



## Lancashire Global Education Centre

Case study purpose: Joint learning outcomes from a UK-India school link.

Schools involved: Carleton St Hilda's CE Primary School,  
Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire.

SHAMS Primary school, Uttar Pradesh, Northern India

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I have been working closely with this school over the past year – it is the only one which has bought a complete “Global Dimension” package. Staff at LGEC had previously done some work with them, and they approached us for help in incorporating their school link into the curriculum in February 2008. The link is with SHAMS school in North India, and I ended up accompanying the head teacher on a visit to this school in February 2009!



Carleton school is a predominantly white British urban primary with 200 on roll, 95% white British. My association with them for this project started when I was asked to speak at a meeting of parents, governors and associates of the school in March 2008 to publicise the link, which had been set up in 2005. Visits had already been exchanged by teachers from the 2 schools, and the meeting was mainly to report on the visit by 2 teachers from Carleton to Shams in November 2007. The founder of the school, who lives in Blackburn, was also a speaker, along with Anjum Anwar and Canon Chivers from Blackburn diocese. I was asked to speak on “how vital teaching global citizenship is for our children” and it was after this talk that I was invited to be part of the next visit to Shams, planned for Feb. 09.

At this stage it was hoped that two more teachers would be able to go, and a reciprocal visit made from Shams. An application had been put in to the British Council to fund this visit. Unfortunately this bid was turned down, and the Head, Beverley Grime, then decided she would fund herself for the visit, and would be glad of my company. I would also be funding myself, but accommodation would be provided.



Before this, I agreed on the package the school wanted over the next year. The school decided to take it up, in the Head's words "in order to support the children in becoming global citizens by giving support to colleagues with ideas about classroom activities, to raise awareness and to inform us about how we could assess the impact our work was having with the children."

There was to be a twilight INSET in July on ways of integrating the global dimension in to the work the school was doing with its partner school. A further twilight in September would be on participatory methodologies, and in November they wanted help with an event to coincide with the planned visit from Shams teachers. As this never actually took place, Jenny (my contact teacher) asked me instead if I could work with them on the next bid to get funding for a later visit. To do this, I first met with Jenny to look at the feedback they had received on why the bid had failed, and ways of addressing the issues raised. This was followed up with an INSET for the whole staff in January. At all these sessions, I found the staff very receptive, keen to try out the activities and to make the link work. At each of them they gave me very positive feedback confirming that the aims of the session had been achieved.

A project plan had been agreed between the 2 schools, with each class doing different topics, to be shared with their equivalent class at Shams (see attached). The problems, as seen by the British Council, were that a) there was not enough evidence of the projects being jointly developed and b) there was an age discrepancy between the 2 schools, as Shams took pupils between 4 and 16 years.

On our visit to the school we were able to observe the classroom teaching, and take part in lessons. As in most of India, the teaching methods used rote learning, chanting by the whole class, and copying from books or the board. However there was a relaxed and happy atmosphere in most of the classes, and the teachers did not mind us interrupting with miming, singing, talking to the children, and asking questions. We also asked them to show us some Hindi, learning to count and write our names.

After school each day (for 6 sessions) we had also been asked to do some training with the teachers. We looked at this as shared planning, not wanting to be seen as the experts coming in and telling them what to do. However that seemed to be what was expected! Attempts to draw them out and ask what they wanted from the link, whether they had any comments on the plans or wanted to change them, drew a complete blank on the first day. We realised that they were not used to doing any planning, apart from which page they would be on the next day, and that the education system did not encourage any critical thinking, questioning or curiosity. So it was very difficult for them to respond to us (in a different language as well!).

At the 2<sup>nd</sup> session we decided to abandon plans for sophisticated assessment activities and go back to basics. Everyone had been sitting around the table in a very formal way (Beverley joked that it looked as if we were interviewing them!) so we did a warm up activity, away from the chairs, in a circle – the person in the middle throwing a ball to someone in the circle, and saying their name. This was fun and helped people to relax, as well as helping us to learn names.



We then used a tried and tested DE activity, ranking in pairs, to get them thinking about what they felt was most important about the link. I wrote words like Friendship, Co-operation, Peace, Global Citizenship, Education on strips of paper and asked them to discuss between themselves what they felt was most important, and put them in order. They were also asked to add any of their own. Each pair then fed back to the rest of the group, and this generated plenty of discussion. We stressed that there were no right or wrong answers – this was hard to get across at first, but in the end we felt we had made a breakthrough!

By the end of the week we had collected in lots of work done by the children in answer to some of the Carleton children's questions, and also involved the teachers in planning the topics. We did this on the last day by writing the beginnings of 2 sentences on the whiteboard – My topic will be... and The children will... and inviting each class teacher to complete them. They went along completely with the topics chosen by Carleton, but at least they had the opportunity to change them if they wanted, so we could say it was joint planning!

Beverley was very careful at the beginning of each session to say lots of positive things about what she had observed in class that day – mainly to praise the behaviour of the children –there were no discipline problems, even though in many cases the children were very cramped – and their handwriting. They spent a lot of time copying, and this was very neat and clear. She also reported on some of the things she had done with the children, and suggested the teachers might like to try these as well.

This was a steep learning curve for both of us, and Beverley said afterwards that "your global education was the key to it all". "It was the development education activities which you carried out with colleagues in India that proved to be pivotal in spearheading discussions which made it possible to us to have a productive discussion about the link." Without that, and being able to talk things over together in the evenings, she would have found things very difficult. This is in spite of tremendous goodwill on both sides and a real desire to make the link work. The new bid was duly completed when Beverley returned home and we await the outcome in May!

There were many other issues with the link, such as IT, language and cultural barriers, material inequality (how much was about giving gifts to the school?) It made me realise that often expectations of a link can be totally unrealistic, and even with 100% commitment on both sides, it may not always work. It also showed me how important it was to try and make it work and overcome the barriers. We left behind many good friends and felt that we had been made very welcome.

Of her involvement with LGEC, Beverley says "(By getting involved with LGEC, we hoped that) members of staff would feel more confident to be able to deliver global education in the context of our link school, that they would gain an insight into the types of activities that could be carried out, that we would work together with Shams school to make sure that the link was a live and purposeful link and that all members of staff involved would play an active part in the link. This is beginning to happen slowly but surely. (Through LGEC's support) it is now more fun in class because there are a wider range of interesting activities for the children to become engaged in, we have purchased and discussed a range of resources to support our teaching which have resulted in higher order discussions taking place, we are clear about assessment activities and there is a renewed interest in and desire to continue developing this area of the curriculum".

The benefits of the link so far are many. There has been improved vigour in geography lessons, with pupils understanding that the link is about communicating with real people. This will be reinforced by the many video clips of classroom and outdoor activities taken by Beverley when we were at the school. The quality of writing, drawing etc, has improved with children making and illustrating books of questions, their own diaries, crests showing what is important to them, letters and so on. The link is a good vehicle for IT and has helped improve the children's skills in this area. Staff are now much more fully trained in delivering global citizenship, and the children are beginning to ask deeper questions and develop their global awareness. Practical activities have included making vegetable curry and learning to eat with their hands Indian-style, and there has been great interest in the pictures of our hands being painted with henna.

The best way for LGEC to continue its support for this school would be by



keeping an overview of the development of the link, being available to give further support where needed and supplying resources as required.

For me, working with Carleton St Hilda's, and being able to visit India and see a live link in action at the end of my career, has been a wonderful culmination of all that I have worked for over the years. The difference the link has made to both schools, the use of

development education to overcome barriers, the value of support from a Centre such as LGEC – all these have been a vindication of our work. I shall continue to keep in touch with the link after my retirement, and hope that St Hilda's will continue to use the services of LGEC and recommend us to others!