



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Associated Schools

UNESCO Associated Schools *Supporting the International Perspective in your school*

Unpacking the Suitcase – Sharing lessons from a UNESCO Associated Schools partnership



A seminar on school linking and partnerships, hosted by UNESCO Associated Schools in the UK, brought together 40 education practitioners from the UK and Zanzibar on 26 June. The event took place at the National Botanic Garden of Wales and built on the experience of the Wales/Zanzibar Associated Schools partnership project “ERLAFS”. The seminar was made possible through the support of Sazani Associates, the Welsh Centre for International Affairs (WCIA) and the UNESCO Cymru Wales Committee.

Highlights of the Day

The aim of the seminar was to provide opportunities for participants to share experiences on school linking and partnerships. The programme for the event included a mixture of presentations and workshops. The workshops had a strong participatory focus, addressing different aspects of school linking and partnerships. The participants also had the opportunity to learn more about UNESCO Associated Schools in the UK and the ERLAFS project linking Wales and Zanzibar.



Participants identified some of the most important benefits of linking as the opportunity to gain new perspectives and develop new ideas. Reciprocal visits had facilitated exposure to different education systems, potentially leading to curriculum development and the adoption of new teaching styles. It was also clear that the personal commitment and enthusiasm of the teachers involved was often the driving force behind links. Participants, both from the UK and Zanzibar, underlined the role of friendship in sustaining international partnerships.

The opportunities to bring the curriculum alive and provide a ‘real’ resource were highlighted as some of the benefits for schools involved in linking. While it was acknowledged that it can be challenging to get the whole school involved in a link, staff training sessions and themed activity days for the whole school were suggested as a way to address this issue. The desire to share ideas and learn from colleagues abroad were often the motivation behind the establishment of links. Existing links were seen as catalysts for new links. External organisations were seen as important facilitators for links, both in terms of coordination and sources of funding.

Key Points from Workshop 1 - What do Schools get out of links?

- Shared, meaningful opportunities, links and resources
- Provides a real resource for teachers
- Helps extend the curriculum
- Helps develop appreciation of our global citizenship
- Teachers and pupils gain understanding of other cultures
- Improved staff and pupil motivation
- Friendship

Key Points from Workshop 2 - How can linking support the whole school curricula?

Involving the adults

- Themed activity days on your link country
- Staff training day
- Make your link fun to be a part of
- Development of stimulus materials for use by staff



Involving the children

- Set up pen pals
- Use notice boards
- Introduce pupils to the culture and language of your link country

Key Points from Workshop 3 - What got you started with linking?

- Opportunities for sharing ideas on teaching & learning methodologies
- Opportunity to learn on a different level
- Added value provided through curriculum development
- Personal initiative
- Chance for real life communication: student-to-student and teacher-to-teacher
- Personal enthusiasm and commitment
- Information from external organisations and networks about linking opportunities
- New links through existing links and new technology
- Link champion in school helped create enthusiasm

Education for Rural Livelihood and Food Sovereignty (ERLAFS)

The ERLAFS project builds on a UNESCO/FAO flagship project titled Education for Rural People (ERP) launched in 2002. The ERP project in Wales was originally initiated by Cyfanfyd and Sazani Associates in 2004 to pilot school linking between Wales and Zanzibar. The linking aims to support Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) and contribute to the development of an improved curriculum in rural schools in Zanzibar. Sazani Associates have been successful in expanding the project to look at the transition between primary and secondary education in the two countries and to build on the ERP concepts to focus on Education for Rural Livelihoods and Food Sovereignty (ERLAFS).

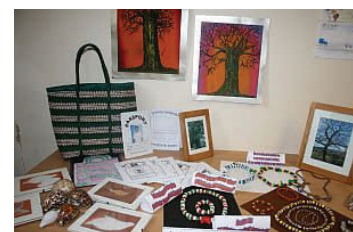
The project utilises a school cluster model to facilitate the linking, with a primary and secondary school cluster in each country. This enables the Welsh schools to have an individual partner school in Zanzibar as well as being part of a cluster in Wales, ensuring on-going peer support. A total of 18 schools are currently involved. The project, coordinated by Sazani Associates, is funded by the British Council



Global Schools Programme, the General Teaching Council of Wales and the Department for International Development (DFID). The funding has enabled three reciprocal study visits by teachers. These visits comprised of a mixture of classroom observation and peer exchange and training. Twelve teachers and advisors from Zanzibar visited Wales in June and were able to join Welsh colleagues for the UNESCO Associated Schools seminar, providing a valuable input to the day.

Impact of School Linking – Sir Thomas Picton Secondary School, Pembrokeshire

In Sir Thomas Picton, one of the Welsh secondary schools involved in the Zanzibar link and a member of UNESCO Associated Schools, the ERLAFS project has had a substantial impact. According to Helen Llewellyn, Personal and Social Education (PSE) Coordinator, the school will integrate its Year 6 - Year 7 transition project in the Geography syllabus. The passports produced in Year 6 will be a focus for the Rich World/Poor World module in Year 7. This will ensure that all pupils are introduced to the Zanzibar link during their first term at Sir Thomas Picton. The new PSE schemes of work will ensure there is continuity and progression of this work through years 8, 9, 10 and 11. The school is also reviewing PSE content for key stage 5, as Sir Thomas Picton is now part of the pilot for the Welsh Baccaulaureate. It is hoped to further develop the Zanzibar link in Years 12 and 13 over the next two years.



Feedback from the event

The final plenary enabled participants to share what they would take away from the day:

“New ideas from taking part in the workshops and talking to teachers from other schools”

“Share the experience with other teachers to improve the level of education offered to students”

“A greater realisation of the benefits of linking for everybody involved with our school”

“Contacts for forging a link”

“A real belief in the need for schools to ensure our children grow up truly being global citizens”

“Inspiration and enthusiasm”

UNESCO Associated Schools

UNESCO Associated Schools in the UK is part of a global network of schools promoting quality education. The UK network supports the integration of international perspectives in schools and promotes the values of UNESCO, including human rights, mutual respect and cultural diversity. We work to better prepare UK children and young people for the challenges of an increasingly complex and interdependent world.

All members are encouraged to undertake projects and activities related to four study themes:

1. The UN system and World Concerns
2. Peace, Democracy and Human Rights
3. Intercultural Learning
4. Sustainable Development

For more information about UNESCO Associated Schools, please contact Anne Breivik. For more information about the ERLAFS project, please contact Cathryn Al Kanaan or Marilyn James at Sazani Associates on 0164 668 2110.

UK National Coordinator

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