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Councillor Dave Shilton Chair of Warwick District Council welcomed everyone to Warwick District and to Leamington Spa. He extolled the virtues of the Warwick One World Link as one of the best examples he has come across and emphasised the need to teach our children through linking the importance of understanding each other. We need to use our partnerships for peace.



Mike Smith, Chair of UKOWLA, welcomed everyone to the conference.

“It’s a pleasure to be back here in Leamington where a very significant national UKOWLA Conference was held 4 years ago.

Then as now that conference was built on the enthusiasm and expertise local people in Leamington Spa, Warwick and Warwickshire and we are particularly pleased that our former Deputy Chair Jane Knight (to whom UKOWLA nationally owes a continuing debt) together with John Myers (Secretary of the Warwick - Bo Link) and Maria Franchi have been able to play a key role in setting up this event. Bill Evans, Richard Scott-Herridge and Andy Smith are other locals who have been of considerable service to UKOWLA over the years.

Just in case you don’t know them - the UKOWLA arrangements have been made by our Director Dr Nick Maurice and our Administrator Pepi O’Neill who are getting to be old hands at this – though the work load never gets less.

UKOWLA is a member of the Global School Partnerships Consortium led by the British Council with VSO and Cambridge Education Foundation. It is the GSP funded by the Department for International Development that is supporting this conference financially. UKOWLA’s role, based on its membership of 350 schools, community groups, local authorities, hospitals and faith groups, is to encourage schools to involve wider communities in their links. One of the foci of this conference is to look at how we can make our links as inclusive as possible.

This is the fourth of a series of UKOWLA country – specific conferences started two years ago as part of a mapping programme of links to different parts of the world. The previous conferences were on links to Ghana (York), The Gambia (Marlborough) and Uganda (Ross on Wye). None of these could have happened without the engagement and enthusiasm of local groups.

We are planning to organise conferences on links on Caribbean and Tanzanian links in 2006.

We in UKOWLA want these events to be a means to better co-operation, collaboration and information - sharing between groups in the UK, not least those who are from countries overseas living here. Each conference should be a component in a growing network to make use of living international partnerships. The core aim is to help us understand each other in an increasingly diverse Britain as an aid to the creation of greater cohesion within our communities.

The programme before you will not only present you with ideas and information but is also designed for you as participants to share views and contribute to all our thinking and the larger ambition I’ve outlined.

One of the best things you (and I) can do though is to make sure that we talk to as many different people as we can over the two days in those informal moments between the bits of the programme. Oh – and have a good time.

So - on with the programme - and I now invite the Warwick- Bo group to present their case study”.

CASE STUDY ONE – Warwick-Bo Link

Warwick – Bo Link

- Founded as a community link in 1981 after two years of preparation.
- 20 schools, hospital, library, farmers and various individuals and families involved.
- The local council have given support with much learning in both communities.

How the link was developed and sustained

- Visits both ways
- Interspersed with long stays of university students
- Exchanges of school work
- Exchanges between hospital sisters and gifts of theatre equipment and medicines
- Letters
- Adult education courses

Partnership between community and local councils

- To start with visitors from Bo in Leamington received warmly by cross party leaders
- Chief Executive interested in Warwick District assisting with establishment of democratic processes in Bo
- Otherwise no commitment of funds or officer time

But

- Visit of Bo Council officer
 - Council staff in Warwickshire concerned about the reality of waste problems in Bo
 - Benefits to Bo – exposure to new ideas, good relationships for future co-operation
 - Widened awareness of international issues affecting local life

Potential since 1004 local government elections

- Leamington TOWN council has allocated funds to launch jointly with Bo Council a youth and community development programme
- Council members of One World Link now working on policy proposal to be put to Warwick DISTRICT Council Official
- Can we achieve recognition by full council of benefits of partnership and budget?!
- Sierra Leone Task Force

Warwickshire County Council proposed activities

- Cabinet endorsed Development Partnership with Bo Town Council in April 2005.
 - Capacity building
 - Strategic planning
 - Councillor training
 - Community participation
 - Physical projects
 - Waste management
 - Water

Possibilities

- Engaging private sector partners
- WRAP – initially based on small eco-schools project to introduce a waste management strategy in Bo.
- ARUP water system for Bo at last?
- Developing youth and university student exchange programmes

What have we learnt in 25 years of linking

- New perspectives on lifestyle
- Different approaches to education and child rearing etc

- Personal understanding of effect of global issues
- different expectations at each end of the link
- Issue of material differences
- Need to look at our aspirations from South perspective
- Patience and persistence
- Significance of community, council and private sector working together

“TOOLKIT OF GOOD PRACTICE – OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES”
– led by Margaret Burr

Margaret introduced the Toolkit and said it was there to look at the issues and challenges everyone faces in their links and to look at the way forward.

Group Activities to look at various aspects of the Toolkit

Activity 1 (Starting a link leaflet)

“Learning for change”

What do we have in common?

What kind of link are we?

How much do we already know about our partners?

What would we like to know about our partners?

What do we want them to know about us?

What have we already learnt?

What have we learnt about ourselves?

Are we receptive to/for change?

Are we communicating effectively?

Have our initial criteria changed?

Has our vision evolved?

Are we prepared for set-backs?

Is everyone enjoying themselves?

Have we made contact with other local groups?

Have we learnt to be adaptable?

Are we using our resources effectively?

Whose agenda is it we're working to?

SWOT analysis with both partners

Can we learn to deal with threats to our link?

Activity 2 (Raising awareness of the issues facing African communities)

Lectures from locally based Africans – different themes

Employ a communications company to do press releases etc.

Let's eat Africa evening – dishes from different countries

World music

Using festivals to show artefacts from different countries

Major festival incorporating all ideas, including educational materials (eg. Leamington Peace Festival)

Local Africans going into local schools

Invite local Africans into your home for a meal with a few friends so can talk about issues in depth and encourage others to follow suit

Engage with local African diaspora organisations

Go to country websites to learn more

Look at BBC's "Focus on Africa" website pages

Buying in Fairtrade goods from Africa

AIDS awareness day

Activity 3 (How do we ensure linking does not lead to reinforcing the stereotype of Southern countries as unable of taking action for themselves)

Ensure equal contributions for both partners in planning and activity

Exchange visits and the involvement of the diaspora

Recognise that the achievement of partner community depends on health, wealth and community support which may be different

Equal ownership

Importance of true empathy

Stress mutual learning

Friendship link

Invite people from the south to come into our schools to break down stereotypes

Activity 4 (key issues on sustaining a link)

Patience

Communication

Rejuvenating your link group – bringing in younger members

Persistence

Purpose

- Clarity
- Advanced thinking and planning
- Shared thinking and planning (time-limited partnership agreements)

Commitment

Enthusiasm

Fun and celebration/ enjoyment

Personal relationships

Honesty (including when you are wrong, flexibility for dynamic change)

Funding

Structure

- flexible and dynamic – not rigid
- accountable
- representative

Assessment/ evaluation/ dissemination/ review (accountability and transparency)

Vision/ hope/ faith

Shared understanding

Humility

Willingness to learn

Flexibility

Equality

Respect

Involving a range of people at both ends (engagement)

Activity 5 (4 suggestions for things an African link school can send to a UK school, to challenge stereotypes)

Essays written by pupils

Video/DVD showing activities

School uniform

Children's art

People

Books

Community projects

Music, songs, instruments

Recipes

Reading packs
Newspapers
Photographs/ postcards/ disposable cameras
Clothing
Games
Tools – alternative technology
Food products (eg. coffee)
Economic reports
Politics reports
Flora and fauna

Activity 6 (2 UK teachers and 14 students visiting their Uganda partner school have built a dormitory and decorated it for cleanliness and safety – what are the pros and cons of this activity?)

Negatives

Why not homestays?
Why can't you trust your partners to look after you?
Assumption that they need greater comfort?
Visitors miss an experience if they keep themselves separate
Could be taking work away from local builders

Positives

Clean safe space
Extra accommodation left behind for the school
Working together

Language and Communication – Group work ideas

Communication

- Heavy burden of trust on those who do the main (sometimes only) communication between links
- Purpose of the partnership has to be clearly defined
- Essential to discover real needs of the community, and securing equal ownership of the project
- Desire to please may distort/ mask reality
- Cultural attitudes (and assumptions) can cause a difficulty in communication
 - Southern reluctance to offend
 - Northern domination of discussion
 - Barrier of stereotypes
- Reciprocal visits essential
- Importance for teachers to keep school contacts throughout the year
- Cameras a vital tool (disposable cameras or digital for a community)
- Mobiles only working in certain areas, at certain times
- Importance of having connections with local Diaspora so that English does not need to be the only language of communication with some of the more remote communities
- Use of modern facilities where possible – to ease delays in communication
- Delayed communication and need for patience
- Need for orientation prior to visiting link partners
- Recognise difference in philosophies and agree a common partnership philosophy
 - if this is not possible then re-examine whether link goes ahead, and if it does accept imperfections
- Recognise that there may be unspoken things, even between visitors meeting their partners
- Communication is the key to success
- Producing a newsletter and circulating it both in the Northern community and the Southern one

- Satellite phones are well priced (especially in terms of the benefits)
- Importance of communication across links, and communities – eg. Ex-pats and visitors can take deliveries / awareness of when people are going
- Make full use of the full range of communication available, including the British Embassies' / High Commissions' diplomatic bag. Some NGOs can act as post offices

Language

- Partners to show and value respect and make some efforts in learning each others' languages – strengthens relationship
- Hearing words but different meaning (eg. No) need to ensure there is a shared vision for link
- Literacy issue: (about 40%)
 - Make it as easy as possible for people
 - Use of pictures, dancers, plays, puppets as English is not always a common language
 - Starfish Initiative (based in Leamington) producing interactive DVDs on practical issues eg nutrition, HIV/AIDS
- (beware of pictures too – as some images carry different perceptions: eg. Children splashing in a puddle of water is fun in the UK but high risk (malaria, gastro-enteritis) in Sierra Leone)

Support

- Required in visa acquisition
- Exchange visits
- Community support will help sustainability
- Find out what structures exist on the ground and use them
- Give training and literacy circles to help ask for support
- Link with the diaspora, need for interaction for support between Southern groups
- UKOWLA ought to be a support organisation, a central resource (with the development of a joint website)
- Involvement of youth
- Accessing support/ networks
 - Financial implications
 - Bureaucracy
 - Infrastructure
 - Communication/ Internet
- Lack of understanding of the purpose of links and needs
- Knowing the sources of support and how to ask, having the confidence to ask, knowing it is OK to ask
- Problem of equity of support (eg. difficulties with financial gifts)
- Possibility of pooling finance / resources
- Schools in Bo have set up a Teachers Group with its own committee (and a fee to join!) for teachers to come together and share experiences. A Primary Teachers Group has been set up in the UK and there is some communication between the 2 groups
- Officers of the Bo committee have frequent telephone conversations with the UK secretary to discuss issues, policies, problems etc.
- Identify what the support needs are by bringing people together to discuss these – at both ends – and to exchange
- Could be more government level support for obtaining visas
- Customs, tax etc is ongoing issue for communicative/ logistical support. The High Commission has a greater role to play
- Share information: up, down and sideways

Finance and fundraising

- For what purpose? Clarify the priorities, the objectives and aims, clarity of purpose essential
 - Is sending money part of the link as you perceive it?
 - Should you have a strategic plan?

- Ensure that there is on-going funding rather than useless white elephants
- Ensure that funding is for things that the partners want/ need
- Procedures for handling money
- Best way of transferring money?
 - Take it out and change it on the black market?
 - Take it out and change it in bank
 - Some kind of joint account to facilitate many small transactions
 - Western Union equivalent
- (NB: consult with Sierra Leoneans who know who to trust)
- Banking system is most reliable
- Relatively easy to get capital funds but very hard to get running costs ie: salaries
- Charitable base
- Membership pool
- Pooling of shipping costs
- Accountability
- face to face contact to encourage accountability
- In the GSP programme Northern schools are accountable for the money, this can create a power relationship
- Trust at both ends required
- Per diem and gifts?
 - Eg. DVD players to visitors – dodgy area
 - gives independence but needs to be pitched at the right level
 - Governmental visitors from the south may well have very substantial per diem that needs to be clear to link group
- How do you keep expectations manageable?
- Does too much finance encourage dependence?
- If you withdraw “the finance” can the friendship link continue?
- Charitable status has added credibility and facilitated fundraising
- Rotary is a potential for fundraising
- Sources of local funding like phone companies “connecting people”!
- Look to similar businesses in this country to help fund similar businesses in the south
- Use local suppliers and local community in the work
- Pay local authority to turn up to local meetings
- Need government ministries in the south that are grant giving to be established
- Instability of currency conversion means money is often lost
- Issues of money being promised and not delivered
- Fundraising should be specifically project orientated, based on needs determined by the overseas partner themselves
- Financial contribution from the north to be equated to labour cost from southern partners (day to day running, travel costs to obtain visas etc)
- Trust the partner to manage any funds transferred to them
- Financial contributions are necessary to support communication

CASE STUDY TWO - Bo District Descendants Association (BODDA)

Martin Tarawally, Chairman

BODDA are an independent, non-partisan, non-political and non-religious association of people from the district of Bo.

Our Aims:

- We endeavour to speak collectively with one voice on issues that affect the destiny of our people in Bo and to address the legitimate fears of all Bo district descendants in the diaspora, which come with the pressures of living away from ones own country and immediate families and friends.

- To benefit children and young people in Britain of Bo descent
- To strengthen networks of Sierra Leoneans living in the UK and affiliated with Bo District
- To assist all Bo descendants living in the UK and to foster good relations between BODDA members living abroad and to help each other in time of severe strain, distress and / or mishap.
- To improve the quality of life.

Then as we grew....

- Tackled social deprivation by.....
 - Improving social standards for youths
 - Develop self-esteem, self-belief especially after the 10 year civil war
 - Supporting youth education through bursaries, scholarships
 - Sponsoring social events such as civic awards and youth talent activities

For the future we hope to:

- Channel the direction of young people towards productive activity
- Improve sporting facilities
- Create more recreational activities in the township
- Solidify our networks and partnerships
- Unify the Bo society

After dinner talk given by Krishna Sarada, Director, Council for Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations



The biggest challenge in our society is living and working with difference - - We need people who can tolerate ambiguity, people who are challenged, not threatened by the state of the world. A few steps needed to bring this maturity about are -

“First, do not seek security in things, nor yet in status. The care of possessions and position, is time and energy consuming and they can be taken away from you by a thief in the night, by a fire in the night, by a change in political fortunes, by any number of disasters. Whatever security you have lies in yourself”.

“Henceforth I ask not good fortune. I myself am good fortune”.

“If you understand yourself, both your strengths and limitations, if you like the person you are, if you acquire coping skills through experience, if you are not too encumbered, and if you know

inwardly that disaster cannot ultimately overcome you, then you have gone a long way to maturity. You will be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

Second, do not rest in intellectual security, for your philosophy and on the knowledge on which it rests are likely to become obsolete. Wisdom is not about amassing facts....

Third, the only real security in the end is the love we have given and the love we have received. All else can be taken from us. So pour out your love and friendship and do not hoard it. And do not delay or hesitate in standing up to be counted with the oppressed.

Finally cultivate the light touch. Develop a sense of humour. Learn to light up a room with joy when you enter. Accept the challenge of our chaotic and dangerous world with a sense of adventure, of gratitude that our time is now”.

CASE STUDY THREE - Diocese of Chichester/Dioceses of Bo and Freetown school link

Autumn 2002

Discussions CMS/Diocese/ Daphne and Trevor to framework scheme.
Equal partnership central to project.

Spring 2003

Liaison with Bo and Freetown.

Summer 2003

Daphne and Trevor visit Sierra Leone and link six pilot schools.
Next 12 months—pilot links consolidated, new ones set up and committee enlarged.
Link Resources Pack produced – financed by CMS.

June 2004

Headteacher of Annie Walsh School visits UK link school.

September 2004

Secondary students from UK visit link school in Freetown for 10 days.

November 2004

Bo and Freetown Dioceses Education Secretaries visit Chichester Diocese.

February 2005

Trevor takes staff from two UK link schools and diocese rep. to S. Leone.
Next 6 months –liaison responsibilities shared after February visit. Three people now.

October 2005

Second visit by UK secondary students to Freetown + visit by two diocese reps.

November 2005

Headteacher of SLC Primary School Baiima visits UK link school.

February 2006

Daphne and Trevor due to lead next visit to Freetown and Bo. Currently 40 schools linked—5 secondary, 35 primary.

Now

Assessment of stage we have reached, review how we got there and set targets for future. Questionnaire to linked schools an important part of this process.

Assessment, review and target setting

<i>Most positive aspects</i>	<i>Least positive aspects</i>
Relationships established especially on visits.	Communication problems.
Positive attitude of pupils, staff and parents in both countries.	Travel in Sierra Leone.
Activities arranged between linked schools.	Complicated form filling needed to obtain grants.
Involvement of other groups / individuals.	Need for visits to be largely self-financing.
Integration of work sent by pupils into linked schools' curriculum.	Managing a scheme that is growing all the time.
Increased awareness by pupils in both countries of global citizenship.	Efficient method of distributing donations to linked schools.
Global Citizenship Training Course in UK.	
Family group feeling of all schools in project.	
Contact with like minded groups.	
Opportunity to place orders for goods locally.	

Future plans

- More advanced planning of tasks to be undertaken during UK students' visits.
- Explore possibility of opening a bank account for School Link Project in Sierra Leone.
- Research reliable and reasonably priced transport in Sierra Leone.
- Discuss with British Council and DFID our experiences of applying for grants and see if any streamlining is possible.
- Encourage UK linked schools to apply for grants thus facilitating exchanges of staff.
- Continue to develop personal links and relationships.

PLENARY SESSION

Workshops

There were six workshops during the Saturday morning and each group was asked to come back to the plenary with issues and recommendations relevant to their specific workshops

Women

Issues

- Difficulty for groups in Sierra Leone to understand how much they give us we must improve our understanding of the role of women and act as a catalyst for women's groups to work together
- Support for generation of income

Recommendations

- Sharing of stories with Sierra Leone as well as within UK to act as catalyst
- Taking a lead from women in Sierra Leone

Faith

Issues

- Relationship between faiths (in UK)
- Obligation in UK to improve co-ordination of diverse groups
- How to get more Sierra Leoneans involved in linking in UK

Recommendations

- To learn from Sierra Leone
- For all linking bodies not just faith links
- Idea of creating UK/SL society as an umbrella group for all associations
- Should UKOWLA get more involved in this?

Health

Issues and recommendations

- Equal partnership link
 - Appropriate link
 - Support from both sides
- Health assessment
 - From both sides
 - Multi-disciplinary
- Vision of health
 - Bring “healthy”, not just sickness prevention

School

Issues

- Gaps in correspondence
- Funding (application process, where to get funding)

Recommendations

- Fill in the gap with shoe box exchanges, disposable cameras, music etc
- Encourage as many 2 way visits as possible
- As inclusive as possible (social cohesion, social educators, primary schools, secondary schools, special schools)
- Transparency in application process for funding

Community

Issues

- Involving whole community – how (problems of diversity)
- Equality
- Partnership
- Rejuvenating the link

Recommendations

- Inclusivity, visiting people (both directions) involving whole community for sustainability
- Honesty, understanding and knowing people
- Awareness of significance of what you give and receive
- Orientation and inductions before visits

Local Authority

Issues

- Making partnerships relevant
- Challenges to local government in Sierra Leone (capacity, structure, trust from community)

Recommendations

- Making link practical and practicable (to needs of SL)
- Collaboration, local authority as member of:
 - A community link AND
 - UK Local Authority Task Force for Collaboration with SL (about wider collaboration, sharing across local authorities)

The main themes arising from these six workshop were:

- Equity and equality
- Cultural understanding
- Collaboration
- Inclusivity
- Visits

Questions were raised around the issues of visas and how difficult it is to obtain them for incoming visitors. Nick recommended a UKOWLA member, the Immigration Advisory Service, County House, 190 Great Dover Street, London SE1 4YB, www.iasuk.org. IAS is the largest not-for-profit national charity giving legal advice and representation on immigration, asylum and nationality. It assists UKOWLA with any visa difficulties encountered by members seeking to come to the UK. IAS has 18 offices in the UK and overseas, more than 350 staff and over 30 years experience.

School groups asked about grants available to help maintain the flow of visits which in turn keeps the link alive, Sharon Leftwich recommended various funding sources (see Appendix I)

There was a discussion around the involvement of diaspora groups and the need to get them involved in links and especially in country specific conferences. It was suggested that there be a follow up conference in London which would be run by the Sierra Leonean organisation, this would encourage attendance by other diaspora groups and it would allow them to lead the agenda. It was suggested that UKOWLA take the lead on forming a Sierra Leone friendship group.

MARK COLLINS, DIRECTOR, COMMONWEALTH FOUNDATION

The Commonwealth is made up of 53 sovereign nations that share common interest and values. The Commonwealth also represents an important network of people and language with many more countries wishing to join.

Mark has been Director of the Commonwealth Foundation now for 6 months. The Foundation was set up 40 years ago and it works alongside the Commonwealth Secretariat. The Foundation aims to support Civil Society Organisations across the Commonwealth and give practical support in such areas as governance/democracy and culture/diversity, it helps people to make contact with Commonwealth ministers, and builds professional networks, and gives small grants for awards in excellence eg. short stories.

One example of ministerial consultation was the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative which held a forum in Sierra Leone in 2004. The HIPC Initiative was proposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and agreed by governments around the world in 1996. It was the first comprehensive approach to external debt of the world poorest most heavily indebted countries, and was the first to provide debt relief on multilateral debt.

The Foundation also runs and organises the Commonwealth People's Forum (CPF) which this year took place in Malta in November. The next one is taking place in Kampala in Uganda in 2007. At the CPF in Malta over 600 people attended from 36 countries and ran 41 workshops involving more than 1,300 participants.

The Communiqué of the 2005 Commonwealth People’s Forum on the occasion of a dialogue with Commonwealth Foreign Ministers was produced and included in this was the aim to “... encourage twinning relationships between schools in the Commonwealth”. Once written into the final communiqué it is far easier for CSOs to follow up specific points to see if there has been any advancement.

The Commonwealth also has 80 professional associations. These associations have to have members in more than 25 Commonwealth countries; they are an important point of contact especially for issues around health.

Mark invited questions from the audience:



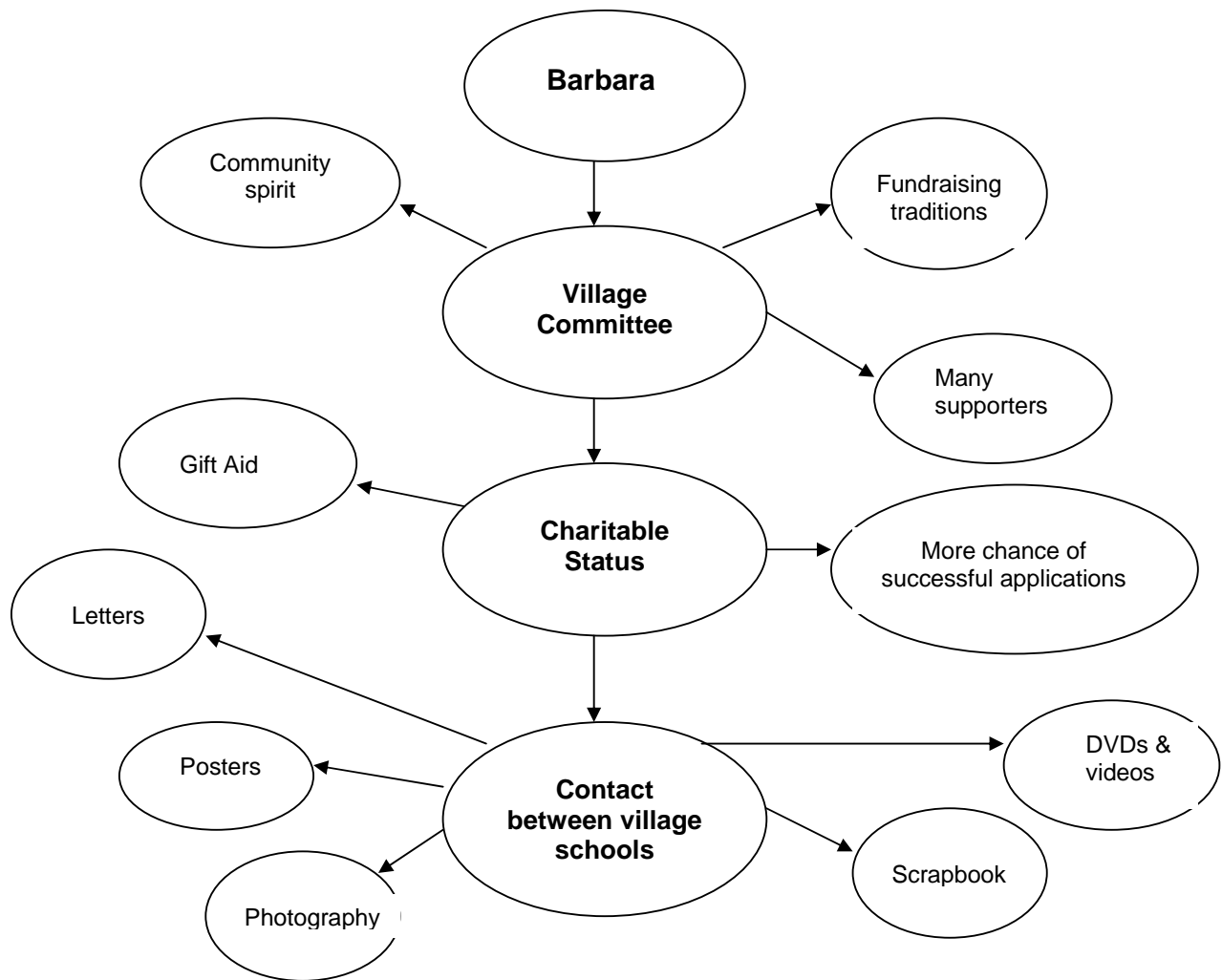
*Mark Collins, Director,
Commonwealth Foundation*

CASE STUDY FOUR – Youlgrave – Bangbutt Village Link Barbara Scrivener, Carol Sutcliffe

- 1992 began exchanging letters, then war broke out
- 1994 Bangbutt villagers were scattered and Youlgrave sent money to support refugees
- 2000 Emails and phone calls began again
- 2001 Villagers came back to Bangbutt and asked for help which led to a re-think at Youlgrave of the purpose of the link
- 2003 granted charitable status
- 2004 some material sent out including items for school, toys and clothing
- 2005 first visit to Bangbutt, introduction to SYLEO an NGO based in Freetown & Mile 91 which carried out projects for VillageAid a charity based in Bakewell. Barbara met with Sammy who had visited Bangbutt twice, SYLEO plans, costs and manages projects in discussion with villagers in Bangbutt.

Structure of Youlgrave committee

There are 4 committee members in Youlgrave and members of the village each pay £10 annually, there are family members and supporters outside the village that also contribute financially.



Challenges	Projects - done	Projects future	Fundraising
Language	Well construction and management training	Goat hers, training, vet	Fundraising events eg. coffee mornings
Distance	21 latrines	New School	Grant giving bodies
Equipment		Sewing machine	One off donations
Accents		Women's health	Annual donations
Face to Face contact		literacy	
Trust & Accountability			

PRACTICAL ISSUE WORKSHOPS

The themes of these workshops arose out of the morning session. Six workshops were run they were:

- Money matters & basic steps to linking
- Communication
- Stereotypes and perceptions
- Networking
- Widening your link
- Whose agenda

The main issues arising from the workshops were:

- Database of group
- Sharing information on available grants
- Make available register of Global Educators – VSO website www.vso.org.uk/groups/globaled_register.asp
- Orientation of induction before visits
- Effective development of linked websites – with up to date message board
- Follow-up linking meeting
- More people to think about linking
- Effective way of involving diaspora
- More networking between co-ordinators of school links. Networking encouragement for schools in Sierra Leone.
- Using the diaspora within your link for social cohesion within your own community
- Involving youth
- Widen a school link to parents and local community
- What we do in and with the local SL diaspora must fit in with the overall situation
- Idea of creating UK/SL society as an umbrella group for all associations
- More contact between local education groups
- Encourage music and storytelling
- Visits to the partner should be long enough to understand and make some practical contribution ie. To be more than just a guest.
- Approach the linked schools individually to review and appraise their link both positive and negative
- Making link practical and practicable (to needs of SL)
- Every attendee take a pledge to themselves of the action they are going to take as a result of the conference
- Give the partner an appreciation of what we gain from them

PLENARY – THE WAY FORWARD

At the plenary session following the workshops there were two panels to answer questions, one was made up of the facilitators of the 6 workshops and the other panel included the representatives of the various agencies.

Resources - Further development of:

- First steps to linking – how to do it
- Research of aims and objectives
- Funding information – where to get the information, workshops on fundraising from UKOWLA



Stereotyping & perceptions

- Need for both partners to spend the time together (finance is a major problem)

Networking

- Lack of knowledge of where to get resources and duplication of resources
- Create an e-group, website which will log what is going on and give advice on resources

Communications

- It was suggested that UKOWLA run and manage a website giving diary showing the movements of people, where they are going and what they are taking. As UKOWLA is resource strapped Andy Smith volunteered to look into a Yahoo group which would require a moderator, also Andy agreed to look at find a volunteer to manage a message board on the UKOWLA website for Sierra Leone Links.
- Well established links could advise new links
- Ask DfID to run a workshop on Fundraising as they are not user friendly

Widening Involvement

- Whose agenda is it?
 - Policy maker
 - Government
 - Community driven
 - North or South driving it forward
- Listen to each other
- Importance of visits
- Targeting people at different times
- Qualifying benefits of link
- Define objectives
- Make link embedded in organisations eg Local Authority, don't let it be the property of one or two individuals
- Network to get the diaspora groups involved in your link

Monitoring and Evaluation

- M&E is fundamental as it helps to find institutional resources and local fundraising
- Investing time in speaking to other groups

Campaigning

- How can we as a body get a voice to influence those who make the decisions? The next Commonwealth People's Forum is taking place in Uganda in 2007, have an international conference the week prior to the CPF.
- Use BUILD (Building Understanding through International Links for Development) as a mouth piece especially with MP through the All-party Parliamentary Group "Connecting Communities"

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONFERENCE – NEXT STEPS

- UK link groups to send or take copies of the Conference report to their SL partners. Discuss with their partners:
 - their needs for networking and what help from UK partners might be practical and useful
 - whether a SL conference (with or without UK partner input) would be desirable and what help from UK partners might be practical and useful.
- Explore the possibility of a low cost electronic network system for UK linking groups using website and /or e-groups managed by a volunteer.
- Arrangements for another conference should wait to see what development might materialise for a diaspora led conference and/or a SL based conference

EVALUATION

The evaluation sheets were very positive. All the Case Studies were awarded very high scores and enjoyed by everyone. Krishna Sarada and Mark Collins scored highly.

The general feeling was that there should be an annual conference on Sierra Leone Links involving and including the diaspora in the organising and running of such an event.

Below are some comments taken from the evaluation sheets.

“What did you feel you learnt from this conference that will be helpful to you in your linking in the future?”

“Learned there are more people and organisations to contact and ask for help. Will carry the amazing achievements and hard work of people involved in links”

“An overwhelming sense of optimism about links with Sierra Leone”

“Basic steps in linking and issues around linking”

“That we have a lot to learn from each other and I welcome the contacts that have been made here”.

“Enlightened, informed, encouraged – wanting to do more”.

“That UKOWLA (and other organisations) exist and are very worthwhile”.

“I’ll question my own attitudes more”.

“Have your attitudes to linking been changed in any way?”

“Yes, have realised how valuable visits both ways are – have learned that inclusion of representatives from diaspora groups is vital – have been encouraged to work to help schools more”

“Yes, stereotyping has been key although attempts have been made to address this issue. Impressed by the extent and commitment to linking and partnerships”.

“I have been given a boost”.

“Yes, it can lead to self confidence, better understanding of societies and the involvement of the wider community”.

“I am completely inspired by the idea of linking and what it means for the planet as a whole”.

“What would you like to see happen as a result of this conference?”

“Involve more grass roots not UK based organisations to participate in this type of conference”

“Confirmed mutual relationships and more conferences/education”.

“Regular meetings of this nature where awareness can be raised and addressed. More involvement in the diaspora organisations and more publicity”.

“A web page about those of us connected with SL, with space to add, ask questions, make suggestions, share ideas etc”.

“More conferences, increased networking, improved awareness”.

“Annual meeting of diaspora groups with links to groups to share ideas and resources”.

APPENDIX I

Reciprocal visits

Reciprocal Visit grants are intended for partnerships that are laying the foundations for long term, collaborative work that aims to embed a global dimension within the schools' respective curricula. It is anticipated that preparatory work will have been undertaken by both schools prior to making an application. Successful applicants have usually been involved in a partnership for at least 6 months. This grant offers the opportunity for schools to prepare for the Global Curriculum Project grant.

The grants can be used to support reciprocal visits between staff in UK schools and staff in their partner schools in Africa, Asia, Latin America or the Caribbean – please check our list of eligible countries for further information.

A total of £1,650 is available for travel and subsistence costs, to be shared equally between partner schools (i.e. £825 per visit). The UK school has responsibility for applying for a grant, although applications should be prepared on a collaborative basis. Schools can apply for grants on a school-to-school or cluster-to-cluster basis.

<http://stagingweb2.britishcouncil.org/cms/globalschools-grants-rv.htm>

Global School Partnership

Partnerships involving UK schools and Southern schools. This grant is aimed at schools that are developing or working on joint activities that embed a global dimension within their respective curricula. It supports the exploration of innovative practice, which takes forward global dimension agendas through school partnerships.

Establishing partnerships between schools in the UK and in Southern countries takes time. We expect that schools applying for this grant will, at the very least, be in their second year of a partnership relationship.

Partnerships applying for a Global Curriculum Project grant are likely to have:

- established reliable lines of communication and co-ordinating teams in both schools
- based their partnership on the principles of mutuality
- strong 'global dimension' development education goals
- plans to develop joint curricular activities with their partner school
- focus on pupil learning in both partner schools
- an on-going partnership agreement which continues to be refined and developed
- made use of support available in both countries
- incorporated the developing partnership into key school documents, e.g. School Development Plans.

A total of £4,800 is available for pre-schools and primary

<http://stagingweb2.britishcouncil.org/cms/globalschools-grants-cp.htm>

League for the Exchange of Commonwealth Teachers

LECT connects teachers and educators throughout the Commonwealth. They promote excellence in education through developing, supporting and promoting:

- International study visits and exchanges
- International collaboration and linking
- Information sharing and support
- Sharing experience and good practice

- Enhancement of the professional status of teachers.

<http://www.lect.org.uk/lect/>

Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council

A Commonwealth youth exchange gives young people the opportunity to get up and go global. To get involved in a world where for some people there is no local take-away, where 'popping to the shop' can mean a five mile trek, or a shower a dip in the river. Part of the challenge of a Commonwealth youth exchange may involve building a school, learning a traditional dance or working on a health project. Every exchange will have its own theme and activities; themes range from sustainable development, young people's health issues, citizenship, through to arts and culture. As importantly it's about meeting other young people of the same age and understanding that beneath the obvious differences there's a lot in common.

But all this is just the tip of an iceberg of achievement. It takes two years to complete exchange goals - time well spent in learning new skills, growing in self awareness and confidence and in becoming part of a team of young people who aim to make a difference at home and overseas.

Young people participate in Commonwealth youth exchanges via their local organisations - their youth club, community or youth organisation or school. Its hard work but its also fun and rewarding!

KEY FEATURES OF COMMONWEALTH YOUTH EXCHANGE

- An inter-cultural experience for local groups of 16 -25 year olds
- A 2 year plus programme of personal and group development
- A highly participatory process with young people planning, undertaking and reviewing their learning
- A two way activity - groups visit and host overseas partners
- Thematic - young people share ideas and explore issues of mutual interest to them and their communities
- Active and involved - working together with overseas partners on projects and activities in both communities
- Self-help fundraising
- Having fun and making new friends

<http://www.cyec.org.uk/exchanges.asp>

Teachers' International Professional Development *(School determined)*

The school-determined element of TIPD is aimed at schools that already have an existing link with a school overseas, and wish to develop the partnership further through a study visit.

This part of the TIPD programme is administered *exclusively by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust*, on behalf of the Department for Education & Skills.

It is different from the Study Visit programme in that it is run independently of Local Education Authorities (LEAs). While we would envisage working closely with LEAs in the promotion of the programme, there is no set entitlement of places according to authority, and schools can apply independently if they wish to do so.

However we would encourage all interested schools to share their proposals with their nominated LEA TIPD co-ordinator where possible.

<http://www.specialistschoolstrust.org.uk/TIPD/sdp-index.html>

International Placements for Headteachers

International Placements for Headteachers is an initiative developed in partnership between the British Council and the National College for School Leadership. The programme is funded by the National College for School Leadership.

<http://stagingweb2.britishcouncil.org/cms/learning-international-placements-for-headteachers.htm>

APPENDIX II

PROGRAMME

The Conference will begin on Friday by looking at the factors that lead to successful links and some of the problems we all have to grapple with.

UKOWLA is about to launch a “Toolkit of Good Practice – Opportunities and Challenges” to help both new and established groups. Participants will be able to try elements of this toolkit out for the own benefit and to help refine the toolkit for future use.

On Saturday there will be a greater emphasis on the Sierra Leone context, on particular kinds of links, and those issues which conference delegates have identified as particularly important.

The aim of the conference is to create as much cross fertilisation of ideas and experience as possible, and pave the way for better linking and better cooperation between groups in the future.

Friday 2 December “Good Practice for Successful Linking”

12.00	Registration
12.30	Lunch
14.0	Welcome Mike Smith, Chair, UKOWLA Councillor Dave Shilton, Chair of Warwickshire District Council
14.15	Warwick-Bo One World Link - Case Study
14.30	Toolkit for Good Practice – Opportunities and Challenges led by Margaret Burr (group work)
16.0	Tea Continuation of Toolkit for Good Practice
17.15	Bo District Descendants Association - Case Study
17.30	Finish
18.45 for 19.00	Supper
20.00	After Dinner Speaker – Krishna Sarda, Director, CEMVO (Council for Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations)
20.45	Entertainment – music by “Two Man Ting”

Saturday 3 December
“Practical Issues & Solutions for Successful Linking”

- 09.00 Welcome back – Maria Franchi
- 09.15 Diocese of Chichester/School links - Case Study
- 09.30 Workshops for single focus links e.g. Health, Local authority, Community, School, Faith, Women etc.
- Agreeing aims with partners
 - Increasing effectiveness
 - Involving the wider community
 - Collaboration with other links with the same focus
- 11.00 Coffee
- 11.15 Mark Collins, Director, Commonwealth Foundation
- 11.45 Plenary – presentation of two recommendations from each group
- 12.45 Lunch – discuss the way forward
- 13.45 Youlgrave-Bangutt Village Community Link – Case Study
- 14.00 Practical workshops focussing on issues identified during the conference e.g. Logistics, Fundraising, Sustaining links, Learning & cultural differences etc.
- 15.30 “Where do we go from here?”
Panel session:
Panel 1 - issue group facilitators
Panel 2 - Peter Penfold,
VSO – Leena Vadha
LGIB, Matthew Wingate
Humanities Education Centre, Margaret Burr
Commonwealth Foundation, Mark Collins
UKOWLA, Nick Maurice
Representative from Sierra Leone Disapora Network
- 16.30 Tea and finish

(N.B. The topics and focus of small groups on Saturday will be determined by the interests and needs of the people attending the conference)

APPENDIX III

NETWORKING WORKSHOP

Brief: To consider issues regarding networking both in UK and in Sierra Leone.

The group felt that this conference has proved to be very useful from a networking point of view, and that the impetus it has given needs to be capitalised on.

Networking in Sierra Leone

Initially we were very much taken up with the suggestion that the next linking conference should be held in Sierra Leone with attendance by UK partners, so that SL groups might have the benefit we have had this weekend with the additional benefit of partners being present.

Discussion then went on to the timing for such an event. It was felt that a date needed to be set well in advance in order for UK partners to coordinate their visits to Sierra Leone to coincide with the date of the conference and do other planned business with their individual partners. The possibility of timing it with some other event or memorable date such as the centenary of the abolition of slavery was mooted.

However, it was questioned whether Sierra Leone based groups yet had sufficient communication between each other to enable the planning of such a conference. Delegates to the 2001 UKOWLA Conference had planned to set up a Sierra Leone One World Linking Association on their return, but other priorities and communication difficulties have militated against that. The objective of having a conference could stimulate a desire for communication; and key people could be identified to help put groups in touch with each other. It was suggested that it might be presumptive of us to assume that this was the way forward at the Sierra Leone end, and the first step might be to explore what SL partners see as the value and means of networking.

Networking in UK

This conference has reinforced the value of networking and the need for continuing sharing of information and cooperation.

The question was raised as to why there were not more diaspora delegates at the conference. It was agreed that this would have been desirable because of the knowledge and contacts they have, however an understanding of common purpose and relevance has to be identified. The workshop would welcome greater input and leadership from diaspora groups; and it was suggested that the next Linking Conference might be hosted by a diaspora organisation. A suggestion has been raised at the conference of forming an umbrella organisation to cover all friendship activities between the two countries such as a UK-Sierra Leone Society. This was seen as desirable, but it might be a long time before such an organisation were formed and had the resources to take on our networking needs. Therefore the group went on to look at practical next steps.

For reasons of ease of communication and low cost in time and labour it was felt that the establishment of an electronic system of networking would be desirable. Possibilities involving websites and e-groups were discussed. There was insufficient time to compare the merits of various ideas; but there was general agreement that this could be a practical next step. In devising a means of networking it will be important to include a) the diaspora b) enabling organisations such as VSO, DEA etc. c) the needs of specialist areas such as school links. This might be a precursor to a UK-SL Society, but worth doing in itself. Workshop members also felt it was important to give importance to maintaining their own local and special area networks