



Connecting Classrooms

Guide to school partnerships

Introduction

School partnerships give young people the chance to collaborate with their international peers on curriculum-based activities. By entering into a global partnership pupils will gain a fuller understanding of other countries and cultures, as will their teachers.



It also helps educators to share best practice with their colleagues at home and overseas and to learn from education systems in other countries.

Partnerships between schools in the UK and other countries bring lasting benefits for young people wherever they live. In particular, pupils get a chance to tackle challenging global themes, explore their rights and responsibilities and prepare to work in a global economy.

We offer financial support to schools that can demonstrate a strong commitment to their partner schools, a desire to embed an international dimension in their schools and introduce global learning into their curriculum.

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Funding offer

An annual grant of £1,500 for each school in the partnership is available. The grant must be spent on reciprocal visits for at least one teacher from each school.

Visits are usually one week long and should consist of at least four days of work. Funding should be used to cover the cost of flights, accommodation, travel insurance, local transport, visas, vaccinations and food.

It is expected that the grant will only be a contribution to the overall cost of a visit but if you do not spend the entire grant on your partnership visit it can be used for project costs such as resources or communications.



Partnership Objectives

If you would like to apply for a grant you should plan your partnership activity around the following three objectives:



Objective 1: increasing global citizenship

Global citizens play an active and positive role in our international community. Educators can increase global citizenship by:

- introducing global themes into the curriculum, which allows young people to make links between their local context and the rest of the world
- providing opportunities for young people to explore and reflect on these contexts and to appreciate similarities and differences between cultures
- setting up collaborative curriculum projects between their pupils and pupils in the partner school, to help young people work together and share ideas
- encouraging students to play an active role in the global economy and to aspire to tackle shared issues.

In order to guide you through this process and to help you to plan collaborative projects we have developed a set of global themes, skills and outlooks:

Global themes	Conflict and peace, sustainable living, rights and responsibilities, fairness and equality, identity and belonging.
Global skills	Self-awareness, conflict resolution, empathy, creative thinking, critical thinking, collaborating, communicating, taking action.
Global outlooks	Positive sense of identity, sense of interdependence, commitment to rights and responsibilities, desire to make a difference, open to new ideas, commitment to justice, commitment to peace, commitment to sustainability.

When you apply for your grant you will be asked to identify which themes, skills and outlooks your proposed activity addresses and to describe how your partnership will build on each. For more information, please refer to the Connecting Classrooms Guide to Global Citizenship.

Partnership Objectives

Objective 2: Enriching education

International school partnerships provide a valuable opportunity for schools to work together to enrich education practice and improve educational outcomes for young people.

To help you to develop this strand of your collaborative projects, we have developed a set of common educational areas:

Subject and curriculum	The content you teach to young people.
Core skills	Young people's achievement in language, numeracy and IT.
Global outlook	The methods you use to teach young people.
Teaching styles	How you measure young people's progress.
Classroom and behaviour management	How you guide young people's conduct.
Inclusion	Catering for additional learning, physical and emotional needs.
Promoting well-being	Encouraging young people to live healthily.

In the grant application you will be asked to identify one or more of these areas and show how your partnership will take it forward.

Objective 3: developing an equitable and sustainable partnership

Successful partnerships should benefit all schools equally and be sustainable in the future. In order to meet these two aims, we recommend that you:

- make long-term plans to commit time and resources to the partnership
- make sure partners contribute equally
- involve more educators and young people as the partnership progresses
- agree shared goals
- involve people from the wider community.

In the grant application you will be asked to describe what you have done so far to make your partnership equitable and sustainable, and what you plan to do over the next year.

Partnership Journey

The progression matrix on the following page outlines the proposed partnership journey for each objective and is designed to help you and partner school plan and assess activity as the partnership develops.

To be eligible for funding, you must be working at the 'preparation for partnership' level for each of the three objectives before applying. In addition, you must outline how after one year you will have progressed to the next level for each objective. For example, if you are working at the 'preparation' stage for 'increasing global citizenship' at the point of application, you should plan to reach the 'developing' stage after your next year of activity. You can be at different levels for each objective, provided you demonstrate progression from one level to the next.

The framework is intended as a guide for planning activity. It is not meant to be prescriptive, but provides a vision for achievement in the three objectives that the grant supports.

	Preparation for partnership	Developing the partnership	Embedding the partnership	Expanding the partnership
Increasing global citizenship	<p>Young people and educators build awareness of global issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> schools run activities that introduce global themes to young people young people share information about their local context with the partner school(s) educators reflect on current levels of global awareness and decide how to move forward. 	<p>Young people and educators reflect critically on global issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> schools run collaborative curriculum projects which enable reflective learning on global issues and facilitate the development of global skills and outlook young people discuss global issues with their partner school(s) educators are able to develop global citizenship issues in teaching. 	<p>Young people and educators take action to tackle global issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> schools run collaborative curriculum projects which facilitate young people taking positive social action on a shared global issue young people participate in collaborative activities which address shared global issues, skills and outlook educators are able to embed global citizenship issues in teaching. 	<p>Young people and educators disseminate their approach and learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> schools run collaborative projects that engage the wider community in a shared global issue young people actively share their knowledge and activities with their peers and communities educators lead others in the teaching of global citizenship.
Enriching education practice	<p>Educators build awareness of practices in their partner school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> educators identify priority areas of practice to improve educators share information about education practice with the partner school(s). 	<p>Educators reflect critically on their own practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> educators critically research their own practice educators run collaborative studies of education practices with the partner school(s) educators exchange education practices during reciprocal visits 	<p>Educators take action to improve their teaching and curriculum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> educators implement useful changes to their teaching and curriculum based on collaborative learning educators refine education practices during reciprocal visits. 	<p>Educators disseminate their approach and learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> educators share their approach and revised practices with others in their education community educators promote refined education practices during reciprocal visits.
Developing an equitable and sustainable partnership	<p>Schools prepare to develop plans for a long-term partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> partnership co-ordinator identified with head teacher support young people and educators are aware of the partnership needs of all partner schools are identified and discussed schools consider the significance of the partnership in their local context. 	<p>Schools develop an equitable and sustainable partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> schools develop plans for a long-term partnership schools develop plans for a long-term partnership partnership co-ordinators set up partnership committees and head teachers commit resources to the partnership young people and educators are involved in partnership activity planned activities address the needs of all schools equally schools identify groups in the wider community to engage in the partnership 	<p>Schools embed their equitable and sustainable partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> schools take steps to embed the partnership on an equitable and long-term basis partnership committees extend activities across the school more young people and educators than previously are involved in partnership activity planned activities meet the needs of all schools equally schools engage groups in the wider community in partnership activity. 	<p>Schools expand their equitable and sustainable partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> schools make plans to sustain the partnership on an equitable and long-term basis partnership committees share practice with the wider education community whole school/department/year involvement relative to size of school planned activities designed to meet the needs of the wider community active participation of wider community in partnership activity.

Eligibility criteria

1. Previous funding

The partnership cannot already be receiving funding from the British Council and must have submitted a satisfactory report relating to any previous funding.

2. Institution type

Institutions catering for pupils from 3–18 years old are eligible. We accept grant applications from schools, sixth-form colleges and comparable institutions providing full-time general, vocational, technical and special-needs education. Both private and government institutions are eligible to apply.

3. Partnership composition

A Connecting Classrooms partnership can be one of four things:

- Individual bilateral: one school in the UK and one school in another eligible country (two schools in total)
- Individual trilateral*: one school in the UK and one school in two other eligible countries (three schools in total).
- Cluster bilateral: three schools in the UK and three schools in another eligible country (six schools in total).
- Cluster trilateral*: three schools in the UK and three schools in two other eligible countries (nine schools in total).

*** Funding for three-way partnerships is only available between the UK and countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. See section 5.6 for more information regarding partnerships between three countries.**

4. Location

We accept grant applications from schools in the following countries:

South Asia	Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka.
Sub-Saharan Africa	Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.
Middle East and North Africa	Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Yemen* .
Americas	Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago.
United Kingdom	Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, England.

5. Priority criteria

If we receive more applications than funding available, the following priority guidelines will apply.

5.1 Location

Applications involving the countries highlighted in bold, as in the table above, will be given priority ahead of other countries in the same region. This also applies to trilateral partnerships that include schools from at least one priority country.

Eligibility criteria

5.2 Previous funding

For new applicants under Connecting Classrooms

2012-15:

1. First priority will be given to partnerships that have not received funding in the past from either Connecting Classrooms or Global School Partnerships for a Global Curriculum Project. Note that partnerships which only received Reciprocal Visit funding from Global School Partnerships will still be considered a first priority.
2. Second priority will be given to partnerships that received funding for one or two years from either Connecting Classrooms or Global School Partnerships for a Global Curriculum Project.
3. Final priority will be given to partnerships that have already received funding for three years from either of these sources.

For those who successfully applied for funding in 2012/13 and want to reapply the above does not apply.

5.3 Global themes

Regional Managers reserve the right to introduce additional criteria relating to the global themes detailed in section 2. In such circumstances, there will be a

clear communication on our website well in advance of the application deadline.

5.4 Multiple applications

It is possible for a school to make more than one application for funding in any grant round. Each simultaneous application must be with a different partner school and the standard partnership composition guidelines apply.

If you do apply with more than one partner school, both applications could be successful in the same round. However, if in the application round we receive more applications than grants available and your school has submitted more than one, priority will be given to the application with the higher score.

5.5 Multiple applications

Multiple partnerships might help a school reach the objectives of the Connecting Classrooms programme, depending on the school's profile and circumstances. For example, a school with a high enrolment could consider one partner for the junior and another for the senior school. It is not easy to develop sustainable partnerships concurrently, so before you undertake more than one partnership:

- consider the rationale behind developing multiple partnerships and your school's motivation to engage in each of the partnerships
- ensure adequate resources are available for multiple partnerships
- consider whether equal priority and resources will be given to your partnerships. If not, what impact will this have on their sustainability?

5.6 Partnerships between three countries

Partnerships between three countries, known as 'three-way partnerships', are subject to some additional parameters. These partnerships must include the UK and two countries from Sub-Saharan Africa. Schools from other regions are not eligible to take part in trilateral partnerships.

Within a trilateral partnership, at least one teacher from each school must travel to visit a partner school during the funding year. There must also be a visit to the UK during the year by either one or both African partners.

Within these parameters, we encourage you to discuss what pattern of visits would work best for your partnership. You should consider how your pattern of visits helps to build your partnership and develop equity in the relationship. If you are planning to apply for a second and third year of funding, you may also want to think about what you will do in future years.

Eligibility criteria

6. Applying for funding

Applications must be completed as a joint endeavour and we expect to see strong evidence of collaboration and joint working in the form.

Any school in the partnership can begin or contribute to the online application form with support of their partner school(s). To access the form, you must be registered on Schools Online.

There will be three deadlines per year in January, June and October. Exact dates and details of the next deadline will be published on our website.

All communication following submission will be by email with the UK co-ordinating school (contract holder).

6.1 Assessment

In the grant application you are invited to describe your partnership activity plan for progression against three objectives detailed above:

1. Increasing Global Citizenship
2. Enriching Education
3. Developing an Equitable and Sustainable Partnership.

If your application meets the basic eligibility criteria, two consultant assessors will review your partnership activity and project plans against the three objectives. Your application must show that your partnership is progressing in all three areas. A final decision taking into account priority criteria will be taken by the British Council.

We aim to notify you whether you have been successful within two months of the application deadline.

6.2 Contracting

A 10-month grant agreement will be issued to the co-ordinating UK school; two signed copies of which must be returned within one month of notification. The co-ordinating UK school will also be required to submit bank details in order to transfer the grant funding by BACS. If the grant agreements and bank details are not returned within the specified time period you will forgo the offer.

6.3 Grant dispersal

All grant funding is paid in the UK and will be transferred to the lead school when the grant agreements are returned. The lead school is responsible for disbursing the grant proportionally between all schools in the partnership.

Eighty per cent of the grant will be paid in advance with the remaining twenty per cent balance paid upon receipt of an acceptable report on partnership activity.

6.4 Reporting

The co-ordinating UK school is responsible for submission of a satisfactory report at the end of the contract period. If you are reapplying for funding this will be integrated with the application form (where we are now section) and you will not be required to submit a separate document.

You should make a record of activities and learning outcomes from the outset. Your report could include quotes and feedback from pupils, staff and parents.

Ten per cent of partnerships will be randomly selected for audit at each reporting deadline and asked to submit full receipts of all grant expenditure. You should make a permanent record of all items of expenditure as soon as you start spending the grant. If you are unable to provide evidence of expenditure on request the co-ordinating UK school will be liable to pay back all funding to the British Council. Full details of this are explained in the grant agreement.

6.5 Reapplying for funding

If you are reapplying for funding upon completion of your contract, the 'where are we now' section of the application form will constitute your report on activity over the previous year and you will not be required to complete any other forms about this. If you decide against reapplying, you will be provided with a separate template to complete in line with your contractual commitments.

Partnerships that received funding under the Connecting Classrooms programme in 2012/13 will be assessed separately to partnerships that are new to the programme (i.e. those that did not receive funding in 2012/13). Priority criteria will still be applicable to partnerships reapplying as detailed above if we receive more applications than funding available from this group.

Other British Council opportunities

Find out more about how you can further support your partnership with other British Council opportunities.



Professional Development

Develop your skills and understanding through Connecting Classrooms Professional Development. We offer face to face and online courses designed to support education for young people in global citizenship and bring international learning to the classroom.

Fully funded by the British Council and Department for International Development, Connecting Classrooms Professional Development courses offer a free opportunity to develop your understanding of international learning.

The Institute of Education certified professional development courses include information that will support Connecting Classrooms funding applications, in addition to providing teaching resources, classroom activities and hints and tips to enrich future or current international partnerships. Sign up today to find the right course to support your schools global citizenship curriculum needs.

All educators, whether new to working in an international context or already actively involved in a school partnership, will find support to deepen their professional experience.

Find out more at: <http://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/professional-development>

Other British Council opportunities



International School Award

The British Council International School Award supports your school in embedding international learning into the curriculum. Working towards it gives pupils and teachers a new perspective on the world, and the skills to work in a global economy.

- Uses an easy to follow methodology which can embed global themes into any curriculum subject
- Has three levels so can be accessed by any school, whatever level of international work has been done in the past
- Creates links between teachers from other countries, facilitating the sharing of best practice and the development of new skills
- Gives the school a new ethos and an outwardly facing identity

Find out more at:

<http://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/International-School-Award>

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