

**Irish Development Education Association**

**Report of Conference**

**Linking and Immersion Schemes with the Global  
South:  
Developing Good Practice**

**September 20<sup>th</sup> 2007.**

*Dedication:*

*To Barbara Gill.* We wish she could have been with us to see this first major IDEA Conference. She will always be with us.

*Acknowledgements.* We would like to thank Irish Aid for funding this Conference. (Irish Aid - LOGO)

**'The Missionaries are now younger and instead of the church, they talk of development. They come; they think they will help; they are the only knowers; they become expert in their observations and people start to consult them about us'**

***Martin Nakata. September 2007.***

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# **Irish Development Education Association: Report of Conference: Linking and Immersion Schemes with the Global South: Developing Good Practice.**

## **1. Introduction**

The Irish Development Education Association IDEA is delighted to present this Report of its first National Conference: *Linking and Immersion Schemes with the Global South: Developing Good Practice*. This was held in Dublin, Ireland on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2007.

**Who we are:** The Irish Development Education Association is an association of organisations and individuals engaged in the advancement and promotion and development education throughout the island of Ireland. The Association was established through a series of annual Conferences held by the development education sector from 2002 to 2005. These conferences identified the need by the sector to establish an independent organisation which would be the representative body for the sector. The organisation was formally launched in 2004 and agreed its Constitution in 2005 and was formally established as a Company Limited by Guarantee in February 2007. It successfully accessed funding through Irish Aid from 2005.

**Our members** range from large development organisations such as Trociane and Concern to smaller organisations working on specific aspects of development education such as *Just Forests, the Africa Centre, Schools Across Borders*. They cover those working in the formal education sector – such as the *Development Education and Interculture Education (DICE), the Ubuntu Network, the Development Education Research network (DERN)* - and those working with specific communities on the ground – such as the *Lourdes Youth and Community Service (LYCS), and the National Youth Federation of Ireland (NYFI)*. Nationally our members come from Limerick, Belfast, Galway, Kerry and Waterford with all the *One World Centres* from these areas active members of the Association. A full list of members is outlined in *Appendix 1*

**Our Strategic Plan:** The Association completed its first strategic plan in 2005 following extensive consultation throughout the island of Ireland. It identified four main goals for the period 2006-2008:

- *Developing itself as an organisation*
- *Capacity Building within the sector*
- *Developing good practice*
- *Representation and advocacy work*

Since early 2007, when it accessed more substantial funding from Irish Aid it appointed its first Interim Director and began to organise a range of activities in line with its strategic goals. The Linking and Immersion Schemes Conference focused on three of its goals: building capacity within the sector, developing good practice and beginning the

process of influencing policy and practice in the emerging Irish Aid-Leargas Linking and Immersion Schemes.

## 2. The Conference

### **The Aims of the Conference were:**

- △ To critically explore Linking and Immersion programmes which link Ireland to the Global South
- △ To identify good practice in relation to Linking and Immersion programmes, exploring how the development education sector can contribute to good practice.
- △ To showcase a range of Linking and Immersion programmes from a variety of sectors.

### **The Target Group were:**

- △ Schools – both teachers and students
- △ Youth organisations
- △ Third level institutions
- △ NGOs involved in Linking and Immersion programmes
- △ Trade Unions, particularly Teachers' Unions
- △ Relevant statutory bodies such as the Department of Education & Science and the Department of Foreign Affairs.
- △ Development education practitioners
- △ Representatives of the business sector involved in Linking and Immersion programmes
- △ Returned development workers

### **Who attended:**

The Conference attracted a wide range of organisations and individuals. 68 people in all attended. Participants varied from individual teachers interested in starting a School Linking schemes to those with long experience of such schemes. Organisations attending included Leargas, Poetry Ireland, Tullamore College, Newbridge Youth Project, 80:20; Self Help International, St Gerard's Junior School, Trociare, Waterford One World Centre, Presentation Education office, YMCA, Development Education Research Network, Development Perspectives, Christian Brothers, Amaweale, Kerry Action for Development Education, Leargas, Colaiste an Chraobhin, Co-Operation Ireland, the British Council (NI), Connect World, SUAS, Tullamore College, Louth Youth Service, EIL Experiment in International living) intercultural Learning Cork, Concem, Amnesty International, St Ciaran's School, Kells, Dochas, St Dominick's Secondary School, the Africa Centre, Comhlamh, Afri, Link Community Development, Schools Across Borders.

### 3. Conference Programme

The Conference programme linked two keynote speakers with four workshops on areas for critical analysis in relation to Linking and Immersion Schemes. These were:

**Keynote Speaker 1:** Colm Regan: 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World.  
Presentation Title: *Lies, Spin and Colonialism*

**Keynote Speaker 2:** Vanessa Androitti: Centre for the Study of Social and Global Justice, Nottingham University (UK) and a Brazilian educator with extensive experience in development education internationally.  
Presentation Title: *Linking Horizons*

**Workshop 1:** **Models of Linking & Immersion.**  
This workshop aimed to showcase and debate different models of Linking and Immersion in they outh, schools and private sectors

#### **Presentations:**

- © Amawele (South Africa). *Billy O'Keefe*, Chief Executive.
- © Self Help International. *Daithi O'hAodha* from Africa Alive Programme. (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Malawi, Kenya, Uganda).
- © Edmund Rice Foundation (Christian Brothers) (Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania, Bolivia & India). *Patricia Higgins*, Chairperson, Steering Committee for Developing World Immersion Programme
- © Louth Youth Service (Sri Lanka and Tanzania). *Bobby McCormack*. Youth Officer.

**Workshop 2:** **Real Exchange or One Way learning**  
This workshop aimed to explore the issue of reciprocity – do both people in the Global South and the Global north each benefit equally from Linking and Immersion programmes

#### **Presentations**

- © Link Community Development. *Cathal O'Keefe*. Programme Director, Ireland. (400 links - primarily - in African countries)
- © Kerry Action for Development Education. *Mary McGillacuddy*. Co-Ordinator. (Lesotho)

**Workshop 3:** **Bringing the Learning Back**  
This workshop aimed to explore how Linking and Immersion programmes can contribute to development education in Ireland.

***Presentations***

- © Schools Across Borders. *Darran Irvine*. Programme Manager. (Palestine, Israel, Ireland)
- © The British Council (Northern Ireland). *Deborah Gadd*, Project Deliver Manager.

***Workshop 4:***

**Developing Codes of Practice: The Experience from Volunteering Agencies.**

***Presentations***

- © Comhlamh. *Dervla King*, Project Officer and *Siobhan Sleeman*, Training & Information Officer, Volunteering Options Programme.

## 4. Keynote Speakers

### **Keynote Speaker: Colm Regan *Lies, Spin and Colonialism***

Colm Regan from 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World made the first Conference presentation through a thought provoking and critical analysis of Linking and Immersion initiatives. Colm spoke from the experience of over 25 years organising and supporting study visits on a wide variety of themes and with a wide variety of groups in the global contexts of Australia, the UK, Northern Ireland, Kenya, Ethiopia, Gambia, Brazil, Vietnam, Bangladesh and Cameroon.

*When organised and delivered properly, study visits can do immense good and are an especially powerful tool in the development education toolkit. When organised badly or in a haphazard manner, study visits can do irreparable damage, undermine much of what we try to do in development education – this is now happening on a large scale.*

**Colm Regan: 80:20 Educating & Acting for a Better World**

*The key points from Colm's presentation were:*

*On the positive side:*

- ☺ Study visits and linking schemes provide opportunities for domestic partners to interact intensively with some of the key issues, problems, opportunities and creativities in the global south
- ☺ They provide structured opportunities in Ireland to integrate these opportunities into their own programmes and agendas in a planned and long term manner
- ☺ They provide international and domestic partners with the opportunity to interact with each other and to understand more fully each others perspectives, agenda's, concerns and approaches
- ☺ They offer opportunities for poor people to speak for themselves, and through the medium of the domestic partner, to speak to a wider European audience
- ☺ They highlight development, justice and human rights agendas which underlie development education and they can challenge the overly dominant images of hopelessness and misery which often characterise presentations of development.
- ☺ They can challenge racism, eurocentrism and ethnocentrism.
- ☺ They provide an opportunity for key groups in Ireland to reflect together on the challenges presented and can strengthen the sector in its approach to the work of justice
- ☺ They facilitate the production of support strategies and material for development education in Ireland, North and South, and across communities

However it was Colm's view that in Ireland there was a less positive side in the approach and delivery of study visits. *Such visits, generally with some notable exceptions, have very significantly under delivered on the objectives outlined above and there have been significant and deserved criticisms from a third world perspective.*

Hence the title of his talk: *Lies, Spin and Colonialism*

- ⊗ **Lies.** In terms of lies, it was Colm's view that those undertaking study visits told lies to the public about what the group does when it is 'there', *'but more importantly we have told lies to ourselves'*. It is critical for every organisation/school involved in any type of linking scheme to examine honestly their *own motives* for wanting to be involved in such schemes. Organisations may need to be facilitated to reach an honest understanding of these motives and get to a place where the visits are based on a justice and equality perspective.
- ⊗ **Spin:** Groups undertaking study visit have 'spun and spun' about aid, about NGO's, about government, about church, about charity, about 'spiritual journeys'. Colm pointed to the issue of Irish people doing *their* development 'on the backs' of Africans. He emphasised that there should be no more talk of the 'spiritual experiences' of the Irish participants *'We have no right to build our spiritual experience on the backs of African schools'*
- ⊗ **Colonialism:** Far too many of the study or immersion models and practices are based on colonial attitudes and perceptions. *We have – They need; We give – They take; 'It is better to do something than nothing. Despite their poverty they are happy.* There is often a 'fundamentalist' mindset of 'assist-entialism' – a non ability to get away from the aid and welfare syndrome. The colonial values with which groups approach schemes allows them to avoid the key issues of *'Why is the group doing this'*. Colm emphasised that it is not better to do 'something' rather than 'nothing'. *'Doing something badly does more damage than good both to the host and the Irish community'*. If the local school is not engaged in the 80:20 unequal debate then involvement in linking and immersion schemes is a 'waste of time'.
- ⊗ **Reciprocity.** We send students, teachers, volunteers, youth workers etc 'there' but is there equal reciprocity?. Why do 'they' not come here in equal numbers? Colm challenged the Conference to ask ourselves have we really asked why this is and challenged the rules of funding which makes this difficult.
- ⊗ **Lack of any effective partnership with third world organisations,** often relying on Irish clergy and volunteers. There is also a lack of effective engagement with third world development and human rights agendas as well as lack of engagement with Irish educational agendas. Colm posed the question of whether the majority of Irish schools had really thought about the impact on *African* schools of their involvement

Overall Colm was of the view that study visits are routinely ill-conceived, poorly structured and inadequately supported. Documentation is non-existent which makes evaluation and the tracking of the long term impacts impossible. He strongly emphasised that school linking is **not** a new phenomenon, that there is a good experienced body of knowledge available in the Irish context and therefore there is 'no excuse' for schools and organisations saying they are 'pilots', thus legitimising errors which with good planning based on the vast knowledge currently available on global linking, should not be happening. .

***Discussion***

*The discussion following Colm's presentation focused on*

- The schemes emerging in the Irish context which are not funded through Irish Aid such as Sports clubs, where there is less likelihood of safeguards being in place
- Leargas/Irish Aids *regional* strategy with regard to the new scheme – questions concerning what this strategy constituted and how this would roll out
- Participants sought advice on applications for funding
- Finding ways where both Irish and host countries could seek mutual understanding concerning *why* they are interested in such linking, particularly in the partner countries?

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**Keynote Speaker: Vanessa Androitti – *New Horizons***

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Vanessa Androitti works for the Centre for the Study of Social and Global Justice in Nottingham University (UK) and is a Brazilian educator with extensive experience in development education internationally. She coordinates the projects Open Spaces for Dialogue and Enquiry and Through Other Eyes which promote an approach to development education based on critical literacy and mutual learning. Vanessa is also a visiting lecturer at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand.

Vanessa outlines some theoretical concepts which she asked the Conference to consider when assessing involvement in global and local linking.

- ***What is our own social analysis of the world?*** Do we really understand the local in the global and the global in the local? It is critical to understand our own social analysis of the world before getting involved in such schemes
- ***Do we understand the ‘multi-literacies’ of the world?*** Do we understand the cultural, critical, political, intercultural media, digital, transnational and systems thinking operating in the world and which have implications for any organisation getting involved in global linking?
- ***Do we understand our ‘dispositions’?*** Are we fully involved in dialogue, critical engagement, mutual learning, challenging power relationships, imagining different futures as we consider involvement in linking and immersion programmes?

Vanessa indicated that her own experience of linking schemes was that they operated in a context of unequal relations:

- Unequal power relations
- Unequal in terms of access to resources
- Unequal in terms of a perception gaps between the parties
- Unequal in terms of assumptions about development

There are therefore critical challenges to teachers involved in such schemes, challenges of skills, space and time to explore the implications and frameworks in order to be able to understand different local and global perspectives, methodologies and supports required to deliver such schemes.

In approaching any linking and immersion scheme, Vanessa indicated that it is critical that schools and other begin a process of ‘looking through others eyes’. This critically involves:

- Learning to unlearn all we know
- Learning to listen
- Learning to learn from and with
- Learning to reach out

There has therefore to be a major shift in thinking from a European perspective if such schemes are to impact equally. This shift has to involve:

- ① The development of critical thinking
- ① Moving beyond our own ethnocentric viewpoint
- ① Developing an ethical relation to difference
- ① Learning tools which will facilitate independent thinking
- ① Preparing for participative decision making
- ① Accountable reasoning and action
- ① Balance rights and justice with care and responsibility

Vanessa left us with a thought provoking quote:

**'The Missionaries are now younger and instead of the church, they talk of development. They come; they think they will help; they are the only knowers; they become expert in their observations and people start to consult them about us'**  
***Martin Nakata. September 2007.***

## 5. Workshop Reports

### **Workshop 1: *Model of Linking and Immersion***

The workshop had presentations from Bobby McCormack from the Louth Youth Service, Patricia Higgins from the Christian Brothers, Daithi O'hAodha Self Help International and Billy O'Keefe from Amaweale.

#### ***Youth Linking***

Bobby McCormack outlined the linking involving young people in County Louth and young people in Tanzania and Sri Lanka. The project is part funded by Irish Aid and involves people aged 18 and over who have direct contact with young people – youth workers, teachers, artists etc. The aim of the scheme is to build a network of development educators in Ireland whose focus would be the youth sector. The programme is a 9 month long one with only a 2 week period away. The programme involved:

- *A pre-departure phase* – which include preparing participants on development theory with a lot of focus being on team building and capacity building of those involved in the programme.
- *An overseas phase* – which involved Irish participants working with Sri Lankans and Tanzanian partners in schools, NGO's through workshops and hands on projects. A second programme involved Tanzanians coming to Ireland, where they all built a basketball court together.
- *A Coming Home phase* – which involved planning, designing, organising and facilitating a range of interactive exhibitions from a range of groups in Ireland

*Recommendations from Bobby for the schemes were*

- (a) Work with existing groups who have long experience of placing people overseas e.g VSI
- (b) Develop more the third phase and delivering development education in Ireland

#### ***The Christian Brothers experience of Linking 'Developing World Immersion Programme'***

Patricia Higgins from the Christian Brothers Education Offices outlined the work of the Christian Brothers in global schools linking. Their initiative was established in 1999 and by 2007 involved 40 schools, 84 immersion trips in 23 locations and in 5 countries (India, Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Bolivia). The aims of the programme have been to *'increase the desire and capacity of students and wider school communities from the Edmund Rice Network in Europe to act in solidarity for a more just world'*. The programme does this through providing senior students with structured opportunities to engage empathetically with people in the global south and embedding the experience in a programme of development education and Christian reflection back in Ireland.

Each immersion programme operates throughout a 2 year cycle, with *Year 1* comprising the Irish school assigned a school in the global south, an induction trip by staff of the Irish school, the selection of students and ideally a development education module which is delivered in the school throughout the year. Patricia emphasised the considerable

preparation involved over both years 1 and 2 particularly prior to departure. *Year 2* is spent on development education training and pre-departure preparation, the immersion visit itself, feedback to the Irish school and the wider community, school and network debriefing, review and evaluation of visits. There are no age limits to the students who travel but the recommended age is 15 and over.

The Christian Brothers Network funds an Immersion co-ordinator, Patricia, to support the programme throughout the whole of the cycle. Currently the Christian Brothers are trying to move the programme on, more substantially, from those who travel.

Patricia noted the Christian Brothers recognition of the critical points made by Colm Regan earlier in the day and was conscious that there was room for improvement and development in all the linking schemes.

### ***Amawele: Ireland and South African School Twinning Project***

Billy O'Keefe from Amawele presented information concerning its School Twinning programme. '*Amawele*' means 'twins' in the Nguni language of South Africa. The programme was formally established in January 2007 and developed originally from parent involvement through two schools in Dublin, one in Rathmines and one in Kildare St. One parent also had business interest in Cape Town and started to meet a school in that city, which resulted in the principle from that school coming to Ireland to discuss potential linking. The link was initially focused on providing funding for the Cape Town school but has now expanded to a wider number of schools in South Africa. They are now exploring the notion of a 5 year plan for each of the linked schools.

Amawele aims are to contribute to the development of education mainly through creating strong support and exchange partnerships with schools and communities in Ireland. In South Africa the main aim is to raise the number of young people who have access to properly structured education up to the end of second level. In order to do this Amawele focuses on the provision of clothing, facilities and material, the training and support of teachers and the fostering of support structures. In Ireland its main aim is to give young people the opportunity to grow in understanding about the world and develop a confidence about the difference they can make in the world and in their own lives.

By the end of 2007 50 such twinning arrangements had taken place at both primary and secondary levels and the aim is to develop 200 by 2010. The twinning now involves communication between the schools, teacher exchange and a funding commitment to the South African school.

Billy finished by alluding to his own questioning about the value of very young people visiting schools versus the development of e.g. teacher supports and other aspects of the programme. There were key issues of safety and support for young Irish people experiencing such schemes at a very young age and these need to be taken into the equation when planning twinning schemes. He also alluded to the fact that many businesses wished to use their own philanthropy and corporate responsibility positively and it was from this perspective Amawele developed.

**Self Help International.**

Daithi O'hAodha presented the linking work of Self Help in Kenya.

**GAP – Presentation required for summary**

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**Summary and Key Recommendations from Workshop 1:**

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***Critical Points which should inform Good Practice***

- ☺ Defining very clearly your objectives
- ☺ Need for partnerships and time spent building equal partnerships
- ☺ Facilitated reflection is critical
- ☺ Preparation of organisations organising the schemes – vs. current focus on students/teachers

***Three recommendations for Action from the workshop***

- Join the dots between the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Education in relation to schemes e.g. reciprocity and African teachers
- Look to models involving more of the local Irish community especially to get the development education message into schools.

***Critical Issues to Consider***

- Visiting should only happen after full planning, structures and funding are established
- Reciprocity is not always about actual visits.

***Recommendations for the workshop***

- ☺ Distil out of the current practice, good practice
- ☺ Have written guidelines. Put in it the key factors for good practice and write it in lay people's language

**Workshop evaluation – Participants comments**

***On the positive side.....:***

- Useful to see alternative models of linking/immersion. Perhaps a more interactive approach would have been useful? NB: To keep development education in mind
- Lot of key issues brought to forefront
- Very important to see other models but I think development educators should link their issues to Global. In other words linking national to global not only Africa
- Very interesting workshop
- Very informative. Make a plan. Make a link. Make a friend. Make a basketball court.
- Good to get different perspectives and experiences. A plenary would have been useful after the four speakers

***On the other side....***

- More participation and debate from audience would have been useful. Presentations could have been shorter to allow more time for discussion
- Room needed a semi-circle. Needed some smaller group work
- Would have been useful to give examples of successes and failures. Would be good to have a general resource with different examples of 'models' and put together some lessons on planning/action/reflection
- Not enough time to have discussion and some of the contributors were a bit 'preachy'
- Last speaker was allowed to take all the questions at the end and he took a lot of time which should have been stopped to allow for more discussion with the audience.

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**Workshop 2: 'Real Exchange or One Way Learning.'**

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Cathal O'Keefe from Link Community Development (LCD) and Mary McGillacuddy from Kerry Action for Development Education (KADE) addressed the critical issue of reciprocity in Workshop 2.

***Link Community Development***

Link Community Development is an international development agency with an office in Ireland, has been linking through its Schools Programme since 1999 and currently facilitates over 400 north/south schools linking across the globe, including linking with Irish schools. The focus of their linking is primarily through correspondence between teachers and students, though visits do take place. Schools generally work on joint projects e.g. school improvement programmes. LCD made the following key points in relation to the critical issue of reciprocity:

- Involvement in school improvements can only work if it brings about improvements in education
- Importance of recognising that benefits for northern schools will be different to those in the south
- The question has to be asked 'Is development education a priority for an African teacher struggling with an over-crowded and under-resourced classroom'?
- Motivation and planning on both sides needs to be clear
- A northern driven agenda needs to be avoided
- Recognise that fundraising and aid donations risk undermining the principle of linking
- Listening to the southern voice is critical to mutual benefit
- Linking will be most successful if supported by organisations experienced in development
- Link Community Development heavily manages its Schools Linking programme through maximising the benefits to both schools, minimising the risk of exploitation of either side and ensure all activities are guided by sound development principles.

***Kerry Action for Development Education***

Kerry Action for Development Education (KADE) has been involved in schools linking since the mid 1990's focusing their links between a primary schools in Tralee, India and in Zimbabwe. More recently in 2006 KADE facilitated the establishment of a twinning project between County Kerry and Lesotho – 'Twinning the Kingdoms'. This project is now entering its second year as an independent organisation which operates its twinning activities across a wide spectrum of Kerry public and private business, community and educational bodies. An embassy official of the Kingdom of Lesotho described the linking as a

*'long term friendship co-operation... on a range of issues with the aim of exchanging educational experiences, understanding and appreciation of history, culture and lifestyles... Twinning... is an ideal tool for removing misconceptions, myths and negative opinion forming about other cultures'.*

KADE identified the critical issues for good practice in Linking schemes as:

- ☞ Awareness, knowledge and skills
- ☞ Reflection and adequate preparation
- ☞ Seek professionally recognised guidance which adhere to agreed standards of practice

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### Summary and Key Recommendations from Workshop 2:

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#### **Critical Points which should inform Good Practice**

- **Meaningful dialogue** – mutual learning. Agree to disagree...Reciprocity
- **Reflection & on going evaluation** & preparation & follow up
- **Avoid assistentialism** (? I am assuming this means avoid getting into an ‘assistance’ frame of mind?)
- **Research**
- **Partnership** between both
- **Equality** – in particular being aware of the language we use
- **Planning**
  - *Physical /first hand experience contributes to real learning*
  - *Sharing of experience with wider audiences*
  - *Cultural immersion/dispelling myths etc*
  - *Increase cultural understand within schools in Ireland*
  - *Skills and personal development*
- **Immersion** – mutual learning will depend on preparation prior to visits on both sides, while ‘in-country’ and as follow up to the visit
- **Follow up** is crucial for learning and needs to be structured
- It is critical participants in Ireland reflect on their own culture, social issues etc before going on visits
- Identify what action can we take from home e.g. campaigning, learning

#### **Challenges associated with ensuring mutual learning**

- Funding imbalance between the north and the south
- Meeting the actual identified needs
- Basic resources may not be available in partner schools/community; schools that have resources e.g. PC’s are more likely to be included in a scheme. Imbalance of wealth (80:20) and how we take this into account
- Time constraints – are we willing to receive as well as send
- Sustaining programmes with past participants
- The development of adequate structures to enable mutual learning
- Power relationships between north and south
- Culture and history, the images we have of the south. Preconceptions. Traditional ‘charity’ models. Not re-enforcing stereotypes
- Willingness to learn on both sides
- Choosing appropriate activities
- Not having practical resources/guidelines or case studies for teachers on both sides

#### **Steps need to be taken to ensure reciprocal learning & benefits**

- Planning and clear objectives on both sides. Honesty re expectations and objectives. **Preparation** for students
- Mechanism for sharing learning. Learn from Southern Voices in Ireland. Listen to the teachers and students to gain feedback – re-define who the experts are.
- Programme strategy – researching, and reviewing the programme and thinking about it strategically
- Think about the choice of partner? What level should this be at?
- Understanding of respective needs and expectations
- Build in evaluation mechanisms
- Include people outside the school in planning & learning
- More curriculum integration

***Recommendations from the Workshop***

- ***Identify components for preparation*** – examine existing programmes
- ***Reach out to teachers*** – redefine ‘experts’ and ‘meaningful contribution’
- ***Link with Curriculum developers***, NCCA, Department of Education and Science.

**Workshop 2 Evaluation – Participants comments**

***On the positive side.....:***

- Good but a bit short
- Good questions and discussions
- Discussions were insightful. Feel there is a need to develop practical guidelines/resources for teachers etc involved in linking and provide useful preparation for teachers and students
- Enjoyed the discussion and having teachers present

***On the other side....***

- Confused by KADE presentation

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### **Workshop 3: 'Bringing the Learning Back.'**

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Darran Irvine, Programme Manager from Schools Across Borders and Deborah Gadd, Project Deliver Manager with the British Council in Northern Ireland addressed the issue of bringing the learning back home to Ireland in Workshop 3.

#### ***Schools Across Borders.***

Schools Across Borders is a school and youth linking and immersion programme between Palestinian, Israeli, northern and southern Ireland young people. Its aim is to develop 'a *partnership between communities for international benefit and mutual solidarity*'.

In terms of bringing the learning back into Ireland Schools Across Borders aims to transfer knowledge and skills that serve target groups and partners alike. They focus on highlighting stage-by-stage processes of learning and building relationships rather than concrete outputs and final closure. They also provide specific further opportunities for pro-active engagement. In Ireland they link in with the curriculum in schools, consulting with teachers in different subject areas working on programme design, content and format.

*Darran finally identified the challenges to bring the learning back home as:*

- Ensuring adequate time for follow-up sessions and final evaluation with student groups and teachers
- Retaining the same teachers for new programmes within the school and securing new teachers, new subjects, new groups in the same or new schools
- Ensuring funding for establishing parity between home staff and southern partners.

#### ***British Council***

Deborah Gadd explored the British Council Northern Ireland Global School Partnerships. This is a programme funded throughout the UK by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). It operates with partners in Sub Saharan Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America. The programme is managed and administered by the British Council in partnership with a number of UK based agencies.

The programme provides cluster groups of 3 schools with the opportunity to partner schools from 2 different countries in Sub Saharan Africa, engaging in collaborative work which must support and be integrated in to the curriculum of all partner schools. The programme aims to enable intercultural dialogue and increase knowledge and understanding of each others societies. The programme provides for supports for schools in terms of advice and guidance, professional development for teachers, workshops and a grants scheme.

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## **Summary and Key Recommendations from Workshop 3:**

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### ***Critical Points which should inform Good Practice***

- Key principles
  - Partnership Agreement
  - Slowly does it
  - It's about Learning – Reflection – Honesty
  - Be prepared
  - Evaluate
- Look to the Comhlamh Code of Practice
- Awareness/sensitivity e.g. re language
- Engage with funders
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### ***Challenges associated with ensuring mutual learning***

- Perception of partner
- Lack of critique on both sides
- Lack of cohesion across sectors (policy level)
- Parity of funding
- Evaluation may not be quantifiable

### ***Recommendations from the Workshop***

- Embed in the reality of life in Ireland
- Draw up a template for a programme for coming back home
- Asking the basic question – do we need Linking Programmes and what do we want from it
- Importance of debriefing and evaluation
- Work with existing structures and organisations who have been in the field of development for a long time. 'Link the Linkers'
- Keep formal and non formal sectors together
- (NYCI) Learning document – Youth Workers to Zambia
- Implement British Council model for teacher training+ Boards of Management. Take a whole school approach

## **Workshop 3 Evaluation – Participants comments**

### ***On the positive side.....:***

- . Information from British Council very interesting. Preparation is the key.
- A good workshop. Good participation. Informative and thought provoking.
- Newness of area and projects means time to explain what projects are about is required – but more time for discussion would have been good.
- Great
- Bring it back. Make it real. Embed it.

### ***On the other side....***

- Would have liked more discussion and information from Schools Across Borders
- Would have been good to have had more time for discussion about the models and experience
- Like to know more about UK/NI
- More focus on actual transfer of learning and follow-on actions would have been useful

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**Workshop 4: 'Developing Codes of Practice.'**

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Dervla King, Project Officer and Siobhan Sleeman, Training & Information Officer from Comhlamh's Volunteering Options Programme made a presentation to the workshop on their experience of developing a Code of Practice for development organisations sending volunteers to the global south.

***Comhlamh***

The team outlined the context of establishing a Code of Good Practice. This developed within Comhlamh's Volunteering Options Programme which was established in 2004 with funding from Irish Aid. This Programme broadly aimed to encourage responsible, responsive international volunteering and to this end has developed a number of resources which includes a website, training courses and research into the impact of international volunteering on host communities. The programme produced both a Code of Good Practice for volunteer sending agencies and a Volunteers Charter for volunteers themselves. The workshop primarily focused on the development of a Code of Good Practice in the context of the potential development of a Code of Good Practice for School Linking & Immersion programmes.

The rationale to establish such a code came from the changing nature of overseas volunteering, with many new organisations emerging in the Irish context – at least 24 since 2000. There was also a sense that in a time of change the basic core issues of development and the needs of host communities and volunteers themselves can sometimes be eclipsed and in this context there was a need to focus practice in a shared and co-operative environment and construct a coherent set of principles for good practice. Volunteering has therefore to be seen in the context of an equal 3 way partnership – the host community, the volunteer and the sending agency.

The Code of good practice was developed over a 2 year period – 2004 – 2006 - using an extensive consultation process, sending agencies themselves drafting the key topics and issues to be covered in the code. A working group from the agencies developed the principles and indicators for the Code. Broadly organisations who now sign up for the Code agree to:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>⊙ Have volunteer programmes based on realistic aims and objectives with appropriate and useful volunteer roles</li><li>⊙ Provide sufficient resources to support and run volunteer programmes in an efficient and sustainable manner</li><li>⊙ Provides marketing and imagery consistent with good practise, and clear expressions of organisational aims, ethos and values.</li><li>⊙ Provide potential volunteers with free, fair and unbiased information on their organisations and volunteer placement</li><li>⊙ Use fair, consistent and transparent recruitment procedures</li><li>⊙ Assist and provide for the varying support needs of volunteers</li><li>⊙ Ensure that volunteers participate in appropriate preparation, training and induction</li><li>⊙ Ensure the protection, safety and well being of volunteers and those they work with.</li></ul> |
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- ⊙ Provide recognition for volunteers, ongoing monitoring and evaluation and debriefing for returned volunteers

### *The Challenges*

The Comhlamh team then explored the challenges in implementing such a Code. These were identified as:

- ⊙ Agreeing an appropriate model of implementation – this currently is a ‘peer support’ model with no external monitoring
- ⊙ Agreeing the content – devising principles and indicators relevant to short and long term sending agencies with widely varying resources and programmes
- ⊙ Developing an easy to use sdf -audit tool
- ⊙ Agreeing the minimal level of involvement to be considered a signatory to the Code
- ⊙ Organisational resources to implement the Code - time, financial and human resources
- ⊙ Fostering commitment to the aims of the Code and ensuring the Code did not become a paper exercise
- ⊙ Creating a consultative process for implementation
- ⊙ Identifying the necessary external support for organisations to effectively implement the Code and getting organisations to prioritise the Code within the operational plans
- ⊙ Trying to get organisations to take a lead on common issues of concern arising from the implementation of the Code.
- ⊙ Building awareness of the Code with the wider sector

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### **Summary and Key Recommendations from Workshop 4:**

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#### ***Critical Points which should inform Good Practice***

- Preparation
- Scrutinising motivations and expectations
- Everyone’s voice is important – both sides of the link/exchange. Need to think things through

#### ***Recommendations from the Workshop***

- Allocate funding to create space for teachers to explore difference and multiple perspectives
- Build/develop resources for schools to challenge perspectives
- Build awareness of existing toolkits and if necessary adapt for the Irish context
- Carry on and foster existing networks and build/extend new ones e.g. with teachers etc.

### **Workshop 4 Evaluation – Participants comments**

#### ***On the positive side.....:***

- Very interesting, good learning – enabling environment
- Very informative
- Very interesting and good learning
- Very thought provoking – thank you

#### ***On the other side.....: (Nothing!)***

## *Appendix 1: Resources*

### *Website links:*

-  [www.throughtherseyes.org.uk](http://www.throughtherseyes.org.uk) This website aims to develop a set of tool where teachers, in particular, can develop knowledge of the works through the eyes of indigenous communities. It plans to develop a free on-line course.
-  [www.ukowla.org.uk/main/toolkit.asp](http://www.ukowla.org.uk/main/toolkit.asp). This website was established in 1984 to assist schools in the UK to develop partnership links with communities in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It's Toolkit of Good practice can be downloaded from the website.
-  [www.osdemethodology.org.uk](http://www.osdemethodology.org.uk) This is the website for 'Open Space for Dialogue and Enquiry' which offers a set of procedures and ground rules to structure safe spaces for dialogue and enquiry about global issues and perspectives focusing on interdependence.
-  [www.volunteeringoptions.org](http://www.volunteeringoptions.org). This is a website focuses on the all the needs of volunteer sending agencies and potential volunteers. It also has a substantial data base for potential volunteers seeking international placements.
-  [www.britishcouncil.org/learning-ie-school-partnerships.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/learning-ie-school-partnerships.htm). This is the British Councils Global School Partnership programme website. It outlines the full programme and assists UK schools link with global schools.  
[www.globalgateway.co.uk](http://www.globalgateway.co.uk) also includes facility for NI schools to register their details and look for potential partner schools.

### *Original presentations*

- The majority of original papers to the Conference are on the IDEA website:  
[www.ideaonline.ie](http://www.ideaonline.ie)