highlights this change in involvement, 'The local community have been very busy during the exchange visits. These visits have involved local businesses, nearby primary school, and parents (School 191B).'

Curriculum Initiatives

Degree to which the partnership is infused within the curriculum. The partnership is an important point of reference for many subjects in schools. It provides context and manifests itself predominantly through project work. Partnerships are infused within the curriculum to varying degrees across schools in the sample. Across the **primary schools**, the partnership is a valuable, yet often not essential, part of the curriculum. In the **secondary schools**, partnerships are often manifested in project work across a small number of subjects.

In four of the **primary schools**, the partnership is a valuable part of the school's curriculum. It develops joint schemes of work, projects and classroom activities. One school uses linked lessons via video conference. In two schools, the partnership is viewed as essential/required part of the curriculum and features prominently in lesson planning. One teachers says,

It's not an add-on to what we do. We deliver what we have to through it (the project). Through the link you can cover everything you need to cover, in a relevant and purposeful context for their learning.

At the same school, the researcher continues, 'The International Project Coordinator said that the Head was very clear that they should work on the projects and see how they could deliver the national curriculum in the context of the project (School 1199).'

In **secondary schools**, the partnership is used across a small number of subjects and mainly in project work. An example of this is one school running a special week-long project called 'Ghana Week' to learn more about Ghana, as one researcher notes,

The school holds an annual event called 'Ghana week', in which different departments integrate Ghana into their teaching... In addition, heads of year use Ghana as a theme in the students' prime time... The school also has curricular links, the strongest of which is the drama link (School 386).

In three schools, the partnership is predominantly centred on one subject area, for example Physical Education or Geography. It is, however, as in many schools, used as a context and reference point in other subjects. As one teacher states,

Within this school, the programme primarily involved GCSE PE students who have, amongst other activities, planned and delivered a sports activity day for local primary schools. However, the partnership has spread to other subject areas including: In Textiles/Art there is an activity written into the schemes of work which involves applying a Sri Lanka theme to the production of a product (School 191B).

Range of Subjects

In both the **primary** and **secondary** samples, the partnership is incorporated in at least three subject areas. Art, Geography, PSHE and English are the most commonly cited subjects. In the **primary** sample the partnership often makes up part of unit plans, while in the **secondary** schools it is more project based.

In **primary schools**, the partnership contributes to a range of modules in a range of subjects. One school reports the names of specific modules that used in the partnership: 'Myself' and 'Houses and Homes', 'Where our Food Comes From', 'Traditional Stories', 'Electricity', 'Issues of the Scottish Government', 'Energy', 'Music and Dance', 'Celebration of Language Day', 'World Teachers' Day' and 'Multicultural Day'.

Activities are not restricted to one subject area but can link between and across many subjects. The following school demonstrates this in their year work with a specific year group of pupils. One teacher explains,

The Year 3 students studied a folk tale from West Africa, 'The Fire Children.' They learned about the different characters and different ethnicities. This work was tied to the PSE curriculum. And then they learned about life in Botswana... Art: As part of 'The Fire Children' project they did some weaving and mosaics. The mosaics are the emblems of Wales and Africa (School 1199).

In a primary school, joint curriculum projects are common across a range of subjects. In some schools this happens through joint lesson plans and schemes of work, but it

also manifests itself through videoconference lessons. One school gives the following examples,

Six lessons are outlined and exchanged between the schools. They focused on how people stay healthy, when people wash, made a book about how people wash in bath, wrote a story about Filthy the Fly, and played [or produced] a card game about looking after teeth (School 751).

In one school, the partnership activities relate to the national curriculum and have been recognised for their excellence, 'Activities at the classroom level are linked to the National Curriculum. The school has been recognized for its excellent curricular links to the partnership in a document produced by the QCA (School 29).'

Art, English and Geography are the subjects most commonly used in the partnerships. In **secondary schools** references to the partnership can be made across a whole range of departments, as one school demonstrates within their case study,

The school partnership is used as a context and reference point for different lessons in departments, such as the Science, Geography, Design, or PSHE department. Across curriculum areas, projects have been shared between the partner schools. In addition, the school has special days, such as technology or PSHE days, where Ghana has provided the context for learning (School 145).

The links between the partnership and the curriculum have to be relevant and specific. One researcher explains, 'A member of the Senior Leadership Team notes that teachers are responsible for linking the school partnership to lesson plans and schemes of work. In the words of one member of staff: We never make tenuous links. We make them specific (School 29).'

Another teacher echoes this sentiment by stating, 'It's not an add-on to what we do. We deliver what we have to through it (the project). Through the link you can cover everything you need to cover, in a relevant and purposeful context for their learning (School 1199).'

In another school a member of staff explains that 'When it [Kenya] is relevant, it enters the curriculum (School 146).'

The sample **secondary schools** incorporate the partnership into the curriculum to different degrees, some build it very closely into subjects and courses, across the whole school, while others use it as a guide and a tool. However, they all share the notion that skills and ideas learnt through the partnership can be applied in the curriculum. One school explains, 'The school partnership is used as a context and reference point for different lessons in departments (School 145).'

Range of Year Groups Involved

In the UK sample, more than two year groups are involved in most partnerships. In the **primary** sector, the partnership includes most year groups. In the **secondary** sector, it mainly focuses on Years 7–9 and the sixth form.

In **primary schools**, most year groups are included in the partnerships. There are often separate activities for each year group, as demonstrated in one case study,

The school incorporates the partnership into school life. Each class was designated a topic and asked to produce a book which reflected this in regards to the partnership. Nursery class and reception focused on toys and the differences, year one explored their homes. Year two looked at the different foods and year three also looked at toys but from a different perspective than the younger years (School 118).

More often than in secondary schools, primary schools attempt to work across the whole school. One participant talks of efforts to include more years, 'The link coordinator from the start has tried to involve the whole school through the school activities (School 448).'

At least four **secondary schools** include all years in the partnership through committees open to students of all years or via all-year curriculum initiatives. For the majority of schools, however, only children from a few years are engaged, as demonstrated in one school where, 'Years 7–9 have the most exposure to the Sri Lankan partnership (School 47).'

Long-term progression and commitment are important aspects of the partnership plans in many schools. One such teacher says, 'The school is about to start a scheme, in which year-9 students save towards the exchange in the 6th form. If they then decide not to participate they get their savings back (School 386).'

Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities are a useful way to include the whole school and community in the partnership. Assemblies and whole-school events are the most common activities, especially during exchange visits. Student partnership clubs are a major organisational force in arranging them. Events where parents are invited to take part in their children's school lives are among the more successful methods of disseminating information on the partnerships' goals and objectives. They also provide an opportunity for the community to meet the visiting teachers and students.

In the **primary schools**, case studies show that assemblies are most commonly used to allow the community to meet the visitors as well as learn about another culture. One participant explains, 'They had a whole school assembly and showed parents and children photographs and artifacts they brought from their partner school. They explained the conditions of their partner school and the conditions of their visit (School 188).'

Another participant notes, 'Joint assemblies and lessons are the major partnership activities other than the projects (School 350).'

Other prominent extracurricular activities in the primary sector include special sports days and activity themed days, as well as fundraising stalls.

In the **secondary schools**, events regularly take place during exchange visits and are intended to allow the community to meet the visitors, as one researcher explains in the case study,

The week-long visit of Sri Lankan colleagues involved a number of people within the community. While the main focus was on the Dream and Teams work, the visitors were able to meet many people within the school community. The local community have been very busy during the exchange

visits. These visits have involved local businesses, nearby primary school, and parents (School 191b).

Student clubs make up an important part of the extracurricular aspect of the partnership. They coordinate events and draw students further into the partnership. One teacher describes their club, 'A vibrant student club, called One World Club, focuses on the school's international partnerships'.

As in the primary sector, themed days and fairs as well as fundraising events are also prominent. The following school describes one such event,

There is an annual week-long international fair which includes food from different cultures. Parents and members of the public attend. The school council helps with these events and is comprised of pupils who coordinate activities across all year groups (School 102).

SECTION 5:

INFLUENCE OF PARTNERSHIPS ON TEACHERS

What is the impact on teachers of participating in a school partnership? More specifically, what is the impact on teachers' knowledge, skill and understanding? To learn more about the teacher outcomes associated with participating in a partnership, our team visited over 50 schools in 12 countries. Throughout our visits and analysis, we explored how teachers participate in the partnership and how teachers, leaders and students perceive the impact of participating in their partnership.

Based on current educational research and, in turn, our conceptual model, we believe that changes in teachers' knowledge, skill and understanding are closely related to changes in their practice. These changes will often precede changes to student outcomes. When an initiative is just starting, you will often see the impact on the teachers before the impact on students becomes evident. As such, we were equally interested in teachers in our study. As many partnerships are in the early stages of development, we can assume that their impact on students may yet be seen. However, even in early partnerships, there is a chance that teachers are already engaged and working towards creating those opportunities that allow students to fully experience elements of the partnership.

Our teacher impact findings are also presented in three overarching sections. We report the teacher data from Africa, Asia and the United Kingdom separately. Within each of these three sections, we present the six core themes that emerged when we analysed our data from the 55 schools. Based on teachers' and leaders' interviews and focus groups, there was a strong belief that partnership participation had an influence on those teachers involved in the partnership and even, in some cases, those who are not. We have used these six themes to organise the data from the Africa, Asia and United Kingdom cross-case analysis section, including:

- Partnership influence on teachers skills
- Partnership influence on pedagogic changes
- How partnership has influenced changes in pedagogy
- Partnership influence on teacher general knowledge development
- Partnership influence on teacher understanding
- Partnership influence on teacher enjoyment

In each section, we present evidence related to the main themes above. In turn, we describe the predominant outcomes within the particular context of Africa, Asia or the United Kingdom. Finally, we highlight any specific issues related to the outcomes of primary, secondary and, where appropriate, all age students.

Based on our analysis to date, we feel this presentation gives our readers the best access to our findings. At the end of this section, we present a set of recommendations for teachers on each continent. However, before we begin our presentation of the second year case study findings, we highlight key findings from our first year survey.

Influence of partnership on teachers: Our first year surveys

During our first year of data collection, our survey asked specific questions about if and how partnerships contributed to enhancing collaboration between teachers. Our understanding of professional learning communities and the evidence that productive professional relationships between teachers can enhance, overall, teachers' motivation and skill inspired our interest in this area. We were also partially motivated by our assumption that gathering evidence on specific teachers' skill and knowledge development would be difficult, given that we were using a survey instrument that was being completed by the leader of the school or partnership. As such, we focused our questions on whole school and teacher collaboration questions as a proxy for the conditions that traditionally inspire teachers' development of knowledge, skill and understanding. In this section we highlight our first year findings. They are explored in more detail throughout the rest of this chapter as we build on our first-hand knowledge gained from our conversations with teachers and leaders across Africa, Asia and the United Kingdom.

Overall findings on teacher collaboration suggested that in the North, **69%** of schools compared to **85%** of schools in the South agreed or strongly agreed that the partnerships had a positive impact on teacher collaboration. This section of the survey was based on five related questions, which were designed to assess how partnerships influenced teacher collaboration, and asked how involvement with partner schools has:

- Provided teachers with a wider range of teaching strategies
- Raised expertise of teachers in the school
- Brought teachers together to work as a team
- Given teachers resources to support student learning
- Encouraged learning across different age groups.

Schools in the North reported that their partnerships had supported their work to engage stakeholders, bring teachers together and achieve their development goals. In fact, 94% of schools reported that partnerships had had a positive impact on school development. Schools in the South reported more positively than schools in the North on the three areas mentioned above. It was interesting to note that schools in the South only reported a lower percentage score on the school development questions.

School involvement. When reporting how they perceived their partnership's influence on school involvement, **72%** of Northern schools and **89%** Southern schools agreed or strongly agreed that the partnership had had a positive influence on the involvement of students, teachers, the whole school and the community around educational issues and improvement.

Teacher collaboration. In the North, **69%** of schools compared to **85%** of schools in the South agreed or strongly agreed that the partnerships had had a positive impact on teacher collaboration and skills development.

School development. In the North, **94%** of schools agreed or strongly agreed that their partnership had had a positive impact on school development, while **86%** of schools in the South agreed or strongly agreed.

Influence of partnerships on teachers: Findings from all school-level data

In this section we present summary findings from all case studies, across Africa, Asia and the UK. Within each theme (partnership influence on teacher skills, pedagogic changes, general knowledge development, understanding and enjoyment) the different elements of how teachers are influenced through partnership participation are drawn directly from the data. It is important to reiterate that we did not rely on existing structures or theory to constrain our analysis of the data.

Partnership Influence on Teacher Skills

The professional development of teachers is an important part of personal and school improvement strategies. Within partnerships, teachers and leaders involved in partnership activities consistently report learning new things as a result. Students are not the only participants who gain new knowledge, skills and understanding as a result of their partnership work. Based on our findings, teachers believe they can gain a wealth of knowledge and skills from the partnership activities.

In order to explore the depth and breadth of teachers' skills development through their partnerships, we examined our data from all schools to identify the skills that teachers are developing as a result of their participation in partnerships. These skills can be grouped into six categories including: **teaching skills; interpersonal skills; leadership skills; planning and management skills; creativity;** and **ICT skills.**

Partnership Influence on Pedagogic Changes

Looking across all of the cases in Africa, Asia and the United Kingdom, teachers often profess changing their teaching practice as a result of their participation in their international school partnership. In order to gain a better understanding of the nature of these changes, after reviewing all cases, specific pedagogical changes can be grouped into six categories including: **behaviour management; delivery of lessons; greater range of resources to support learning; different teaching methods based on fewer resources; lesson planning;** and **other.**

How Partnership has Influenced Changes in Pedagogy

As teachers clearly indicate, many have changed their pedagogies as a result of the partnership. We wanted to find out the impetus behind these changes. Direct questions were not asked about the reasons for changing pedagogies; however, a few indications emerge in our analysis. After reviewing all school cases in all countries, we wanted to learn more about the reasons why changes in pedagogy have occurred. Based on our conversations in schools, there are four main catalysts for changes in pedagogy, including: **exchanging ideas and mutual learning between partner schools; borrowing teaching methods; reflecting on teaching and learning practice;** and **other.**

Partnership Influence on Teacher General Knowledge Development

As pupils are learning about their partner countries, we wanted to find out what teachers were gaining in terms of their own knowledge. We were interested specifically in the influence of the partnerships on the teachers' acquisition of knowledge. We asked respondents directly about what teachers were learning. Upon reviewing all of our school case studies, we discovered that teachers' general knowledge development can be categorised in the following four groups: **global issues; their partner school's country; school management and organisation in their partner country;** and **school management and organisation in their own country.**

Partnership Influence on Teacher Understanding

During our time in schools, we asked questions of our teachers and leaders about the type of skills and knowledge they were developing. However, during our analysis, information about teachers' understanding (including understanding of different cultures) permeated elements of our school case studies. We returned to the data across schools to identify the different types of understanding that teachers were developing as a result of their partnership experience. Three distinct categories of understanding emerged: **differences and similarities between cultures; challenging their preconceptions and stereotypes;** and **developing their understanding of other cultures.**

Partnership Influence on Teacher Enjoyment and Motivation

Students enjoy participating in the partnership. We believe that teachers' enjoyment of the partnership is an important factor in how students experience their partnership. As such, we wanted to mine the data in our case studies to explore if and how teachers are enjoying their partnership. Based on our review of all of our case studies, five categories emerge related to how teachers and leaders experience the partnership, specifically in terms of their level of enjoyment of different activities. These categories include: **personal connections; learning about other cultures; management or organisation of projects or activities; learning different teaching methods; increased student learning and/or motivation;** and **other.** Overall, it appears that teachers generally enjoy the partnership, although more information is needed from secondary and all age school teachers.

In the following three sections we explore the landscape, with evidence from case studies, first in Africa, then Asia and the UK.

Influence of partnerships on teachers in Africa: Findings from our school-level data

Partnership Influence on Teacher Skills

As our primary focus in all schools was on learning more about student outcomes and impact, some of our African school case studies do not provide enough information for us to make a unilateral statement on teachers' skills development. However, our data demonstrates that through **exposure to new teaching approaches**, teachers **develop their pedagogical skills**. Teachers in Africa also develop **leadership** and **ICT skills** as a result of partnership participation.

Primary school teachers. In all four schools where enough information on teacher skills is available, teachers attribute skills development to the partnership. In one school, teachers highlight that the partnership has enhanced their **teaching, interpersonal, leadership, planning, management and creative skills**. More specifically, through exposure to and developing a **stronger awareness of pedagogical practices in the UK**, teaching skills have improved. One teacher notes, 'We acquired knowledge of how to teach so that students can easily understand. For example, separating slow from the fast learners, stubborn and active learners... although this cannot effectively work here because of the problem of bigger classes (School 188).'

Secondary school teachers. In most of the secondary schools, teachers believe their skills have improved. In one school, **ICT skills** have been enhanced via the partnership. This appears to be related to the necessity of using computers to produce work and communicate with their partner teachers in the UK. Through their exchange visits to the UK, teachers have experienced different types of teaching through workshops and observing lessons (School 31a). Additionally, teachers gain experience in **new ways of managing the curriculum, environmental understanding** and **computer skills** (School 456).

All age school teachers. There is also evidence of the **development of teaching skills** in all age schools. In one case, foreign visits have led to improved English language skills and interpersonal skills among teachers. Describing their own **leadership skills development**, one participant explains,

I've learnt a little about leadership too. How to solve problems. Deal with problems. To attend to individual problems for teachers and students. The [leaders in our partner school] are helpful in discussing issues with me. I've learned a lot from them. They have learnt from how we do things here. It has made me a better leader (School 145).

In several cases, UK teachers have shared **new approaches to teaching and behaviour management** (School E2). Teachers feel that it is helpful and encouraging to be reminded of different methods and reinforce ideas (School 31b).

Partnership Influence on Pedagogic Changes

In many of our African schools, as a result of the partnership, improvements have been made to the **delivery of lessons, lesson planning, time management** and **behaviour management**. In some cases, borrowing pedagogies occurs between partner schools. The ability of teachers within the African context to adopt teaching methods they are exposed to by their UK partner teacher is challenging in some instances due to the differences in curriculum and context.

Teachers **develop new pedagogies** based on **exposure to new techniques through observations** and **using donated materials**; however, there is not enough evidence to comment on the consistency or depth of these changes across schools. Teaching practices improve in the area of **lesson planning, time management** and **behaviour management**.

Primary school teachers. In most schools, the **delivery of lessons changes** and, in some cases, **lesson planning** and **time management** are affected. One school reports:

The way we ask questions in class [has changed as a result of the partnership]. Handling the classes [has changed] because I have seen it practically in [the partner school]. The skill is [how] you handle the children. The way teachers respond to feedback from the children. The way you volunteer without being paid (School E1).

Another school reports **tremendous improvement to pedagogical practices** in the area of **handling bigger numbers, teaching language skills** and **speaking to lower primary pupils**, as a result of training workshops (School 1119). Further, the commitment to improving teaching practices as a result of the partnership is evident in some schools (School 1176). Finally, **behaviour management** has also been enhanced in many schools, as one teacher explains,

Children's rights are a problem in our country. We caned children a lot. We learned (from our partnership) to examine children's rights and how they handled children. Our numbers are large compared to theirs (School E1).

Secondary school teachers. In all schools, the partnership influences the **delivery of lessons**. There is specific reference to **increased student involvement** and the **delivery ICT lessons**. **Lesson planning** and **time management** have also improved. One respondent explains,

Teachers have also gained knowledge about interactive teaching and lesson planning. When the partnership started a new curriculum was introduced at the school. The visit to Scotland was useful because it helped teachers implement the new curriculum in this school. Teachers in Scotland had more experience in the new methods of teaching and learning. Teachers are now seen as facilitators of learning and their relationship with students is one of working together (School 396).

In many schools, partnership has introduced a change in they way teachers understand and attempt to engage students during lessons. One teacher explains

how they try to **actively involve students more during lessons** (School 456). Another participant mentions how visiting teachers from the UK **introduced a new way of approaching lesson planning**. In one school, UK visiting teachers produced a plan for the lessons taught at their partner school. A teacher in the school states that if all teachers produced such a detailed plan, and all plans were filed with the administration office, then anyone could come in and teach the lesson. They explain that they would like to introduce such a system and that it would be an innovation in their school. Overall, the strength of change is varied, with some schools reporting a significant improvement, while other schools indicate some improvement in these areas.

All age school teachers. Teachers develop **behaviour management skills** and **make use of a greater range of resources to support student learning** through donations of books and maps from the partner school. Another school indicates that they **improved their lesson planning**, making specific reference to **time management**.

There is a mixed picture regarding the depth of impact of these pedagogic changes. Three schools indicate some improvement in the quality of teaching. In one school, participants indicate that the partnership has had no effect on the quality of teaching and learning (School 864). However, many participants express the main challenge in partnership-driven pedagogical and curricular changes as the stringent nature of their national curriculum and the training methodology of national teacher training schools. One participant explicitly stated that the impact is minimal in their school because they must adhere to the national curriculum and teaching methodologies (School E2).

At times, schools feel that the partnership has **affected pedagogy as a result of the exchange of ideas** and **mutual learning** between partner schools. In one school, **borrowing teaching methods** from the partner school has occurred as a result of the partnership programme, with teachers applying the new techniques. The learning of pedagogies may also be somewhat mutual as one teacher explains,

When teachers come back from UK they educate teachers on how to go about the work of teaching...there are lessons for UK from us. They learn from us and the values and culture that we have (School 145).

How Partnership has Influenced Changes in Pedagogy

In Africa, it appears that teachers consider their pedagogies and alter them after **borrowing teaching methods** from the partner school. It is unclear whether they are encouraged to borrow ideas or evaluate the practice and decide whether it would work in their own school. Other reasons for borrowing include **training sessions by a coordinating organisation** and the **exchange of ideas and mutual learning between schools**.

Primary school teachers. Generally, teaching pedagogies change as a result of **borrowing teaching methods from the partner school**. In one case, learning is mutual between schools. In some schools, improved pedagogy is a result of the **training provided by the coordinating organisation**. For example, information on handling infants is provided in training sessions. One teacher notes,

We acquired knowledge of how to teach so that students can easily understand for example separating slow from the fast learners, stubborn and active learners... although this cannot effectively work here because of the problem of bigger classes (School 188).

Secondary school teachers. Pedagogy changes mostly as a result of ***borrowing teaching methods from the partner school***. There is some indication that the partnership affects pedagogy through the ***opportunity to reflect on teaching and learning***.

All age school teachers. On the other hand, in mixed age schools, the ***exchange of ideas and mutual learning between schools*** is one of the main reasons for changes to pedagogy. One school mentions ***borrowing teaching methods***.

Partnership Influence on Teacher General Knowledge Development

In our African schools, teachers are developing ***general content knowledge***, for example about the history and culture of the partner country, as they prepare lessons. ***Knowledge about global issues***, such as those involving the environment, is also being developed among teachers. They are also ***learning about the education system and teaching practices in the partner schools***. Teachers are gaining the same types of knowledge as students with regard to the history, culture and ***general information about the partner country***. However, they are also ***gaining knowledge about the UK education system***, which helps them understand the partner school better.

Primary school teachers. Knowledge is being developed in two different ways. In some schools, the ***partnership helps teachers develop knowledge of their partner country***, such as foreign currency, history and cultural practices (School 1176). In other cases, partnerships are influencing the development of ***specific knowledge related to school management and organisation in their own country and their partner country***.

Secondary school teachers. In some schools, staff develop their ***knowledge of school management and organisation in both their partner and own country***. There is also some indication that schools are developing their ***knowledge of global issues***, specifically environmental issues.

All age school teachers. Little information is available on this aspect. There is some evidence that teachers develop ***knowledge of the world or their partner school's country***.

Partnership Influence on Teacher Understanding

Primary school teachers. In African primary schools, partnerships develop teachers' ***understanding of other cultures***. There is some indication that the partnership helps teachers to develop their understanding of ***differences and similarities between cultures*** and ***develops teachers' understanding of other cultures*** as they acquire knowledge about the partner country.

Secondary school teachers and all age school teachers. There are no reports of teachers developing knowledge and understanding of their own culture, or the culture of the partner country.

Partnership Influence on Teacher Enjoyment and Motivation

In African schools, teachers generally enjoy the partnership, although in some schools insufficient information is provided to evaluate the level of enjoyment, particularly in the case of the secondary and all age schools. Enjoyment stems from **sharing stories from exchange visits, learning about different projects, increasing student learning, personal connections** and **professional development**.

Primary school teachers. Primary school teachers appear to enjoy participating in international partnerships. They most enjoy **sharing stories of exchange visits, learning about different projects, managing the projects, increased student learning, personal connections** and **learning about different teaching methods**. Teachers not involved in exchange visits enjoy **hearing stories from their colleagues** and are motivated by them. The **opportunity to develop professionally** is important for teachers as they are motivated to emulate standards of education in the UK. The partnership empowers teachers with new skills and approaches to teaching (School 1128). They also enjoy comparing notes and working towards improving their schools (School 1119).

Secondary school teachers. Teachers generally express their enjoyment in their school partnership. One school notes that enjoyment stems from **personal connections**. There are no reports of teachers in any of the schools disliking the partnership.

All age school teachers. Unfortunately there are no reports of teachers in all age schools enjoying the partnership, although equally there are no reports of teachers disliking the partnership.

Influence of partnerships on teachers in Asia: Findings from our school-level data

As all schools in our Asia sample are all age schools, this section is presented slightly differently from those regions in which there are different phases of schools present in our sample. Where possible, we have used subheadings in each section to identify the different themes and trends that are evident within the different areas of teacher impact.

Partnership Influence on Teacher Skills

In Asia, **improved ICT skills** are an important consequence of partnership, mainly as a result of teachers having to learn about computers, email and other technologies in order to communicate with partners overseas. Improved ICT skills are evident in three of the schools we visited. One researcher explains in their school case study, 'The main areas of learning include computer skills, communication skills... and the concept of a different working culture was pointed out in particular (School 141).'

Improved teaching skills are predominantly coupled with **improved interpersonal skills**. In four of our schools, teachers and leaders associate improvements in teaching and interpersonal skills directly with their collaborative work and learning with their partner school.

Partnership Influence on Pedagogic Changes

In Asia, changes in pedagogy revolve primarily around **lesson planning and teaching methods, the delivery of lessons** and **teaching with a greater range of resources**. According to teachers in one school, partnership leads directly to improvements in **teaching styles and techniques**, which are closely linked with improved student learning. In the majority of Asian schools, teachers have **improved their interpersonal skills** and their new learning is based on meeting with, and learning from, their partner school colleagues.

Visiting partner schools appear to be the most important means of **learning about new teaching methods**. Teachers explain the value of observing more student-centred practice in the UK and during exchanges. These new skills and techniques, in turn, influence how teachers plan their lessons. One researcher provides more detail in their case study,

Teachers interviewed said that they now have got new ideas about teaching such as getting prepared for a lesson, its presentation and make the students do the work rather than the teacher doing it for them. Teachers explained how they are trying to introduce student centred learning rather than the lecturing and note taking method they currently have in the school (School 47).

Another teacher shares how they perceive the benefits of the partnership by saying, 'In fact the exchange of teaching techniques, methods and lesson plans was seen as a major benefit of the partnership programmes (School 709).'

Understandably, as lesson planning and teaching methods change, so does the **delivery of lessons**. One teacher describes how they have learned new teaching methods from the partner school that allows for more ‘... hands on and activity based...’ lessons (School 350). In another school, teachers now celebrate students’ work differently. They also consider their classroom environment more often. As one researcher describes, ‘Teachers have started to display student work in classrooms in a similar way to their UK partner school (School 47).’

In two schools, understanding of and access to **new teaching aids and computers** affect delivery of lessons. One researcher explains, ‘The Indian teachers have started preparing lessons and started using teaching aids and computers in the classroom more frequently (School 141).’

How Partnership has Influenced Changes in Pedagogy

In Asia, **borrowing teaching methods from the partner school**, often after an exchange trip, is the most prominent reason for changes in pedagogy. Two schools, however, believe that the exchange of ideas has been **very mutual, with both schools learning from one another**. **Reflecting on teaching methods**, after visiting the partner school, only led to changes in one school. In all cases the changes occur predominantly as a result of exchange trips and visits. However, it is important to note that, in some cases, it is only the Southern school borrowing teaching methods and that the Northern school, based on our data, appears not to be as active in borrowing.

Participants in several schools highlight that, through exchanges and opportunities to collaborate, the differences in teaching methodologies are evident and that there is great **opportunity for both sides to learn from each other**. One teacher explains, ‘Theory is widely used and is the strength of Indian schools. Practical aspect, discussion and hands-on activity are the strength of schools in UK (School 102).’ According to teachers in another school, the **exchange of teaching techniques, methods and lesson plans** is seen as a major benefit of the partnership programmes (Schools 709 and 84).

Based on their experiences in partnership with UK schools, teachers want to introduce student-centred learning, rather than the lecturing and note taking methods they currently have (School 47). After visiting their partner school, schools often **adopt different strategies that are common in their partner school in order to improve student learning** in their own school. One researcher describes how one school views their ability to learn from the practices of their partner,

The partnership is an eye opener... It brought into the limelight the kinds of extra curricular activities, additional work, planning lessons, conducting workshops, voluntary work teachers of the North are engaged in beyond simply teaching. This was of particular interest within the confines of the school day that are available to teachers (School 350).

Visits by teachers to their UK partner schools appear to be the most significant factor in teachers’ **reflection on practice**. In some schools, upon their return, they have developed a more **formal process for sharing learning**. In one school, the researcher describes that ‘experiences are shared and whatever teachers learn in the UK is shared through workshops back in India.’ A teacher explains,

In the UK, the working culture is basically that they are highly committed people. Their teachers are highly committed and they are professional and have a thorough knowledge of their subjects. This we appreciate. And they are putting a lot of hard work for taking their class. They prepare for the class. In fact, there no teacher takes class without preparation, in UK (School 141).

Partnership Influence on Teacher General Knowledge Development

In the majority of schools in Asia, teachers develop both their **knowledge of global issues** and **knowledge of their partner school's country**. Teachers who develop knowledge of their partner school's management and organisation are much less prominent, only appearing in one school. These findings are similar to the student findings as both groups predominantly learn about their partner school's country.

Teachers share how the partnership has inspired their **learning about global issues**. As one researcher explains in their case study,

The international themes centring on environmental and other international issues are seen as a way to extend the debate beyond the frontiers of India. The school has adopted the practise of international assemblies and was consciously integrating internationalism into the wider curriculum (Schools 709 and 84).

At another school, teachers describe how a curricular project with their students inspired their own learning. Beyond exploring, with the students, how history is interpreted differently in different countries and cultures, topics of global importance are also raised in parallel in both schools (School 141).

In several schools, teachers discuss how their international partnership participation has **changed their relationships with teachers in their own schools**. One school explains how this has happened in one of the schools they visited,

Teacher relationships has also been improved as senior and junior staff work together and develop mutual respect for each other, despite the traditional senior-junior divide in Indian schools (School 141).

A teacher in another school echoes this feeling, stating, 'The impact on teachers is mainly on teaching methodology... Teachers who go to the UK through the programme grow closer and work together because they are working for a common cause (Schools 709 and 84).'

Partnership Influence on Teacher Understanding

In Asia, the greatest impact of partnership participation is on **teachers' understanding of differences and similarities between cultures**. As with the students in Asia, none of the cases discuss challenging stereotypes and preconceptions as one of the impacts of the partnership on teachers.

For many of the schools, the focus is on **understanding the similarities and differences in the education system** with a focus on teaching and learning. More specifically, teachers and leaders appear to gain an **understanding of the differences in management in classes** and the two different curricula.

Within schools, the development of ***understanding of other cultures*** is much less prominent, but nevertheless still evident. One researcher explains,

The international coordinator admits that such visits allowed her to get more educated outside of the classroom. The partnership programmes further the professional development of teachers. But it goes beyond that as teachers have started to send their children abroad for higher education. Many feel that they benefit personally, their families do, and in the process the whole-school community is part of a capacity building project (Schools 709 and 84).

Partnership Influence on Teacher Enjoyment and Motivation

Among Asian teachers, the following categories were more prevalent: ***personal connections; learning about other cultures;*** and ***learning different teaching methods***. All are seen to increase the interest and motivation of participating teachers.

Two colleagues from the same school explain the value of partnerships in engaging and motivating teachers by stating, 'The programme is seen as also enabling teachers to become more open-minded, to acquire greater satisfaction in the job and to grow and to become happier as teachers (School 102).' The other teacher shares that the evidence of the benefits of the programme can be seen in the 'happy faces of teachers and students – more people want to go and experience it (School 102).'

Influence of partnerships on Teachers in the United Kingdom: Findings from our school-level data

Partnership Influence on Teacher Skills

Partnerships provide UK teachers with opportunities to develop a range of skills – especially for those who are leading the endeavour. In primary schools, the most prominent skills to emerge are **interpersonal skills**. In secondary schools, the most prominent skills are **leadership skills**. This evidence appears to be related to direct participation in the partnership.

Primary school teachers. For many teachers, visiting a partner school and hosting visitors from the South is a new and unfamiliar experience. These opportunities provide excellent catalysts for the **development of interpersonal skills**. As one teacher explains, ‘It’s developed me personally to be able to work better with other people (School 1199).’

In another school, teachers’ skills development parallels that of its students as all respondents agree that teachers and leaders are developing many of the same skills as the students, namely **interpersonal, citizenship and investigative skills** (School 29).

Secondary school teachers. As a consequence of leading a partnership within their school, several teachers comment on how their **leadership skills** have developed. For some teachers, their partnership work and exchange visits provide them with rich opportunities for professional development. One teacher explains,

Some [teachers] would not normally step outside of their comfort zone... [but they] come back fired up with project ideas and link ideas. It’s a boost in professional development and better than any course (School 47).

Partnership Influence on Pedagogic Changes

In the UK, changes in teaching practice are evident in the majority of secondary schools and several primary schools. Specifically, teachers are developing skills in **teaching based on fewer resources**, alongside changes in their **delivery of lessons**.

The UK schools tend to have vastly more teaching and learning resources to support their lessons. The UK teachers’ conversations with, and observation of, their Southern counterparts result in an increased understanding of teaching in a more resource sparse environment. As one researcher notes, ‘The teachers who went on the exchange said that it was inspirational to see the teachers in Africa teaching without the same sort of resources that they have (School 1176).’ This led teachers to consider themselves, to a greater extent, as a learning resource, ‘Learning to teach when you have yourself as a resource. You begin to ask what is teaching? (School 1128)’

Travelling to the partner country and visiting a partner school provides considerable **opportunity for teachers to learn and improve their teaching practice**. Based on

these preliminary findings, it appears that changes in pedagogical practice are closely linked with direct contact with partnership schools and professional interaction with teachers.

Primary school teachers. Teachers from primary schools echo the **value of exchange visits** and opportunities for professional dialogue with partner school teachers. This has implications for the quality of their practice, especially in the **delivery of lessons**. One teacher shares an example of a professional interaction and the implication of this for their work, explaining,

One of the African teachers said to me, 'How do you teach without a stick?' He actually said that to me. But in all fairness they have children from the age of three to seven and 60 children. So I talked to him then about positive teaching and we shared our teaching experiences and that was lovely. Because I admire someone like him who can actually do that and teach in a class like that (School 1199).

Another teacher explains how learning about language teaching in a partner schools supports their own lesson delivery, stating,

The South African schools are bi-lingual and this was very interesting for the Welsh teachers to observe. They videotaped a lesson that was being taught in Afrikaans and English and brought it back with them to share with their colleagues in Wales (School 1176).

Secondary school teachers. In secondary schools, four areas of teaching have been enhanced through partnership activities: **delivery of lessons, behaviour management, planning, and teaching with fewer resources**. In seven schools, teachers report prominent changes in the **delivery and planning of lessons** as a result of their partnership participation. Teachers across these schools discuss teaching with a range of resources they developed from their visits as well as altering their teaching methods based on fewer resources. Teachers create lessons based on their experiences, gained during exchanges, in Geography and History classes (School 386). Other colleagues report **changes in teaching** after the exchange visits as they took time to reflect on their relationship with students. Two schools discuss **changes in behaviour management** where the partnership provides a point of reference to consider the relationship between teachers and pupils, and the provision of pastoral support. The teacher comments that 'We saw the value that Sri Lankans place on education', and that the relationship between staff and students is something that the teachers could learn from, particularly concerning the respect between staff and students (School 191a).

How Partnership has Influenced Changes in Pedagogy

In the UK, most partnerships provide tangible **professional development** opportunities for those staff closely involved in activities, rather than for the whole staff body. Teachers' professional practice develops from involvement in the following three areas: **exchanging ideas, mutual learning between partner schools** and **reflecting on teaching and learning practice**. When teachers have a chance to reflect, they are able to develop their practice. The reasons for the changes in pedagogy are identical **for primary and secondary schools. Visiting partner schools** is the most influential activity that enables this. One respondent

notes that global links allow teachers to see things ‘...on a bigger scale – a chance for reflection (School 709).’

Primary school teachers. In primary schools, three of the eleven schools provide information on the reasons for pedagogic changes. All the schools mention the **opportunity to reflect on teaching and learning** as a factor influencing their pedagogy. Teachers reflect on their own practice as a result of exposure to their partner school. One member of staff notes how the interaction and partnership influences their teaching, ‘You question how we teach, we have so much and why aren’t we achieving so much more (School 29).’

Two of these three schools also mention the **exchange of ideas** and **mutual learning between partner schools**. One teacher suggests that partnership enhances teachers’ knowledge and understanding. Participants also suggest that even if their teaching practice has not yet changed, their knowledge and understanding has (School 146). Another school explains how sharing skills helps their practice develop. They say,

Along with learning how to relate to teachers from different countries, members of staff mutually benefit from the partnership as North and South teachers are able to share skills, as well as knowledge and understanding of the partner countries (School 29).

There is little evidence to suggest partnerships penetrate all teachers or the whole school.

Secondary school teachers. Six secondary schools report that their partnerships have somewhat **improved the quality of teaching and learning, leading to increased professional development** and **new ideas about teaching**. There is, however, insufficient evidence to determine the degree of change in all participating schools. Eight schools report **changes in pedagogy as a result of the opportunity to reflect on teaching and learning**, coupled with the **exchange of ideas and mutual learning**. Two schools report that changes in pedagogy were the result of borrowing teaching methods. One school reports that the exchange gave teachers the opportunity, ‘...to socialize, observe and work alongside colleagues (School 456).’ Concerning the exchange visits, one school states, ‘We saw contrasting teaching styles when teachers have taught lessons in each other’s schools... you come back and you start to re-evaluate things (School 449).’ Several teachers also comment on their commitment to learning, ‘As a teacher, you like to be constantly learning... it makes learning real... bringing life into the classroom (School 191b).’

Partnership Influence on Teacher General Knowledge Development

In our UK schools, teachers’ **knowledge of their partner school’s country** has improved as a direct consequence of their school partnership. As one researcher explains about the school they visited, ‘Teachers continue to learn about the Southern partner country and its education system, particularly in the area of delivering quality teaching with little resources (School 29).’ Secondary school teachers tend to **develop knowledge of partner school’s country** and **global issues**.

Primary school teachers. Primary school teachers focus, to a greater extent, on **school management and organisation in their partner country**. This often

promotes **comparisons between schools and education systems**. Teachers also find the partnership encourages them to **reflect on their own practice**. For example, one teacher reports that they are ‘finding out how a different school is run, the differences and similarities, the friendship I’ve made (School 473).’ Another teacher comments on the impact of this learning on teachers, ‘The opportunity to go to another country and compare educational systems has had a tremendous impact on the project coordinator (School 1176).’ Another teacher reflects on how this learning has led them to **reflect on their own context**, explaining,

It has made me realise how lucky our children are over here and how lucky our education system is. We have smaller classes and different levels of integration policy. Our children have a good education even from our resources point of view (School 448).

Secondary school teachers. In six schools teachers developed **knowledge of their partner school’s country**. In four cases, the partnership enabled teachers to **develop their knowledge of global issues**. One participant notes that the partnership has increased teachers’ global awareness, which makes them view their own country in perspective (School 141). Another comments on the specific knowledge gained, which includes learning about the differences in the role of the teacher (School 456).

Partnership Influence on Teacher Understanding

Teachers most commonly develop understanding of **the differences and similarities between cultures**. This is enhanced through exchanges, as one teacher explains,

Having someone over from different countries is very valuable. Especially from somewhere like Kenya, there are similarities but lots of differences that you can learn from them (School 86).

In some cases the opportunity to meet others has led to profound **questioning of attitudes to and relationships between different people**. One participant highlights,

Personally, it has widened my own middle class white perceptions of the world. I question if our intentions are right... what happens if there is more time on their hands because they won’t go so far to get water? (School 350)

Primary school teachers. Meeting people from overseas partner schools **challenges teachers’ preconceptions and stereotypes**, as one teacher explains,

We try to do it [communication about realities of Africa] as modern as possible... to ensure our teachers have a very real and accurate understanding of other countries (School 146).

(The participant who discusses this is concerned about the portrayal of Africa in the media as a continent of hunger, colourful traditional dress and as unindustrialised.)

Secondary school teachers. Teachers’ **understanding of the differences and similarities** between their countries has improved because of partnership activities. Two schools report that partnership activities have developed **teachers’**

understanding of other cultures. In one case this is coupled with a better understanding of similarities and differences,

It is life changing, for two weeks I went out there and I've never been to Asia before from a teaching point of view, you add a personal point of view and look at how faith is so important to them. They were so welcoming. It was touching. I do talk a lot about it in my teaching (School 47).

Teachers reported some potential outcomes of working with the partnership as '... awareness of another culture', '[gaining] a broader understanding' and 'think[ing] outside the box and extend learning for staff as well (School 709).'

Partnership Influence on Teacher Enjoyment and Motivation

In the United Kingdom, teachers' **personal connections**, such as going on exchanges and meeting and talking with the partner school teachers, generate the most enjoyment and enthusiasm. In some schools this enthusiasm stems from increased student learning.

Primary school teachers. Primary teachers emphasise the **personal connections** as a means to enjoy the partnership. As one teacher says,

On a personal level, it is fascinating. You can meet up with teacher[s] from all over the world-you have a common bond. They are all there as they love children, no matter what environment you are in, you all have that bond. Despite the fact that you can't communicate at all, we still all know what we are doing and why we are doing it. We get to know people quickly and share things with them, that's a really exciting part of taking part in these programs (School 86).

Enjoyment of these personal connections often stems from **welcoming visitors into homes and communities**. A teacher discusses the experience of hosting a visitor,

I love to meet people from different countries, and it's been fantastic to have people staying in my house and to socialise and to learn about different foods and what they do in their spare time (School 1176).

Secondary school teachers. Secondary school teachers comment with enthusiasm about the **management of projects and learning about other cultures**. One participant sees the exchanges as 'something else to be interested in (School E2).' Another school states that it is simply the personal connections from exchanges that generate enthusiasm. However, in one school the partnerships have also caused frustration. One school reports not enjoying the partnership because the partner school does not respond to emails/letters.

CONCLUSIONS RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENHANCE PARTNERSHIP INFLUENCE ON TEACHERS AND LEADERS

Based on the evidence from our research, we have identified several core themes for leaders and teachers to consider as they design and implement their partnerships. The themes, presented below, include: **designing for school development and partnership implementation; building leadership for sustainability; promoting learning opportunities; and promoting intercultural dialogue and global awareness.** Within each theme, we draw conclusions from our research and set out recommendations we believe will support the ongoing success of our high momentum school partnerships.

Designing for school development and successful partnership implementation

Nurture exchange visits for school improvement and capacity building. Professional – and often personal – development results from direct contact with overseas colleagues. When teachers travel overseas, they reflect on their role as a teacher, learn new knowledge, skills and understanding. Often, they have life-changing experiences and bring back their learning and transformation into their classrooms. To enhance the value of exchanges, we recommend that school-based partnership leaders and teachers:

- use their partnership as a vehicle for advancing a culture of staff learning and positive attitudes towards personal and professional development
- consider how an individual's experience as a participant in an international school partnership can contribute to changes within the school, and follow through so they can share their experience in a safe and positive way to contribute to the overall learning of all teachers
- encourage staff exchange participation among those who would benefit from developing confidence, and leadership and communication skills
- harness the observations of other schools' strategies and structures to reflect on internal school issues including behaviour management and teacher–student relationships within their school
- build opportunities for professional development into exchanges by encouraging all travelling members of the partnership to teach in each other's schools as a means of initiating and developing professional capacity and student learning.

Start with meaningful units of partnership. Building sustainable educational change, including partnership, is a challenging endeavour. We also know that all educational changes start with a small group of impassioned supporters. Based on our evidence, as well as the larger body of educational change theory, we believe that partnerships may be stronger when they are initiated by a small group of individuals. In secondary schools, this could take the form of a linked department – English or Geography, for example – rather than the whole school. This would concentrate resources, ensure suitable teachers from both schools are initially linked and provide a focus for activities within both schools. Thus the objective of the partnership is clear and focused, its scope is narrow, and there is a greater likelihood that it will be linked to the curriculum. The partnership could, over time, grow to include a greater number of staff and possibly become a whole-school endeavour.

Building leadership for sustainability

Develop leaders (and the partnership) by distributing leadership. The role of the Partnership Coordinator(s) within a school is far from straightforward. However, being a Partnership Leader is an excellent opportunity for teachers and leaders to deepen their skills, as is leading the partnership, by embedding an initiative, incentivising school-wide collaboration and generating staff buy-in. Furthermore, visiting an overseas partner enables individuals to observe and learn about school leadership in a different context. In order to foster interest in the partnership and broaden the number of individual champions within the school, we recommend that leaders be encouraged to ensure that there are multiple leaders who can take on responsibility if the initial Partnership Leader moves on to another school.

Promoting learning opportunities

Organise partnership activities within and beyond the curriculum. Partnerships provide an avenue for teachers and students to gain knowledge about their partner countries. They also create opportunities for examining comparative and local issues related to the countries and regions involved. Issues can be explored through the curriculum and linked to specific national curriculum objectives. Equally importantly, knowledge can be nurtured through informal activities such as assemblies, discussion with visiting teachers and whole-school events. We recommend that schools use the partnership in a variety of forums to facilitate the widest possible access to opportunities for teachers and students to develop their knowledge and awareness of issues related to their partnership and global issues.

Promote interactions to develop skills. Our findings show that teachers and students are more likely to develop skills when they are interacting directly with others from their partner schools or their partner school country. We recommend that schools work at generating multiple opportunities for person-to-person interaction, whether in everyday lessons or through special clubs or events, to support the development of skills such as literacy, interpersonal and ICT.

Promoting intercultural dialogue and global awareness

Encourage visits from partner school to develop student's understanding. Hosting teachers from a partner school has a greater influence on students' understanding of others (in terms of breaking down stereotypes, understanding other cultures and so on) than having their teacher visit a partner school. This is because students have direct contact with the visitors, rather than simply receiving feedback from their own teachers. We recommend that policy and programmes should ensure visits are balanced, with a similar numbers of staff and, in some cases students, going in each direction.

Coordinate opportunities for participants to deliberately engage in challenging stereotypes. When interactions between teachers and students and their colleagues from their partner schools are facilitated to support the sharing of perspectives on global issues and exploring of stereotypes, students develop a richer understanding of the global context and their role in the world. In some cases, stereotypes are challenged which may lead to a deeper level of cultural sensitivity. By identifying preconceptions among students, teachers may be able to challenge these directly by designing activities that provide them with information about the other country. Pupils

should be encouraged to ask partner pupils questions about their culture. Through interest and inquiry, pupils are often able to develop a stronger understanding of the other culture and process new information that will help them challenge stereotypes. There is some evidence that remote communication has supported this learning, but evidence from the case studies indicates that face-to-face meetings have a significantly greater impact. We recommend that leaders and teachers create these opportunities for their students and colleagues at all stages of partnership development.

Foster development of global knowledge and awareness. Partnerships enable those directly and indirectly involved to develop knowledge about the partner country, its education systems and global issues. Whole-school learning and development is particularly influenced by high profile events. We recommend that UK schools consider how their partnerships can be used to deliver cross-curricular themes with a strong emphasis on developing the Global Dimension.

Facilitate student-to-student collaborations. An international school partnership can be a launch pad for students to develop greater interest in global issues and other cultures. The key feature of UK partnership schools that motivates students is the opportunity for them to develop a personal connection with their counterparts in other countries. In African and Asian schools, partnership activities mostly take place in the classroom. In these countries, the more socially motivated outcomes such as building relationships with students overseas and communicating with tourists may not be seen to be as important as the traditional academic motivation to achieve higher grades. However, for UK students, the personal connection is an important aspect of their personal growth and development. It appears that students become motivated and enthusiastic about learning based on their friendships with partner pupils. We recommend schools place an emphasis on fostering connections between students as this will likely lead to a greater interest in global issues. While we are confident that all educators in partnerships currently prioritise these activities, we emphasise that issue of student protection must be given high priority and monitored throughout activities.

SECTION 6:

INFLUENCE OF PARTNERSHIPS ON STUDENTS

What is the impact on students of participating in a school partnership? More specifically, what is the influence on their knowledge, skills and understanding? To learn more about the student outcomes associated with participating in a partnership, our team conducted interviews, focus groups and student activities in over 50 schools. Throughout our visits and analysis, we explored how students participate in the partnership and how teachers, leaders and students perceive the impact of their partnership participation.

Our student impact findings are presented in three overarching sections. We report the student data from Africa, Asia and the United Kingdom separately. Within each of these three sections, we present the five core themes that emerged when we analysed our data from the 55 schools. Based on teachers and leader interviews and focus groups and, in some cases, analysis of student activity data, there was a strong belief that partnership participation had an influence on students. We use these five themes to organise the data within each of the Africa, Asia and United Kingdom cross-case analysis sections, including,

- Partnership influence on student knowledge
- Partnership influence on student skills
- Partnership influence on student understanding
- Partnership influence on student enjoyment
- Partnership influence on student motivation

Within each section, we present evidence related to the main themes outlined above. It is important to note that within each theme, the different elements of how students are influenced through partnership participation are drawn directly from the data. We did not rely on existing structures or theory to constrain our analysis of the data. The different types of knowledge, skills, understanding, enjoyment and motivation presented within these sections have been identified as recurring across all three regions. In turn, we specifically describe the predominant outcomes within the particular context of Africa, Asia and the United Kingdom. Finally, we highlight any specific issues related to the outcomes of primary, secondary and, where appropriate, all age students.

Based on our analysis to date, we feel this presentation gives our readers the best access to our findings. At the end of this section, we present a set of recommendations for students in each continent. However, before we begin our presentation of the second year case study findings, we highlight key findings from our first year survey.

Influence of partnerships on students: Findings from our first year surveys

To provide some context for our second year case study findings, in this section we present a summary of our first year findings. Based on our first year data, we found it most helpful to stratify the findings into South (Africa and Asia) and North (UK). When analysing our case studies from the second year of the study, we intended to present the data in the same format. However, it was clear from the analysis that

there were clear distinctions and differentiation between the experience and data from African and Asian schools. As such, we decided to isolate the African and Asian schools and present the data separately. While this makes direct triangulation of year 1 and year 2 data more difficult, we believe that the additional value of distinctive case study data from Africa and Asia is well worth this omission. We will be mindful of the year one findings as we present our conclusions and recommendations.

As part of our first year of research, we distributed surveys to 799 schools in Africa and Asia and 799 schools in the UK. In Africa and Asia, paper surveys were distributed to all schools and we received 368 responses, representing a 59% response rate. In the UK, surveys were originally electronically distributed and then, after a low return rate, they were sent again by paper. In the end, we attained approximately a 20% response rate from the UK sample.

Student participation and engagement. Our analysis of the quantitative data from the first year of our research shows, as a perceived impact of the partnership activities, that schools involved in international school partnerships report a moderately high level of student participation and engagement. The Southern schools (Africa and Asia) reported a higher level of perceived student participation and engagement, than their Northern counterparts. The difference in perception was with regard to student behaviour. However, both the Northern and Southern schools reported the same high level of impact with respect to student development of content knowledge through partnership links. We explore these issues in the case studies by examining, in detail, the reported impact of partnership participation on ***student enjoyment and motivation.***

Student development, context knowledge and student outcomes. Data from the first year of the report shows that both Northern (**91%**) and Southern (**85%**) schools perceived the partnership as having a positive influence on students' development of content and context knowledge. In terms of student participation and engagement, **66.7%** of Northern schools and **88.6%** of Southern schools agreed or strongly agreed that the partnership had had a positive influence. Specifically, these findings show that in schools in the South (Africa and Asia) the partnerships seem to have more strongly influenced student outcomes, behaviour and learning than in the Northern schools. Again, we explore these issues in the case studies by examining, in detail, the reported impact of partnership participation on ***student knowledge, skill, understanding, enjoyment and motivation.***

Changes in students' academic and social behaviour. In response to their perceptions of the partnerships' influence on students' achievements, academic and social behaviour, and learning, responses from schools in the South were twice as positive as those in the North. These findings show an average of 80% of schools in the South agreeing or strongly agreeing that the partnership has a positive influence on their students in these areas. In the North, less than half of the schools agreed or strongly agreed that the partnership had a positive influence on their students in these areas.

When reporting how they perceived their partnership's influence on changes in their students' academic and social behaviour, **49%** of Northern schools and **85%** of Southern schools agreed or strongly agreed that the partnership had had a positive influence. As with the findings above, we explore these issues within the case studies by examining, in detail, the reported impact of partnership participation on ***student knowledge, skill, understanding, enjoyment and motivation.***

Concluding thoughts. It is challenging to assume that there may be a specific, and direct, impact on student outcomes or other aspects of schools and stakeholders, if the partnership has not been developed to specifically address these issues. While we are the first to agree, based on the evidence above, that all partnerships have unintended outcomes, at the end of our first year of the research, we posed two questions for organisations related to the influence that partnerships have on students and their learning. These questions were designed to assist us in focusing on the students in the second year of our study. The questions were:

- Are students at the centre of the partnership work?
- Are partnerships initially designed to influence student outcomes?

As becomes evident, in most of the schools included in the second year of our study, there is much evidence that the partnerships had a significant impact on students' development of knowledge, skills and understanding. While the scale of this development varies from school to school, in the following sections we present evidence that explores exactly how students are being influenced via their partnership participation. Details of the levels of engagement and more details of partnership activities are presented in the section of the report entitled 'Partnership in practice'.

Influence of partnerships on students: Findings from school-level data

In this section we present summary findings from all case studies, across Africa, Asia and the UK. Within each theme – student's knowledge, skills, understanding, enjoyment and motivation – the different elements of how students are influenced through partnership participation are drawn directly from the data. It is important to reiterate that we did not rely on existing structures or theory to constrain our analysis of the data.

Partnership Influence on Student Knowledge

Looking across all case studies in all countries, we found that students often develop three core areas of knowledge in relation to their partnership work. While knowledge acquisition is evident to different degrees in different schools, partnerships appear to influence student learning related to their knowledge of the **partner country**, **knowledge of the home country** and **knowledge of global issues**. Often, when discussing what they have learned about their partner country, students and teachers believe they have developed knowledge related to the climate, culture, education systems and food of their partner country. Knowledge of their own home country often relates to exploring their national traditions, heroes and events. Students' knowledge of global issues often relates to climate change, fair trade and other issues affecting countries around the world.

Partnership Influence on Student Skills

When we examine our data related to student skills development, eight distinct categories of skills emerge, including **ICT**; **leadership**; **literacy**; **numeracy**; **interpersonal**; **creativity**; **planning and management**; and **analytical skills**. Any

skill that fell beyond these categories was grouped in an '**unspecified skills category**'.

Partnership Influence on Student Understanding

When designing the research, we wanted to identify which areas of student learning and of specific knowledge and skills developed as a result of partnership participation. During our research, it became clear that student understanding – beyond knowledge and skills – is an important outcome of partnership participation. As we analysed the school cases with an eye to capturing information on student understanding, we found that students who engage in partnership activities develop an **understanding of others**. Looking at all schools in our research, we identify three ways in which this understanding is being developed; through **exploring similarities and differences between cultures; challenging preconceptions and stereotypes**; and **learning about other cultures**.

Partnership Influence on Student Enjoyment

We were interested in learning more about students' enjoyment of partnerships and partnership-related activities. This was inspired by our belief that students who are enjoying a particular subject and/or activity are more likely to pursue their learning and develop deeper understanding. Based on our research, four categories of student enjoyment emerge from the data including: **personal connection; learning about other cultures; assistance in the management or organisation of projects or activities**; and **other**.

Partnership Influence on Student Motivation

While pupils clearly enjoy the partnerships, we were interested in exploring how partnerships may influence their motivation to learn. Although we did not ask a direct question about whether pupils' motivation for learning increased with the link during our interviews, motivation to learn emerged consistently as a theme related to student outcomes of partnership participation. We wanted to identify specific sources of motivation for students. Looking across all of our participating schools, several themes emerge from the data, including **opportunities to develop personal connections; learning about other cultures; assistance in the management of projects or activities**; and **other factors**. In African schools, we identified several sources of motivation: **interest in global issues; financial benefit; building friendships**; and **learning English**.

In the following three sections we explore the landscape, with evidence from case studies, first in Africa, then Asia and the UK.

Influence of partnerships on students in Africa: Findings from school-level data

Partnership Influence on Student Knowledge

In most of our participating African schools, students most often develop **partner country knowledge** when they engage in partnership-related activities, including exchanging letters with students in their partner school. For example, in one school partnered with a school in Wales, students learn about the geography of Wales, the Welsh environment and their food traditions and preferences. Across the African school case studies, there was less evidence of students developing knowledge of their own countries and knowledge of global issues.

Primary school students. In primary schools, understanding the impact of partnership on students' learning was difficult to isolate during our school visits. However, based on perceptions of teachers and leaders, primary students in Africa are more likely to develop **knowledge of their partner country**. Throughout our research, we have seen examples of pupils learning about foreign currency, history and cultural practices of their UK partner school and country (School 1176). In some schools, new sports activities have been introduced, including badminton and netball (School 188). In one school, students learn about global issues (School 1176) and in another school students learn about other cultures and becoming better citizens (School 1128). It appears that many students are keen to learn more, despite a lack of clarity in their ability to highlight the knowledge they gained (School 1119).

Secondary school students. In many schools, partnerships are used as a strategy for enhancing student **learning about global issues** and **knowledge about the partner country**. Knowledge of the partner country is developed as pupils explore the differences between their two countries. Participants note that this opportunity broadens their perspectives (School 456 and 396). For example, one participant shares, 'These intercultural interactions help (students) to be not so conservative. The partnership has helped broaden horizons and developed a greater interest in the world (School 456).'

For the African secondary school students and teachers, the exchange trips to Britain facilitate significant learning about other cultures. Participants explain how their visits allowed them to experience life in their partner country and to visit castles, church and a camp. Exchanges help students learn about British culture and experience different world-views. One participant suggested that at its best, partnership, via exchanges, allows students to learn about the world and understand it better (School 31a).

All age school students. Within our four all age schools, the partnerships enable students to develop knowledge about their **partner school and its country**. There is no discussion of the partnership leading to knowledge about students' own country or global issues. In three schools, students and staff explain how students have developed factual knowledge about the partner country, including knowledge of their food, culture and region. One teacher explains that students learn about 'the very different sounds of their names and what life is like in Wales (Case 31b).'

In other schools, participants suggest that knowledge develops through the exchange of letters. However, one participant suggests that letter writing may not allow the

partnership to have a broader impact on the whole school or learning. They suggest that,

The partnership has had hardly any impact on the school, the community, or on teaching and learning. The main impact of the project has been the exchange of letters and photographs by the learners... The compositions and essays they write are informed by information about their partner school (School 864).

Another school highlights that the partnership helps students learn more about the other side of the world and that food can play a role in doing this. However, they note that partnership-based learning is not always smooth and that there are often challenges to this form of partnership learning. As one teacher states, 'It wasn't easy for us (School 145).'

Partnership Influence on Student Skills

At every school level in Africa, students develop **literacy skills** through their partnership activities. In many cases, **English language skills** develop as students are motivated to communicate with their partners. Letter writing activities, book clubs and exchange visits also help students develop their skills. Students also develop skills related to **learning new sports; creating artwork; and social and interpersonal skills**.

Primary school students. In all schools, pupils **develop literacy skills** through letter writing and making cards for their partners. Students also often read the books received from the partner schools. In several cases, schools have created libraries and/or received resources for books with the inspiration and help of their partner schools (School 1128). Students also develop **athletic skills**. For example, in one school, the partner school introduced badminton and netball (School 188). In other schools, students develop **music skills**. There is also evidence of the development of **interpersonal and creative skills**. As one teacher explains,

Students engage more socially when they write and read letters. They also learn about how they feel, how to communicate with visitors. They learned how to be responsible (School E1).

Secondary school students. Partnership activities support students' **literacy skills** in secondary schools. While many schools support their students in letter writing, one school has formed a reading club with the book donations from the partner school. One teacher explains how the partnership influences student development of **interpersonal skills**, which can be beneficial for communicating with tourists. They explain how their partnership 'motivates students to develop their competence further as they realise the value of being able to communicate with tourists and visitors (School 31A).'

All age school students. English **language skills** are the most prominent skills developed through partnership activities in all age schools. According to participants, local and national languages also improve, as does students' motivation to learn English (31B and 145). One researcher explains that,

Teachers say that English language skills have improved, not only the reading and writing, but also listening through the interaction with the Welsh

teachers during their visit. Consequently students have gained confidence to speak English and try to do so more often.

As in the primary and secondary schools, students also develop **skills related to sports**. When students have the opportunity to participate in student exchanges, they also develop social skills.

Partnership Influence on Student Understanding

In some African schools, students develop a **high level of understanding of other cultures** and a **wider outlook on life** as a result of the partnership. At the same time, many students also **challenge the stereotypes** that they hold about others. Through **comparing their own culture with the culture of the partner country**, understanding is fostered within many African pupils. Interestingly, students often identify stereotypes and misconceptions held by students in partner schools about Africa, through questions raised about experiences on exchange visits. In several schools, participants share stories about partner school students believing people in Africa live in trees.

Understanding appears to develop through exposure to another culture and through challenging stereotypes. The process of building relationships with other pupils and asking each other questions about their countries is important. This may demonstrate how schools encourage pupils to develop an interest in another culture and to inquire into different traditions and lifestyles. It can also be helpful in identifying and challenging stereotypes. As a result of these actions, often a sense of understanding develops and pupils are able to foster a wider personal world-view.

Primary school students. Based on the data we were able to gather, it is difficult to distinguish the level of understanding primary pupils develop as a result of partnership. In two cases, respondents indicate that the partnership helps students strengthen their **understanding of other cultures**. In another school, pupils **learn about other cultures** and, in turn, link this to their own context (School 1128).

Secondary school students. In some secondary schools, partnerships help students **understand similarities and differences** between their own society and the society of their partner school. Because of their partnership experience, pupils **understand different cultures**. One teacher explains, 'Students learn about their different outlooks on life and about their knowledge in various areas. The programme allows them to learn more about the world and understand it better (31A).'

In one school, the partnership activities **challenge preconceptions and stereotypes**. One teacher comments on the misconceptions that the partner school has by explaining their own learning on their exchange visit, 'In the UK, we were listening and they were asking more questions... The children were asking so many interesting questions... They thought that Ghanaians were living in trees. They have funny ideas (School 386).'

All age school students. Students in all age schools develop a **greater understanding of people in other parts of the world**, via their partnership work. Exchange visits help to foster this understanding. For example, one teacher shares, 'The interactions with visitors has helped students consider their own country, society and values (School E2).'

Another teacher contributes that the experience of relating to peers from another country and context 'seems to give (students) insight into the

reality of a different part of the world rather than into an idealised image (31B).’ The process of meeting new people brings in new ideas, new ideologies, and as a result ‘they can compare theirs and others and they can make a common ground, so it can give them a chance to evaluate.’ Through this process of reflection and learning, preconceptions can also be challenged. In fact, one respondent notes the impact on UK visitors and states, ‘Through the link we have been able to put away some of the (bad) ideas about Africa. Only the colour changes. We are all family. We are equal.’

Partnership Influence on Student Enjoyment

In Africa, the social aspects of the partnership are most prominent in providing student enjoyment. The **development of personal connections, making jokes, teaching each other games** and **debating** provides the students with enjoyment and pleasure. Students express enjoyment at feeling cared for within the personal relationships that develop and, at times, become more ambitious as a result of the relationships they have formed.

Primary school students. In many schools, student enjoyment of the partnership is evident from pupils’ **willingness to participate in activities**. One teacher explains, ‘All the learners at the school are involved in one way or another in the programmes. Their excitement and willingness to participate indicates that they all find it beneficial (School 1176).’ While most primary schools report student enjoyment of the partnership, only one school identifies the specific source of enjoyment. In this school, students benefit from an opportunity to **make friends and develop their communication skills**. The partnership also increases students’ awareness of a different way of living. They teach each other games and send each other art, and arts and crafts materials. One teacher from this school notes: ‘There are people who care about them and their school. They feel loved and care for, they transfer the same to others (School E1).’

Secondary school students. Enjoyment in African secondary schools is derived from **learning about other cultures** and **developing personal connections**. Friendships with partner pupils help students personally to develop. One participant explains, ‘Being in touch with the British students helps the students reflect on their own lives and can help them to be more ambitious (School 31A).’ However, one participant raises a concern about student pen pal communication stating, ‘There are worries expressed by a member of staff that some of their girls may use a pen pal relationship as a means to find a British husband (School 456).’ This finding was only shared with our team once during our African research and could be an outlier. However, it could also be a more common feeling that is not expressed freely in other cases. In either case, we feel it is important to include as a flag for some of the ethical and challenging issues related to partnership.

All age school students. Students enjoy **personal connections** with pupils from partner schools. They like interacting with UK students through socialising, playing sports, debating and making jokes (School E2). For many students, the friendships they develop with their **partner pen pals** and students are particularly enjoyable. One teacher notes, ‘Students write letters to their friends. My daughter even has a friend. It is great for her. They love it. They feel proud to send their letters (School 145).’

Partnership Influence on Student Motivation

Pupils in the African sample are motivated by several different factors. In one school, pupils are motivated to participate in activities to develop confidence, reap higher grades and communicate with tourists. Some of these factors have a direct benefit for the students, such as participating in exchanges and achieving higher grades. Other factors that appear to be related to participation in school partnerships and student motivation include learning about global issues, friendships and communicating with tourists, which provide wider benefits.

Primary school students. African primary schools are generally motivated to learn more from the link. In one school, the partnership generates an interest in global issues by fostering personal connections, learning about other cultures and developing a sense of achievement (School 1176).

Secondary school students. Secondary school students are motivated to learn about other cultures as a result of the partnership. One respondent explains, 'Students are gradually being liberated in the way they reason and think... to give room to other ideas from other cultures... has motivated them (School 456).' Personal connections are another strong motivating factor. In fact, these friendships help students develop personally. One teacher explains, 'Being in touch with the British students helps the students reflect on their own lives and can help them to be more ambitious (School 31A).' In one school, confidence, higher grades and communication with tourists are also factors.

All age school students. Generally, increased levels of student motivation are related to personal connections with those from the partner school. In some cases, this involves an increased motivation to learn English (Schools 31B and 145). This may be due to the expectation in one school that English skills are a prerequisite for visiting the UK. As a result, this has motivated children to focus on their learning.

Influence of partnerships on students in Asia: Findings from our school-level data

As all schools in our Asia sample are all age schools, this section is presented slightly differently than those regions in which there are different phases of schools present in our sample. Where possible we have used subheadings within each section to identify the different themes and trends that are evident within the different areas of student impact.

Partnership Influence on Student Knowledge

In three of the five schools in our Asian sample, students are developing knowledge of their partner country. In two schools, it appears that this is directly related to exchange visits the students made to the UK. Fundamentally, the students develop knowledge of many different elements of the UK's culture, infrastructure and geography from partnership activities. As one teacher explains, 'Students felt they had learned most by getting to know more about the culture, language, lifestyle and food as also about the levels of technology and civic infrastructure of the host country, its environment and climate (School 141).'

Students' knowledge development has extended beyond the cultural aspects of their partner country. In one school, students developed knowledge of the UK education system. As a result of partnership work, students are able to make comparisons between their educational experience in India and that of students in the UK. One researcher explains, 'The students also reflected upon the differences in the system of education of the two countries, perceiving the education system in UK to be... more practical and technological (School 102).'

In creating comparisons and reflecting on the different experiences and contexts, students engage in reassessing their own learning and the styles in which they are taught. A respondent at one school gives a specific example of their comparison of history lessons in their country and the UK, stating,

The way History is taught here [is] that the East India Company... had basically captured us and they had ruled us... This is the way it is taught to us... when History is taught there... [the] East India Company was basically a trading company that had come here for trade and whatever problems they were encountering they were trying to overcome... 1857 is basically considered to be an uprising of independence here and that is considered as a military rebel [movement] by the British (School 141).

Two schools credit student exchange visits as the primary way for students to gain knowledge about their partner country. However, the impact of visiting a partner country and school helps students develop knowledge, which has both negative and positive implications. One participant suggests that students become concerned at their country's comparative resources and approach to education having seen the way of life in the partner country. This could possibly lower students' morale, but it is also suggested that when students return home they do so with knowledge of ways to improve, a greater sense of curiosity and a desire to continue their learning about their partner country. One teacher shares their experience,

In fact, they come back and their total attitude is changed. And they feel that other countries are doing better than us, the good points they have and we can adopt from them... It also highlights, to some extent, the impact of the partnership program in increasing their levels of curiosity, desire for acquiring more information about the partner school and country (Schools 709 and 84).

Partnership Influence on Student Skill Development

In Asia, we found students develop six different types of skills, including **ICT skills, leadership skills, literacy (writing, speaking and reading), interpersonal skills, planning and management skills**, and **confidence**. Based on the schools we visited in Asia, creativity, analytical skills and numeracy do not appear to have been developed as by-products of the partnerships. The most prominent skill developed via partnership participation relates to **ICT** and **communication** and **interpersonal skills**. These skills sets have developed in two schools out of the three that provided sufficient information.

Within our Asian schools, there is a direct link between students' enthusiasm and the skills they learned. One school suggests that students are hugely positive about the partnership, with the enthusiasm of some students filtering through to other students in the school. The impact of the partnership programmes has been in terms of broadening the **IT, communication, comprehension** and **interpersonal skills of students**. It is also seen as impacting upon students' personal development, primarily in **building confidence** and **a cosmopolitan outlook**. Teachers and students also suggest that some students' confidence has increased from partnership activities. One teacher shares,

Students have acquired phenomenal levels of confidence, increase in openness, increase in acceptability... receptivity and enthusiasm. They have actually become fans of the entire programme and it percolates down from them and to the others (School 102).

Events are a significant way through which schools develop student skills within the partnerships. One school mentions two special (non-curricular) activity days which had a range of positive outcomes for students. As a result of their participation in the days, students have acquired project management skills, including time management and decision-making, interpersonal skills and teamwork. One student says, 'It was a big challenge for all of us to balance our day-to-day activities and the extracurricular activities. We developed out time management skills (School 47).'

These activities also help students to develop understanding of each other and to respect each other's inputs. Referring to the Global Day and Friendship Day activities that the students have done on the partnership programme, students explain,

We learned to work as a team, sharing our thoughts and ideas. We improved our quick decision making skills. We learned to be selfless, to communicate with others in all activities and to respect and accept others' ideas (School 47).

Partnership Influence on Student Understanding

In Asia, students' **development of understanding of the similarities and differences between cultures** and **understanding of another culture** are the most

frequently developed aspects. These understandings also appear to be inextricably linked, appearing in three schools together. Once again, students participating on exchange visits to the UK actively develop this understanding and their comparisons often centre on school-based differences, such as in pedagogy, assessment or infrastructure. For example, in one school, students' understanding of the differences between the two education systems led them to believe that their school could adopt more interactive teaching methodologies.

Exchange visits allow students to understand and appreciate the culture and way of life in the partner country. It is evident that this leads to acquiring **knowledge and understanding about their partner country** and, in most cases, this develops into an **appreciation of the similarities and differences**. On a school-based level, students understand the differences in the way the school is run; however, they can also look beyond this and, in some cases, examine the attitudes and behaviour of the people. Unusually there is no evidence of the partnership challenging preconceptions and stereotypes, either because it does not or because there were none there in the first place.

However, our observations of developed understanding are by no means limited to school-based differences. Students on an exchange trip at one school made comparative comments on the education system but also on the **character of people** and **attitudes to disability**. One researcher provides insight into students' work, based on their participation in the interactive research exercise,

Students demonstrate increased levels of awareness, understanding and appreciation of each other's cultures that, according to the students, has come about with the student exchange visits to UK. The students also reflected upon the differences in the system of education of the two countries perceiving the education system in UK to be more 'rational and practical' and 'advanced.' Students observed, 'Everybody has a laptop.'

The students referred to the positive aspects of the behaviour and conduct of people in the UK as being self-reliant, friendly, and hospitable, 'environment and science conscious.' Students also felt that those in the UK had respect for the disabled and they noted that UK people regard 'disability as an asset and a resource.' Students also noted that relationships between parents and children are more open than what they are accustomed to. The experience of the visit, of one-to-one interaction with the UK students, their families and school has also led to them challenging the stereotypes and myths that the students also had prior to the visit, many of which were referred to by them during the exercise (School 141).

In one of the schools, students recognise their ambassadorial role when visiting another country. They suggest that they had a responsibility to represent their culture in a positive light. The researcher explains,

The students also reflected upon the differences in the system of education of the two countries perceiving the education system in UK to be more 'practical and technological'. Students also felt that teaching-learning methodology in Indian schools can incorporate more of the joyful learning techniques adopted in UK schools. They referred to an increase in their own interpersonal communication skills as a result of the exchange visit. They also claimed to have recognised and accepted responsibility for representing their school, their culture and their country in a proper light at an international level (School 102).

Curiosity and a desire to learn more about their partner country undoubtedly drive this pursuit of knowledge and maintain students' involvement. One researcher observes that 'in increasing their levels of curiosity and their desire for acquiring more information about the partner school and country, the school also, more importantly, wants to be a part of such programmes in the future (Schools 709 and 84).'

Partnership Influence on Student Enjoyment

In Asia, **personal connection** is the main aspect of the partnership that creates enthusiasm among students. This is evident in three schools. **Learning about other cultures** also emerges as an important component of personal connection.

In two schools, students enjoy interacting with UK students using social networking sites such as Facebook (Schools 709 and 84). In another school, enjoyment results from the many activities that students participated in during the exchange visit, which included face-to-face interaction and learning about other cultures. One researcher explains in their school study,

Amongst the activities they liked doing, students referred to visiting the UK, sightseeing/outings with UK students, interactions with UK students and host families and attending regular classes (along with dance, archery etc), presentations and workshops on diverse global issues in their partner school (School 47).

Partnership Influence on Student Motivation

Similar to our findings related to partnership influence on enjoyment, the Asian schools demonstrate that **students' interactions with students from the UK** is the most significant factor in motivating students in the partnership as well as **learning more about global issues** and, in one school, **cultural issues**. An increase in **students' levels of awareness, understanding and appreciation** is directly related to the student exchange visit (School 47). In one school, there is such great demand within the student body to participate in the partnership, the associated activities and the learning it involves that, as one teacher explains, 'the response of the students has been so positive that now 150 students apply to go for the limited number of places (School 141).'

Despite the importance of exchange visits, it is suggested by one school that those students who do not attend an exchange visit have also benefited. One participant suggests, 'The impact however is not limited to those students who travel, although evidently they are left with a lifelong impression (Schools 709 and 84).'

Influence of partnerships on students in United Kingdom: Findings from our school-level data

Partnership Influence on Student Knowledge

In the UK, there is little consistency in the types of knowledge students' gain when they participate in partnerships. This is directly related to the fact that partnership activities are different in every school, located in different departments and led by teachers with different interests and expertise. However, **knowledge about the partner country's geography and culture** is most frequently reported. An **increase in knowledge of global issues** is also common among UK students participating in partnerships. These issues include war, health and poverty.

In our UK schools, partnerships commonly lead to students **developing knowledge specific to partner countries**. In some cases, this knowledge allows students to **understand more about the similarities and differences between their own and their partnership country**. It is uncommon for schools to report that students are forming knowledge of their own country. For UK students, it is uncommon for partnerships to lead to in-depth knowledge of other countries beyond the countries involved in the partnership. However, as some examples demonstrate, partnerships can support the link **between learning across partner countries** and **global issues**.

Primary school students. In partnerships, UK primary school students often acquire **knowledge of their partner school's country**. In some schools, children talk about the daily lives of people in their partner countries (Schools 473 and 146). They share their ideas about students' school experience or the food they eat. In schools where teaching staff from Southern partner schools have visited, there is invariably a profound effect on students' knowledge. In one school, a teacher explains how the whole school embraced the partner school's Headteacher on their visit (School 86). They explain how students spent significant time and energy learning about the Headteacher's culture and talking with their visitor. During the visits, the Headteacher 'taught pronunciations of different sounds in [their] language and songs in [their] language. Pupils were more aware that there are similarities between different countries (School 86).'

Common in many schools, but less common than acquiring partner country knowledge, students **acquire knowledge about global issues**, such as conflict, health or water. In many schools, there is an indication that teachers are using the partnership as an avenue for learning about global issues. For example, students became aware of issues such as the water shortage, illnesses (malaria and HIV/AIDS), and food deprivation through their collaboration with partner schools (Schools 188 and 146).

Secondary school students. Through studying the religion, climate, food and clothing of their partner country, students in partnerships have opportunities to **develop a sound knowledge base of the partner country**. The impact of this knowledge can vary; however, teachers commonly share that 'awareness of challenges facing people in (our partner country) has made student[s] reflect on their life in London (School E2).' Schools often develop a **richer knowledge of their own country** by **comparing similarities and differences between the countries**. As another teacher explains, 'When students read about other children's lives, they

learn about their own lives (School 47).’ Another strategy for developing partner knowledge is using artefacts and resources brought back by teachers from visits to partner countries.

In some schools partnerships are being used as a means to link learning about the two partnership countries and global issues simultaneously. In two of the UK schools, participants indicate that students are not only forming **knowledge of their partner school’s country**, but also **developing knowledge of their own country** and **knowledge of global issues** together. However, there is little evidence that partnerships consistently inspire learning about countries beyond the partner country.

Partnership Influence on Student Skills

Within our UK primary and secondary schools, students commonly acquire **ICT, literacy, interpersonal and creativity skills** related to their partnership activity. Within UK schools, it is important to note that numeracy, planning and management skills are rarely mentioned as skills that are developed as by-products of partnerships.

The most common activities mentioned as leading to skills development involve students in the UK **communicating with students in partner schools**, either remotely or in person. This leads to the **combination of developing and applying skills in the use of technology** (film and ICT), the language of communication (literacy) and **human-to-human interaction** (interpersonal skills).

Technology skills. In some schools, working with partners requires the use of technology to either prepare resources to be sent to the school or to communicate with the partner school and students directly. In one school, students develop their technology, interpersonal and literacy skills simultaneously. One researcher writes, ‘The head teacher notes that student social skills, speaking and listening skills are gained when students present in front of a camera (video camera) and in front of over 120 other children watching the video presentation (School 350).’

Interpersonal skills. Often, students’ interpersonal skills develop from interacting with teachers visiting from partner schools. In one school, a staff member notes that children are able to better relate to other visitors in the school as a result of their interaction with the Southern teachers participating in teacher exchanges (School 29). In another school, a teacher shares how teachers and students have learned,

Our interpersonal skills and self-confidence have improved significantly, our awareness of good teamwork has been strengthened, other cultures are different and similar and we should learn to respect both (School 191a).

Primary school students. Primary school students develop the most robust set of skills related to their partnership engagement. Students **increase their literacy skills** via speaking and listening within partnership activities (Schools 473 and 146). Participants also mention that partnerships influence students’ **ability to understand different cultures** and **communicate across cultures** (School 146). Primary school students also develop **ICT and literacy skills** within their partnership activities, as one researcher explains in their case study,

The project coordinator feels that the children’s social skills have improved as a result of having visitors in the classroom. They also believe that the English

standards have improved and the partnership work is impacting the ICT standards (School 1176).

Across all primary schools, there is no mention of students developing leadership and management skills.

Secondary schools students. Across UK secondary schools, students' **literacy skills** are the skills most strongly influenced by partnership activities. Participants also believe that partnerships can **stimulate students' development of communication and interpersonal skills**, often simultaneously. In five of the participating schools, students develop **leadership and management** skills via their partnership activities. One teacher explains how students are evolving as they engage in school-related partnership activities,

I can see the girls becoming better leaders... giving presentations... talking in assemblies... writing up projects... I can see how much they have changed as responsible pupils around the school... [they are developing] as people and leaders (School 191b).

Three schools highlight how students enhance their **ICT skills**. Primarily as they use the Internet to locate research and communicate with their partner school. Students also develop the ability to work independently via partnership activities. Finally, the students' **collective self-esteem** and **emotional maturity** is nurtured in some partner schools. One teacher explains,

[Our students] learn how to get on with other cultures, toleration, and communication, how to cope independently, and basic skills [like] how to build a brick wall, community spirit, [and they] broadened their horizons (School 102).

Partnership Influence on Student Understanding

The impact of the partnership programmes on the UK students' **understanding of other cultures** appears vast. Schools are proud of how they use the partnership as a window to learn about and develop understanding of other people. Meeting people from partner schools tends to lead to these learning outcomes.

In 21 of our participating schools, partnerships help students **develop an understanding of other cultures** and **help them consider the similarities and differences between themselves and others**. One teacher explains the impact on students participating in partnership activities stating, 'The children loved the different culture, and loved it when we wore the traditional clothing... thought they were wonderful... that it was ok to be different (School 188).'

Partnerships often **challenge students' stereotypes**. For example, two primary schools mention the challenging of preconceptions, referring specifically to the negative image of Muslims around the world. They report that their partnerships have given students a positive image of this religious group. One teacher shares,

It has changed our attitude of things. One of the biggest things it has done in this school is that the word 'Muslim' and the word 'Pakistan' are not interpreted as the way BBC interprets them. If you watch the BBC you would

only see something negative. [In] Our work with Karachi we have seen positive things. Our children see positive things (School 350).

Primary school students. The majority of our participating schools report that partnership activities help the students to **understand differences and similarities between cultures**. One researcher explains how a learning assistant, who is also a parent at the school, feels that children have changed the way they view the world mostly due to the visits from the South African teachers. In this instance, it is the visiting teachers who appear to have taught children a lot about the similarities rather than differences with the children from their partner school (School 1128).

In another school, a teacher explains,

Pupils learn social skills and how to be tolerant of other people. Through exposure to children who have different experiences and beliefs, pupils in the English school have developed a stronger understanding of their faith, realised deep down that everybody's the same (School 473).

Secondary school students. In 12 of the 15 participating secondary schools, the partnership helps students to develop an **understanding of other cultures**. In part, this understanding often challenges students' preconceptions and stereotypes. In some schools, students learn to reflect on their own lives and explore how their lives are different or the same as the lives of the students in their partner schools. As a result of interacting with peers from their partner schools, students are able to **deconstruct, often previously ingrained, stereotypes**. One teacher explains that partnerships can be helpful in demonstrating that 'other cultures are different and similar and we should learn to respect both.' Students in the same school echo this, stating, 'in a role play exercise we learned to respect difference and also challenge stereotypes both positive and negative (School 191a).'

Partnerships may also **improve understanding of other faiths and cultures** in secondary schools as several schools within dominant Christian or monocultural communities suggest partnerships create opportunities for developing students' understanding of other faiths and cultures.

One teacher shares how meeting students from other cultures is the most powerful experience for students and creates a significant opportunity for generating intercultural understanding. They explain,

Students get a greater sense of the people... they are people like themselves, exactly the same, same hopes, fears, memories, family situations, everything, and they're not just images on the TV screen or people they see on the other side of the street and avoid. Those are really powerful things (School 141).

Another teacher shares a similar point of view and states,

When we brought students [partner school] over here, they didn't look like what they [our students] expected, like what they see on TV, so for them it had a big impact to see them wear baseball caps or Nike trainers, and the fact that they [have] homes with computers – so it challenged the stereotyping of our own students quite substantially... the Ghanaians give us such a different insight into life than living in an over-commercialised town like [ours]. [We hope our students] see that there are ways of enjoying life and contributing fully without having wearing the latest labels (School 449).

Partnership Influence on Student Enjoyment

We were interested in learning more about students' enjoyment of partnerships and partnership-related activities. This was inspired by our belief that students who are enjoying a particular subject and/or activity are more likely to pursue their learning and develop deeper understanding. Based on our research, four categories of student enjoyment emerge: **personal connection; learning about other cultures; assistance in the management or organisation of projects or activities; and other.**

Based on our UK research, it appears that the most enjoyable components of partnership activities relate directly to **personal interaction with students and teachers from other countries.** High impact activity days/weeks are also enjoyable. Those students who manage partnership activities also thoroughly enjoy the process.

Primary school students. Personal connections via video, letters or visits are the main source of enjoyment for primary school students. In some cases, students were excited by a competitive activity linking the two schools. One teacher explains,

Children appear to enjoy the link as they look forward to receiving packages in the post and have stated their satisfaction with the partnership. The competitions organised by the school council, such as one involving bookmarks created by English pupils and sent over to the Southern children for judging, yield a sense of excitement and enjoyment (School 473)

In other schools, visiting teachers and new experiences are also sources of enjoyment for students. One teacher shares,

The music teacher taught the children the South African national anthem. She states that the children still say 'woah' when they hear stories from her visit (School 1128).

Secondary school students. Partnerships can bring a **sense of enjoyment to learning.** This is most often reported in light of visits and exchanges between partner schools. Eight schools report that visits create a significant, if not the most important, source of student enjoyment and enthusiasm. **Personal connections, learning about other cultures** and **assisting with the management of projects** are also sources of enjoyment that emerge within schools we visited.

Participating in partnerships has been life changing for some. In one instance, a student who had participated in an exchange visit returned to visit their partner in India on their own. After their second visit and graduation, the student entered a programme in development studies at university and now works with UNICEF (School 141). Another student reports, 'It's completely changed my life (School E2).'

High impact themed activity days/weeks also create a sense of enjoyment among students. One participant states, 'You could see a lot of awareness by other pupils, you could see the enthusiasm of pupils who were not involved in the (partnership) club before. A lot of pupils are now very keen after Africa week (School 396).'

Finally, even simple letter exchanges can be an enjoyable activity, as one participant shares,

It does so much. It widens pupils' horizons, you get cultural diversity, you give pupils experience[s] that they will take with them for life... In year 8 I started writing to [another student at our partner school] I still keep in touch with her I enjoy writing to her and it quite literally makes my day when I receive a letter from her. Although we talk about general things that any friends would say to each other, her letters help me understand different traditions and aspects of her culture... Two of her friends have read my letters and this has encouraged them to start writing to students from this school (School 102).

Partnership Influence on Student Motivation

In the UK, partnerships can be a catalyst for **generating interest in global issues and cultures** for students in secondary schools. However, in primary schools there is limited evidence to conclude that partnerships generate a greater interest in global issues or other cultures. We can suggest, however, that partnership-related learning is both enjoyable and valued in primary schools and, therefore, we could deduce that it is motivating.

Primary school students. Primary school students are particularly motivated by **interaction with individuals from their partner schools**, both teachers and students. For example, one teacher explains the importance of personal connections, 'the children see a reason behind activities and are motivated to communicate with pupils in the partner school (School 29).' One researcher writes in their case study,

The Headteacher was pleased that the pupils were not ignorant to certain issues like water and food deprivation in their partner school. The head teacher felt the children connected very well with the issues concerned, they were eager to learn more and asked a lot of intuitive questions (School 188).

Secondary school students. Partnerships and, in particular, **personal connections** appear to be prominent strategies for generating secondary school students' **interest in global issues and other cultures**. Four of the participating schools list both personal connections and learning about the culture of others as the partnerships' key sources of motivation and inspiration for students. These schools demonstrate how partnerships have been used to change behaviour and improve self-esteem. One teacher shares,

In geography, they realised that in areas such as the reuse of materials India is ahead of England, and some students made a list of recommendations to the school on how to create a greener school. As a result of that student initiative, the geography department started to recycle (School 141).

Another teacher explains how partnerships can directly influence students' motivation and says,

A staff member at a participating school states that the trip to the partner school's country, really improved their self esteem... [the trip] really motivated the students (School 191a).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENHANCE PARTNERSHIP INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS

In Africa and Asia, knowledge of the UK is evidently at the heart of the knowledge gained by the students. However, the actual knowledge gained varies from school to school and includes culture, infrastructure and geography. Somewhat understandably, one school also states that they also gained knowledge of the partner country's education system.

While the development of knowledge of the partner school can be credited primarily to the exchange trips, lessons and other partnership activities are also important. A note of caution was struck by one school which suggested that students were concerned at their country's comparative inferiority after acquiring knowledge of the partner school. This is an important consideration that implies that more emphasis could be placed the strengths of their own country when discussing the similarities and differences between the partner countries.

The real enjoyment within the partnership for the students undoubtedly lies within personal connections and learning about other cultures. This is linked with the exchanges that feature so prominently in the other sections. Motivation is very closely linked to enjoyment. This comes from both personal connections and the curiosity and desire to learn about other cultures

We hoped that at the end of our second year of research, we would be able to provide some insight into how partnerships were designed and developed, and the influence, if any, of those processes on the outcomes related to students. We have developed some preliminary understandings in this area that are positive and presented in full at the end of the Partnerships section of the report.

School-level strategies for enhancing student participation and experience

Students in Africa, Asia and the UK benefit from participating in partnership activities in a variety of ways. Based on our findings on student activities and impact we have formed the following four recommendations for schools that will influence students, and teacher, experience: **organise in- and out- of lesson partnership activities; promote interactions to develop skills; coordinate opportunities for engagement to challenge stereotypes; and facilitate student friendships.**

Organise in- and out- of lesson partnership activities. Partnerships are an avenue for gaining knowledge about the partner country, and the issues relevant to this are being analysed in a global context or as a comparative exercise to the home country. Knowledge can be delivered through the curriculum, and be linked to specific national curriculum objectives. Equally importantly, knowledge can be formed through informal activities such as assemblies, discussion with visiting teachers, whole-school events and so on. We recommend that schools use the partnership in a variety of forums to facilitate students' knowledge development.

Promote interactions to develop skills. Our findings show that students' skills are more likely to develop when they interact with those from partner schools (both teachers or students). Generating opportunities which involve human-human

interaction, whether in everyday lessons or through special clubs or events, supports the development of skills such as literacy, interpersonal and ICT.

Coordinate opportunities for engagement to challenge stereotypes. When interactions between students and individuals from the partner schools are facilitated, students develop understanding. In some cases stereotypes are challenged, which leads to a deeper level of cultural sensitivity. By identifying preconceptions among students, teachers may be able to challenge these directly by designing activities that provide students with information about the other country. Pupils should be encouraged to ask partner pupils questions about their culture. Through interest and inquiry, pupils are able to use their sense of curiosity to develop a stronger understanding of the other culture and process new information that will help them challenge stereotypes. There is some evidence that remote communication has supported this learning, but evidence from the case studies indicates that face-to-face meetings have a significantly greater impact.

Facilitate student collaborations. A partnership can be a launch pad for generating greater interest in global issues and other cultures. The key feature of a partnership that tends to motivate students in the UK is the personal connection. In African and Asian schools partnership activities mostly take place in the classroom, and the social motivation outcomes such as friendship and communicating with tourists may not be seen to be as important as the traditional academic motivation to achieve higher grades. However, this is an important aspect of personal growth as it appears that students are benefiting from friendships with partner pupils. We recommend schools place an emphasis on fostering friendships between students as this will likely lead to a greater interest in global issues.

Policy and practice strategies for enhancing student participation and experience

Based on our findings we propose the following three core recommendations for policy makers. However, we present below the conclusions and recommendations that emerge from our research of highest relevance for our policy colleagues in policy making.

Facilitating learning rather than prescribing content. The range and types of knowledge being formed by UK students varies. Based on our evidence, we believe it would be unwise for policy makers to prescribe the specific knowledge schools should be developing. We recommend policy makers focus on supporting organisations which facilitate partnerships that enable teachers to provide learning opportunities relevant to their school, their students and their international partnership.

Fostering widespread sustainable student involvement. Our findings indicate that students, above all else, benefit from and enjoy direct contact with teachers and students from their partner school. We recommend maximising resources towards supporting exchange visits, with a focus on wide student involvement. We also recommend that policies promote student involvement at all levels of the partnership both in relation to exchanges, throughout the curriculum and beyond. As mentioned above, opportunities to interact with students overseas are also an important component that should be considered when funding support organisations, and those programmes that support multi-method communication and dialogue between teachers and students should be a priority.

Investigating strategies to support exchange visits. While this research did not set out to compare programmes that provide face-to-face support with those that do not, our findings indicate that opportunities for face-to-face learning have enhanced the development of partnerships within our sample. Partnership programmes should enable direct communication between colleagues, as learning and improvements in practice happen when teachers meet each other. There is limited evidence of learning or change involving teachers who have only a minimal level of contact. We recommend that resources be focused on these visits and, importantly, post-visit activities. Exchanges are the cornerstone of partnerships and the turning point for learning and engagement. We recommend policy makers consider ways to ensure that partnerships are able to take advantage of those opportunities.

SECTION 7:

HIGH MOMENTUM PARTNERSHIPS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PARTNERSHIP SUCCESS

During the second year of our study, members of our international team visited 54 schools in Africa, Asia and the United Kingdom. As detailed in our Methods section, our original intention was to work only with schools in their partnerships. We experienced difficulty in securing our original roster of 32 partnerships (64 schools) and we were forced to accept that we would only secure 17 partnerships, with the remaining schools not participating with a partner school.

For all participating schools, we prepared a 6–10 page case study based on the interviews, focus groups and observations conducted by our research colleagues. For the 17 pairs of schools in partnership, we created an additional layer of analysis that allowed us to explore both schools together and draw out their shared story of partnership. Based on this pair analysis, we have been able to map out the main patterns emerging among partnerships that have built momentum and a track record of success as well as those that are moving towards this ideal scenario of a truly mutually beneficial partnership between schools in two countries.

In this section we present the factors we believe are necessary for a well-functioning and successful partnership. To accomplish this task, we re-analysed six partnerships that provide evidence of a mutually beneficial partnership, alongside an enthusiasm shared by the majority of the school and a commitment to maintain and support the partnership. These include schools that have faced their share of partnership challenges. However, rather than becoming discouraged by the process, they provide evidence of strong willingness to deal with any obstacles in the way of sustaining their partnership. In order to build on the breadth and depth of the other analyses completed for this second year of research, we have also considered the lessons from all of the other pairs, as well as the individual cases, in presenting this model of partnership.

The following report is based on the same data slicing structure that we used across our analysis of all case studies. In this section, we provide a detailed analysis of six specific partnerships that allowed us to develop these criteria for high momentum partnerships. We begin by outlining the characteristics of these partnerships in the profile section. The remaining sections include:

- Partnership formation
- Support and training
- Leadership and management
- Connection to school structures
- Partnership objectives
- Communication between partners
- Student/Teacher and staff/Community involvement
- Curriculum initiatives
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Challenges and opportunities

Partnership profiles

Our partnerships that fall under the 'high momentum' category include a mixed range of schools, varying in type, size and location. In each partnership, the two paired schools have at least one of these demographic criteria in common. In some cases, it is the size or composition of the student body, in others it is the type of school. However, as most of these partnership schools have some fundamental differences, it is clear that difference does not negate high momentum partnerships.

Partnership 102

Similarity: Both girls' secondary schools with approximately 900 students in each

Difference: Northern: grammar school **vs.** Southern: private school

Partnership 386

Similarity: Each school has approximately 100 teachers

Difference: Northern: mixed comprehensive school **vs.** Southern: private fee-paying school

Partnership 47

Similarity: Both schools have approximately 2000 students and 130 teachers

Difference: Northern: secondary Church of England voluntary aided **vs.** Southern: private primary and secondary school

Partnership E2

Similarity: Both schools are mixed comprehensive, one with Christian influence

Difference: Northern: mixed comprehensive secondary school **vs.** Southern: charity school

Partnership 1128

Similarity: Both schools are state primaries

Difference: Northern: 400 students **vs.** Southern: 1000+ students

Partnership 141

Similarity: Both are mixed secondary schools

Difference: Northern: comprehensive foundation school with 2000+ students **vs.** Southern: public boarding school with 800 students.

Partnership formation

In order to understand the detailed nuances of the factors that contribute to the formation of high momentum partnerships, we examined how these schools began their partnerships. We found that **early exchange experiences**, or exchanges during the initial development of the pairings between schools, are the more prominent aspects in the formation of all the successful partnerships. Other factors that appear to be fundamental to laying the foundation for successful partnership include **a personal connection; whole-school involvement in the decision-making process; a clear purpose; supportive leadership; and a supportive organisation's assistance.**

Early exchange experiences. In all of our well-functioning partnerships, exchange visits were an integral element of their collaboration from the beginning. In all but one of these partnerships, the exchange visits took place during the initial stages of developing their partnership. It appears this helps to develop the personal

connections and relationships that are, as we detail in the next section, key to the success of a partnership. It also appears that all of these schools selected their partner schools and were not simply allocated a school to partner with. As one researcher details in their case study,

A group of three teachers visited Ghana with the first group of students. The Ghanaian school however that the Northern school had had email contact with was not in a position to partner with another school. The teachers then visited other schools to find a partner, and the current partner school welcomed them with open arms (School 386).

The importance of the pre-existing relationship is highlighted in another school that chose a partner to which they already had some connection. In this case, 'The Partnership was initiated by a member of staff at the Northern school who had a friendship with a couple who were founding and building the partner school in rural Kenya (School E2).'

Relationships can, and should, be cemented early in the partnership, as it is very beneficial to their partnership. One researcher explains how this evolved in one school, 'After the school exchange programme was established, the current partnership coordinator took an unpaid leave and taught for two years in the Indian partner school, a boarding school. This experience strengthened the link and friendship between the two schools (School 141 N).'

Personal connection. As is evident from the stories of these partnerships and their discussion of exchanges, the development of a personal connection, or even friendship, between the schools is important to the longevity and the success of a partnership. This is explicitly mentioned in half of the partnerships, and is implicitly evident in the others, including in one that has existed since 1982. One researcher explains,

Since the contact to the partner school in India dates back to 1982, the school looks at their relationship as 'friendship', rather than 'partnership', about which they feel very proud (School 141).

Whole-school decision-making. Involving the students and the teachers in the decision to embark on a partnership, as well as in the selection of the partner school ensures cooperation, support and greater involvement in the scheme. This building of initial commitment is fundamental to any successful partnership and this was evident within the school partnerships in our study. Creating opportunities for members of the entire school community to engage in the decision-making is an excellent way of building momentum, fostering the partnership and providing a whole-school sense of ownership and commitment. Three partnerships explicitly discussed how they engaged different groups in the decision to become involved with their partner school. Their strategies are drawn from our researchers' case studies and are presented here,

In order to choose a country, a large group of interested students were grouped together and conducted research on different countries... The students presented their findings to the school governors and the school leadership, who then chose a country based on the strengths of the presentation (School 386 N).

The Southern school was selected by a director in the Northern Cape Department of Education's district office [who] informed them of the project.

The principal called a staff meeting and informed the staff of the partnership and asked for their opinion. After short deliberations a vote was taken. The staff unanimously agreed to participate. (School 1128S).

Clear purpose. Within two of our partnership analyses, partner schools explicitly detail their initial purpose within the partnership. Two of the well-functioning partnerships (Schools 386 and E2) describe their clear purpose from the start. This purpose was inclusive, could be adapted and was not restrictive. Both schools see their partnerships as an educational project with a charity element. One researcher shares,

It is relevant to note that the link between the Kenyan school and the UK is not solely located at the school level. The Kenyan school seeks charitable donations, through student sponsorship amongst other means, and the Programme Coordinator at E2 is heavily involved in the UK operation of this project (School E2).

Supportive leadership. A pro-active and supportive leader is very important to the success of change in organisations. This is also true of school partnership. It appears that the partnership can be initiated at different levels of the organisation. However, the support of the most senior leaders is an important factor in a partnership's success. Equally important to the Senior Leadership Team's support is allowing those actually leading the partnership the freedom to nurture its development at their own pace. As one researcher explains,

The Partnership Coordinator at the Northern School is described as the 'driving force' and was allowed to develop the link initially without interference from the Senior Leadership team (School E2).

Supportive organisation. Only one partnership refers to the British Council's help at the very start, although many get it later on. This suggests that having a supportive organisation's help at the start is valuable but not essential. One school demonstrates,

The Kenyan school seeks charitable donations, through student sponsorship amongst other means... The partnership's inception and early development contained no influence from Government policy, the British Council nor any other national or local initiative (School E2).

Support and training

The well-functioning, successful partnerships have all received some form of financial support for their partnerships. Five of the six partnerships have received **core funding support** from a common organisation. Most successful partnerships are receiving **other organisation funding; local community support; local authority support**, and **non-governmental organisation non-financial support**. Our high momentum schools also highlight training. In two of our six partnerships, two are using their own funds to maintain and support the partnership. This is particularly to the case in funding student exchanges.

Core funding support. Funding from a major international organisation was a key source of funding for five of our six successful partnerships. The funding has been

used to develop the educational components of the partnership as well as to facilitate the exchanges between schools. As one participant explains,

The partnership has received support from the [an international organisation]. Two years ago the Northern school received a small grant that funded one teacher for a year. After a gap of no funding, this year the schools have received a three-year grant that will fund two teachers both ways as well as the development of an educational/curriculum link (School 386).

Other organisation funding. Three of the schools with this aforementioned funding have also received extra funding from other organisations such as the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council (School 141), Discover Ghana Tours (School 386) and Oxfam, Save the Children and Christian Aid (School 1128). All schools believe this additional funding is important to the continued success of their partnership.

Local community support. Several partnerships also receive support in the form of charity donations for the Southern school directly, or for the Northern schools' fundraising. The most common source of local community support comes from churches, although one school highlights the help it receives from a range of other groups. One teacher from the Northern school explains,

The local Northern school community, such as women's groups, church groups, and sports groups, have donated to the charitable project, after teachers and students gave presentations on Ghana.' (School 386 N)

Local Authority support. Within our case studies, there is evidence that two of the partnerships receive local authority (LA) or district-level support. This may be an important form of support for some schools but appears not to be an essential component of external support. In one case, the LA is not only supportive financially but also provides logistical support. One researcher details the support explaining,

The Northern School received a £15,000 grant from the Youth Opportunity Fund, part of the Local Authority, which was used to fund the student trip to Kenya. The health and safety officer at the local council also provides good support in the risk assessment process (School E2).

Non-governmental organisation non-financial support. Two partnerships (Schools 1128 and E2) receive non-financial support from non-governmental organisations. This suggests that this is a valuable resource, if available. One participant demonstrates their NGO support by sharing,

There are many activity resource tools that the teachers from the Northern school draw on such as from Oxfam, Save the Children, and Christian Aid... Link Mac, a local South African organisation, ran workshops on the environment, reconciliation, vegetable gardens and eco-schools. The district office in South Africa is supportive of such ventures (School 1128).

Training. Three partnerships explicitly discuss the training they receive from a major international organisation. While participation in training was an element that appeared in three of the six successful partnerships, the value of these training sessions is not entirely clear. While one school participated in a course on 'establishing school partnerships', they state that since they had already set up a school partnership, 'the course was not as useful as it could have been if the school had not (already) been in a partnership (School 386).' In a Sri Lankan school, one

teacher provides feedback on their training session by stating, 'about three teachers attended a training session, which the school did not find sufficient (School 47).' It is interesting to note, that the Northern partner school found the training workshops 'useful and sufficient (School 47).'

Leadership and management

At the heart of our high momentum partnerships is a strong and suitable leadership and management structure that supports and nurtures partnership development. Throughout the cases, a **strong leader; active school leadership support; and strong staff support** emerge as important factors in partnership success. Another important factor, which relates directly to the spread of engagement in the partnership across the school, is the value of **teacher, student or parent partnership committees**, and extracurricular clubs to support the leadership.

Strong leader. In all of our high momentum partnerships, individual schools have each named a Partnership Coordinator that leads the partnership. In the majority of cases, this role is remunerated. In one school, the Headteacher is the Partnership Coordinator (School 102). In another school the Headteacher and Coordinator lead together. In another school (141N) the partnership has been in existence since 1982 and has had the same Partnership Coordinator 'driving' the partnership for that whole time. This highlights the importance of continuity in the leadership and is an extreme case that highlights the benefits of maintaining the same coordinator for a period of time. In this specific case, this continuity provides stability for the partnership.

Three schools (386, 141 and 102) also have a leader who has **visited the partner school**. This again is useful in building the personal connection that is evidently so important to the success of a partnership. Conversely, we have seen that often changes to partnership leadership or a high turnover of leadership can cause challenges to the stability of partnership.

Active school leadership support. The majority of our schools demonstrate that active school leadership support is important, if not vital, to a successful partnership. While the Headteacher or other Senior Leaders do not need to provide sole leadership of the partnership, they do need to be supportive of the partnership and provide the necessary support for the leader of the partnership programme. The support for the Partnership Coordinator can come in many different forms. However, consistently, our successful schools demonstrate that the role of 'overseer, to encourage, motivate and support all activities (School 1128S)' can be helpful.

An enthusiastic and motivated Headteacher can be a key component in partnership success, as the Headteacher from one successful partnership explains, 'As far as I am concerned I am very, very keen on the international dimensions to the school because I know the kind of impact it has. So my visit to the school added a further new impetus to it (School 102).'

Strong staff support. Along with a strong leader and active school leadership support, four out of six of our high momentum partnerships (Schools 386, 102N, E2 and 47) show that it is important to have widespread staff support for the work of the partnership. Teachers are on the frontline of delivering lessons, motivating students and building support for the partnership. Their support and engagement is, not surprisingly, important if partnerships are to become visible and sustainable. In three of our high momentum partnerships, formal teacher committees provide leadership,

coordinate and maintain the partnership (Schools 386S, 1128S and 47N). For example, School 386S has a steering committee of five teachers. However, this form of teacher support and engagement does not have to be formal. Two other partnerships have informal groups of teachers who support the work. As one researcher explains,

At the Northern School there is a number of other staff from a variety of departments who have invested time in the partnership, through participating in visits to Kenya and in taking the lead in school based partnership activities. Like at the Northern School, at the Southern School there are no formal committees that work on partnership activities although a number of staff have been involved in activities (School E2).

Student and/or parent committees. Two partnerships (47 and 1128) have student committees and one also has a parent committee that organises and leads events. This not only serves to provide support for partnership coordinators but also increases the number of individuals across the school who are interested in and knowledgeable about the partnership and the related activities. This is a valuable component of building a strong partnership as well as important student and parent cooperation. Coupled with this, in other schools, there is an extracurricular partnership club.

In the Northern school the parent committee meets on a regular basis. They meet about twice a term but more if a link visit is approaching. They usually have about 6–8 members (School 1128).

The link coordinator and link officer delegate some of their work to teachers in charge of the student–teacher link club. All 12 teachers who have visited the partner school are taking the partnership forward (School 47S).

Two Northern schools (386N and 102N) also include the students in the organisational process by having student committees, generally sixth form committees. Again this encourages more student involvement, as well as extends their sense of ownership over the partnership. One school explains the responsibilities of this committee,

The responsibilities of the 6th form committee have included: arranging the itinerary of the Ghanaian group; assisting with cultural events such as booking halls, arranging food, selling tickets and poster[s]; arranging host families and youth hostels for trips to London (School 386).

Connection to school structures

Our successful partnerships demonstrate that the partnership itself is closely tied to the overall work and priorities of the school. Also, the partnership serves to enhance the overall work of the school and, in some cases, school improvement. One common and strategic way to ensure partnerships are embedded within schools is to write it into the School Development Plan (SDP). In other countries where nationally required School Development Plans are not part of the normal school practice, schools create these linkages between the partnership and the school structure by including the partnership as a component of its overall objectives. Both strategies point to the value of creating a formal and recognised strategy for positioning the partnership within the schools' priorities and plans. There are, of course, other

methods for connecting partnerships to school structures in our high momentum schools, including securing cooperation from Governors and/or linking it to other significant documents and priorities within the school.

School Development Plan (SDP). Five of our high momentum partnership schools write the partnership into their SDP (Schools 386, 141 and 47S). In one school, the partnership is included within the 'community involvement' section of the Plan (School 141N). This strategy binds the partnership closer into the school as well as giving it a more permanent standing within the school structure. At one UK school, the partnership is included in the school's Self Evaluation Form (SEF). One researcher explains,

At the Northern School, (the partnership) is mentioned in the school's Self Evaluation Form (SEF), and according to a member of staff you 'definitely find traces' of the link in other documents such as 'Technology College Plan' and the 'Citizenship analysis' (SchoolE2).

Linked to school's overall objectives. In general, within our high momentum partnerships, the work and goals of the partnership are closely linked to the global dimension (School 102N) or community cohesion (School 47) objectives of the UK schools. One participant states, 'The partnership contributes to the school goal of being a community in which all students develop the values and attitudes of responsible local and global citizenship (School 141 N).' Another researcher also observes, 'In the Northern school the international dimension within the school is a key component of their strategy, structure and commitment to international partnerships (School 102)'.

School Governors' support. One of the remaining schools that has not included the partnership within their School Development Plan has instead included the school Governors in their planning and development of the partnership. A researcher provides more detail stating,

In the Southern school the elected governing body, the SGB, consists of teachers, parents and the principal. This body has various functions, including support for all non-professional activities at the school, fund raising, and maintaining the resources of the school (School 1 128S).

Partnership objectives

All of our high momentum schools are pursuing a **variety of partnership objectives**, which suggests that a clear, unified purpose among all schools is unusual. High momentum partnerships appear to design their partnership objectives to meet the overall needs of the school. It appears that these schools are using the partnership to fulfill the true interests, ambitions and needs of the school. In addition, these partnerships also focus on some of the following objectives: **broadening horizons/global citizenship/exploring cultures; student and teacher learning; school improvement;** and **fundraising/charity.**

Broadening horizons. This is one of the most common objectives in our high momentum partnership schools (386S, 102S and 1128). As one researcher explains, 'A teacher from the Northern school says that the aim is to 'broaden peoples horizons about how other people live from an adult point of view and a child's point of

view (School 1128).’ Three schools (386, 141 and 47N) also prioritise **global citizenship** and **exploring cultures** as the main objectives of their partnership.

Student and teacher learning. All high momentum partnerships have **student and teacher learning-related** objectives. These objectives include developing knowledge about the partner country and history (Schools 141S, 1128 and 47). One researcher provides more detail, stating, ‘The Indian school focused on the collective and global aspect, such as knowing more about other social systems and histories and reducing prejudice (School 141S).’ One teacher also explains their school’s goal, ‘To bring internationalism, to enable students to understand their own role in the global arena and also to make them aware of the issues which concern the world as a whole, not only their own country (School 102S). Finally, two partnerships (E2 and 47S) aim to improve academic performance, while another two focus on students’ personal and interpersonal skills (Schools 141N and 47).

School improvement. Improving the overall performance of both the school and students appears to be an important objective within our high momentum partnerships. This reason for this may be that, by linking the partnership to such a visible, school-wide agenda item, the partnership is prioritised and elevated to a place of high importance. Two of our high momentum partnerships view the partnership as a core strategy for learning, comparing with other schools and developing their infrastructure for improvement.

Fundraising/charity. Three of our schools (Schools 1128N, E2N and 47) connect the partnership to their school-level fundraising and charity priorities. In many cases, however, this is also coupled with their school-wide curricular and learning aims.

Communication between partners

Across our high momentum partnerships, schools use a **variety of different communication methods**. Each partnership reports using **more than one method** to communicate with their partner. Telephone communication is the most prominent; however, it appears to be used as a last resort when the other methods do not work. Post and email are used in four schools. Two schools report active text messaging. A range of different communication methods seems to contribute to the successful communication patterns within these partnerships. Other important communication-related lessons from our high momentum schools include **students emailing/texting/writing letters; minimum monthly communication; and overcoming the limitations of weak Internet connection**.

Students emailing/texting/writing letters. Student-to-student communication is present in all but one of our high momentum partnerships (Partnerships 141, 102, 1128, E2 and 47). This may imply that student-to-student contact is an important element of partnership development and continuity as it may build up students’ involvement and their ownership of the partnership. Student communication methods are varied and include pen pal letters, email and text messaging.

Minimum monthly communication. Regular communication is fundamental to the survival and success of a partnership. All our high momentum schools have at least monthly communication, with some schools communicating weekly or, in some cases, daily. One researcher explains, ‘The two schools communicate telephonically once a quarter, by facsimile once a month, and in regard to learner activities once a quarter (School 1128).’

Overcoming the limitations of weak Internet connection. Only one of the schools in the South (School 386) has good Internet access. Nevertheless, all partnerships appear to be working exceptionally well. This shows that while Internet access is valuable, it is by no means essential for a successful partnership.

Students, teachers, staff and community involvement

Teacher exchange. All the schools in our high momentum partnerships, except one Southern school, have participated in teacher exchanges and endorse their value. Just as early exchanges are fundamental to the growth of a successful partnership, continued teacher exchanges appear to be equally valuable. Teacher exchanges motivate and teach the staff, as well as constantly renew and refresh the important personal connections developed through the partnership.

Student exchanges. Student exchanges take place in all the partnerships in our high momentum category. However, in four partnerships the exchanges for students are only one way (North to South). Student exchanges appear to be important factors in motivating students to become involved in the partnership and creating a more tangible partnership experience for them.

Community involvement. Communities engage in schools in all but one of our high momentum partnerships, possibly indicating the importance of community commitment and support in helping to develop a successful partnership. Community involvement appears in two forms including: **fundraising** and **general involvement**. However, at a minimum, all of the schools demonstrate that the community is aware of the partnership.

Fundraising. Two Northern schools (386 and E2) involve the local community in fundraising for the partner school, as one researcher describes,

The local community of the Northern school has also been involved in the Ghana experience, both in the charitable project and the Ghana school partnership. The school, including students, has given presentations on Ghana to different groups, such as women's groups, church groups, and sports groups, and schools, including the feeder primary schools (School 386).

General involvement. Four schools actively involve the community in ways other than fundraising. This includes incorporating them into events with visiting students or disseminating information about the partnership or the partner country.

Curriculum initiatives

There is evidence that curriculum initiatives take place in each of our high momentum partnerships. All schools include the partnership in a number of subjects; two schools run curriculum projects with all students across a number of subjects. In all but one school these in-lesson activities are coupled with out-of-lesson, whole-school events. In addition, curriculum work across schools is supported within our high momentum partnerships by **shared teaching of lessons**, **subject inclusion**, and **special events**.

Shared teaching of lessons. Three of our high momentum partnerships (Partnerships 386, 141 and 47) mention that teaching staff are involved in teaching lessons within subject areas in the school. There is also much discussion of shared teaching and/or teaching observation taking place during the school exchanges. Of the staff currently at the school, about 30 teachers have been involved in the school partnership through the departmental work of Geography, IT, History and English and about seven teachers have visited the partner school in India (School 141).

Subject inclusion. All schools within our high momentum partnerships include the partnerships in multiple subjects. Geography, English and Art are popular subjects; however, there is a wide reach of subjects involved in each of our high momentum partnership schools, including:

- In School 386 – Food technology, Art, English, History, Drama
- In School 47 – RE, Art, Social Studies
- In School E2 – Geography, Music, English, PSHE
- In School 141 – Geography, History, IT, English
- In School 102 – Art, Geography, RS, Citizenship, Technology.

Two schools (1128N and 47N) include the partnership in curriculum projects for all students across a number of subjects. Another school also provides an example of this approach,

For example, joint water project in Geography. The major thrust areas that the project is focused upon is working with students from the partner school on projects like sustainable development, water etc. (School 102).

Special events. All but one partnership includes whole-school events in their partnerships. These range from theme days or weeks to special events to which the community are invited. This again encourages greater student and teacher involvement. One researcher describes a special week-long event,

The Northern school holds an annual event called 'Ghana week', in which different departments integrate Ghana into their teaching. For instance, in Maths students play Owari, a strategic bead game from Ghana, in art some of the students do Ghanaian patterns and symbols (School 386).

Monitoring and evaluation

None of these high momentum partnerships have any formal monitoring and evaluation plan, which suggests an informal approach can be effective. Informal monitoring appears to allow for more continuous evaluation.

Challenges and opportunities

Without exception, challenges arise in all partnerships. What differentiates these six schools from others in our research is that the school and partnership's approach towards the resolution of these challenges. In all six of our high momentum partnerships, the morale of the school sustains their partnership's success. The actual challenges are varied but are reported along the same lines as the elements of successful partnership, as discussed throughout this section, including

communication with the Southern partner school; funding; commitment and time; leadership; bureaucracy, and other.

Communication with the Southern partner school. The biggest challenge in four partnerships (386, 141, E2S and 1128) appears to be communication. Lack of Internet access in the Southern schools is the major obstacle, as one teacher explains, 'A main challenge is that the Southern school does not have a robust email system so the school relies on phone calls (School 1128).' Another researcher recognises the reasons for these issues, 'In regard to the communication with the Indian school, the English school pointed out both a difference in culture (i.e. slow responses) and limited electricity supplies in the Indian school (School 141).'

Funding. Within the partnership, much of the funding supplied is allocated for teacher exchanges only, and not student exchanges. Two Northern schools (386 and 102) highlight issues related to the financial imbalance. Student exchanges are, in most instances, self funded. This means that many cannot afford to participate in the exchange. This is especially true in the Southern schools. Often, those who can afford to travel are from wealthy families or have been to the partner country before. One teacher explains, 'We have this dilemma that we don't want it to be charity, but yet if we don't do something to redress the imbalance between their income and our income, then some of them wouldn't ever get here (School 386).'

Linked with issues of financial imbalance is the expense of maintaining the successful school partnership. Two partnerships mention this as a challenge. One teacher shares,

The resources required to sustain the school partnership, not only in terms of funding but also staffing, are very expensive. Having teachers off timetable to visit Ghana and to manage the return visits is very resource heavy (School 386N).

Commitment and time. As well as being expensive, high momentum partnerships take commitment and time. As one participant notes, 'Although many teachers have shown interest in the school partnership, many teachers are busy and lack the time to dedicate themselves to a sustained partnership between the schools (School 386N).'

Linked with this issue of time is the issue of prioritising different initiatives going on across the school and the partnership, as one researcher details,

The link with Kenya is one of a number of initiatives in school and according to one member of staff '... it will never be top priority... because it doesn't directly impact on results'. This makes the challenge of maintaining the interest of students that bit greater (School E2).

Leadership. Successful partnerships require strong and active leadership. However, this creates a challenge in schools where the leadership has changed during the partnership (Schools 141 and E2N). If changes in leadership are not thoughtfully planned for, then it can create partnership chaos. One researcher shares,

The English school mentioned the frequent change of head teachers in both schools... challenging. Having been part of and driving the partnership since its inception, it is not surprising that the change of head teachers is mentioned by the English partnership coordinator, who felt that the partnership had to be renegotiated with every change (School 141).

Bureaucracy. Two Southern schools (386S and 141S) find that the amount of paperwork involved in the partnership creates challenges. This also relates to the bureaucratic challenges associated with obtaining visas for travel. In some cases, the visa issue also decreases the number of individuals who can travel on exchanges. One teacher explains, 'Visa and passports from the embassy have also been an issue for the Southern school. Out of a trip group of twelve people, two students couldn't get a visa (School 386).'

Other issues. The schools also mention the physical distance between the partnership schools, which makes contact difficult (School E2S), the political situation such as civil war in Sri Lanka (School 47S) and the language barrier with schools where not much English is spoken (School 1128N).

SECTION 8 FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our findings, several simple suggestions have emerged. We encourage support organisations to consider carefully those elements of the recommendations for schools above as this could enhance their current work process. We are, as previously stated, developing a resource tool for support organisations based on our findings to provide an evidence-based guide for supporting and nurturing high momentum partnership. We believe that support organisations have a key role to play in ensuring partnerships are meaningful to all participants. The following should be prioritised:

Ensuring programmes are building on current evidence. Across the UK and around the world, there is little research evidence on what makes a successful partnership in terms of meaningful teaching and learning. This research, thanks to the funding from DFID and the support of our Advisory Group partners and international research team, makes a considerable contribution to what is known about high momentum partnerships. However, others in the UK are working on the issues and more evidence will be coming to light in the next year. We recommend that support organisations and policy makers both draw on the evidence when designing and supporting international partnerships, and ensuring that schools have access and the opportunity to read, debate and reflect on the evidence and its implications for their own work.

Supporting multimodal communication and engagement between partners. Our evidence suggests that high momentum partnerships use different forms of communication to engage with their partners. We recommend that support organisations ensure that their schools are encouraged to work in this way and facilitate, where possible, their ability to do so.

Gathering evidence and sharing knowledge. Schools new to partnership want to learn from those with experience. Mid-partnership schools want to learn from those farther along their journey. Partnerships at the end of their funding want to learn from those partnerships that have been successful in generating opportunities and resources that will ensure their partnership is sustainable. We recommend that support organisations create innovative and meaningful ways for their partnerships to develop robust examples and evidence of their partnership. This evidence should be designed to support learning between schools but also to promote open access to knowledge gained and developed by schools. This will create a firm foundation upon

which other schools can examine, reflect and act upon the successes and challenges experience by others. This recommendation also holds for all groups.

Providing school-level guidance on leadership and exchanges. Teachers participating in exchange visits report these to be the greatest influence on their knowledge, skills and professional development. We also found that distributing leadership not only builds capacity but also enhances sustainability. To further support distribution of responsibility and experience, exchange opportunities should be shared among teachers and leaders and should not remain the exclusive domain of a few. We recommend that clear guidelines for schools that encourage that different individuals are encouraged to make trips and host visitors as well as other points highlighted throughout the recommendations. Similarly, we recommend that support organisations also provide schools with evidence of the benefits of and strategies for distributing leadership responsibility across several members of the school.

Devolving expectations to schools and leaders for design and exchanges. The activities associated with exchange visits and their anticipated learning outcomes are difficult to predict. Rather than place expectations that schools should do x or y, support organisations should encourage schools to plan their own objectives, examine their processes and disseminate their experiences to other schools. Furthermore, the central focus of partnerships should be on sharing practice with colleagues and students. Many programmes require high levels of monitoring and evaluation to support their own internal accountability regulations. We strongly recommend that schools use these systems where required but also ensure that they are also creating their own strategies for providing meaningful evidence of their learning.

Conclusions and recommendations for policy makers

As above, we would like to suggest strongly that the recommendations and conclusions above for schools and support organisations are also considered during the policy development and analysis process. However, below we present the conclusions and recommendations from our research that we believe are of highest relevance for our colleagues in policy making.

Developing a knowledge base of outstanding practice in partnership. We believe there are many valuable resources for schools interested in initiating and enhancing their partnership work. However, at times, accessing and understanding this complex landscape of resources is confusing for those working in schools. We recommend that policy makers continue to support the development of evidence about partnerships and continue to create opportunities for support organisations to share their experience as well as contribute to easily accessible and decipherable resources for schools to support high momentum partnerships across all programmes.

Managing competition and developing outstanding practice among support organisations. As mentioned above, the landscape of support organisations is a complex one with many support organisations receiving funding centrally to support their work. Throughout our data collection process in the UK, it was clear that many schools are confused by the funding sources available and how to best meet their own needs for school development and student learning. While we do not have a specific recommendation to make about the funding of partnerships based on our data, we strongly encourage policy makers to ensure that the competition for central

partnership funds for support organisation does not interfere with the development of meaningful partnerships.

APPENDIX A: REFERENCES

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APPENDIX B: TECHNICAL PAPERS & RESOURCES

Charting the landscapes of partnership. Each of these papers outlines the overall experiences of schools in each region. The following analysis will become available in the near future:

- The landscape of all age schools in Africa
- The landscape of primary schools in Africa
- The landscape of secondary schools in Africa
- The landscape of all age schools in Asia
- The landscape of primary schools in UK
- The landscape of secondary schools in UK

Analysis of partnerships between schools. Each of these short papers represents the amalgamation of the two partner schools into one partnership study. The following partnership analysis will become available in the near future:

- Partnership 47
- Partnership 141
- Partnership 188
- Partnership 350
- Partnership 386
- Partnership 864
- Partnership 1128
- Partnership E2

Case studies. The following school-level case studies will be available. We may be able to prepare additional cases pending resource availability.

- England 47
- Sri Lanka 47
- England 141
- India 141
- England 188
- South Africa 188
- Scotland 864
- South Africa 864
- England E2
- Kenya E2

MA Dissertations

Coates, J. 'International school partnerships: Opportunities for organisational learning and leadership'. Institute of Education: London.

Lawrie, J. 'International school partnerships: Case study of a rural Kenya and urban British school.' Institute of Education: London.

Resources for schools. We are developing resources to assist individuals, teams and whole schools work with the documents and resources from this study to initiate or improve their own partnership work. These will be available on our website before January 2010.

