

Link Schools Programme News

December 2010



Welcome to the winter edition of the Link Schools Newsletter:

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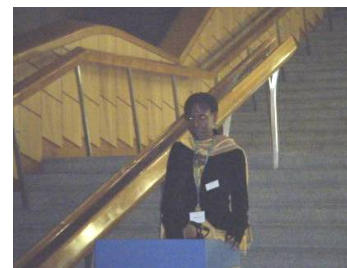
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LINK NEWS

Celebrating our partnership with Malawi

As Scotland celebrated the five year anniversary of the signing of the Mutual Co-operation Agreement between Scotland and Malawi, Link Community Development held a reception at the Scottish Parliament on Wednesday 27th October hosted by former First Minister Lord McConnell MSP.

The reception was a celebration of Link Community Development Scotland's work in partnership with Malawi, with speeches from Fiona Hyslop, Minister for Culture and External Affairs, Lord McConnell MSP, and Alice Ching'oma, Programme Director in Malawi. Staff from Link



Alice Ching'oma, LCD
Malawi Director

Link Community Development

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Community Development in Malawi, Ethiopia, Ghana, South Africa and Uganda, as well as representatives from the Scottish education and international development sectors attended the reception to celebrate Link Community Development's achievements in improving access to quality education in Scotland and Malawi.

A key component of the Mutual Co-operation Agreement is a joint commitment to improve the availability of, and access to quality education. Link Community Development is one of the strongest proponents of this aim; the Scottish Government funded Malawi Inclusive Education Programme addresses the critical problem of high drop-out rates and low learner attainment in Malawi, particularly amongst girls in primary schools. Minister for External Affairs Fiona Hyslop commented:

"The Link Community Development project is an excellent example of what can be achieved through partnerships between Scotland and Malawi. With Malawians unable to take education for granted like we do in Scotland, this project has improved availability and access to quality education and empowered pupils, teachers, school managers and communities to actively engage in the decision-making. At the same time, schools in Scotland have been given the opportunity to learn more about the developing world."

Malawi Programme Director Alice Ching'oma also spoke of the benefits that Link Community Development's programmes bring to supporting school improvement in Malawian schools through School Performance Review; highlighting in particular the role of Mother Groups and Female Teacher Networks which have supported and encouraged many girls to stay in school.

Lord McConnell MSP praised Link's ongoing programmes including the Link Schools Programme, which brings sustainable improvements to the quality of education received by children in Malawi, and in Scotland actively supports global citizenship teaching and learning in over 60 schools.

Teachers and pupils from Craighead Primary School, Dalbeattie High School, South Morningside Primary School, Gilmerton Primary School and Castlehill Primary School exhibited and discussed the joint curricular work they have produced in partnership with pupils from their Malawian partner schools.



Pupils from Gilmerton Primary School with Lord McConnell

Malawi Co-operation Agreement pays off for pupils and teachers: TESS Article

The Times Educational Supplement Scotland also recently reported on Scotland's unique relationship with Malawi, highlighting the success stories from the past five years and the impact that Scottish teachers, including Global Teachers and Link Schools, have made in country. Read more about it here: www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6061836

Link Schools Programme

Do you know of a friend or colleague who might be interested in forming a link with a school in Malawi, South Africa, Ghana, Ethiopia or Uganda? School linking actively supports teachers to deliver the Curriculum for Excellence through a range of topics from Religious and Moral Education and social studies to cross curricular areas such as eco-schools and Fair Trade.

Sign up a friend to join the Link Schools Programme and you could receive a **£50 discount** for your annual fee for 2011/12. Ask them to fill out the application form attached and sign up by 31st January 2011 for you to qualify for the discount. Send on your suggested contacts to louise@lcd.org.uk or ask them to email the same address to register their interest.

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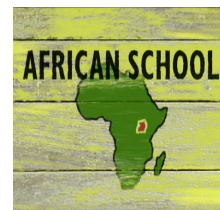
Become our friend on facebook

Sign up to the new Link Scotland page where we hope to keep you updated on Link news, offers and events. Please share the link with your colleagues and friends!

www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Link-Community-Development-Scotland/111186155618618

Watch Link's Ugandan schools on T.V.

Link's schools in Uganda are featured in a BBC TV series called 'African School Series'. The TV series interviews teachers and students in Uganda and discusses the challenges facing Ugandan education. Our Link staff in Uganda helped to facilitate the production.



Here is a link to a few clips from the series, each clip is three minutes long. This is a great chance to learn more about the schools we are working with in Uganda. We recommend watching the clip titled, 'Masindi Dreams'. Click here to watch www.linktv.org/africanschool.

Reminders: Link School mailing dates 2010/2011

DHL Mailing	UK / Ireland DHL date	Africa DHL date
Autumn term	Friday 10 th December 2010	Friday 17 th December 2010
Spring term	Friday 28 th January 2011	Friday 18 th February 2011
	Friday 25 th March 2011	Friday 15 th April 2011
Summer term	Friday 20 th May 2011	Friday 10 th June 2011
	Friday 1 st July 2011	Friday 29 th July 2011

LINK RESOURCES AND TRAINING

Cluster Training

- LCD Scotland is pleased to announce that we will be running four training courses in 2011, focusing on supporting clusters of schools to work together to share experiences and good practice. The training courses will also cover partnerships, exploring Development and Development Education, and Link's new themed Partnership Resource Materials.
- Being part of a cluster will allow your school to benefit from additional support from other schools. Link Community Development offers support and training to help schools work in clusters and to help them to better understand the situation of their partners, the aims of school linking, and how to learn together and support development. We know that some schools are doing brilliant work with their partners and being part of a cluster allows sharing of ideas and support in the same local area.

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- The training will be held in:
 - **Edinburgh, 25th February from 1.30pm - 4.30pm**
 - **Glasgow, Aberdeen and Perth (dates to be confirmed) from 4.30pm - 7.30pm**
- To register your interest for these free training courses email: louise@lcd.org.uk.

Teachers Pack

- The new Link Teachers Pack, which has been developed with funding from the EU 'Partners in Development' project, will provide you with simple guidelines and tips to help you get your school partnership underway and to keep it running successfully.
- The pack, which will be sent to your school in the New Year, will introduce you to Link Community Development and our work, to basic themes in international development, provide you with advice and activities to help you integrate the global dimension into learning, and help you to involve your community in your link and wider development projects.

Pack contents:

- Section 1: Introduction
- Section 2: Link Community Development
- Section 3: Making a success of your school partnership
- Section 4: What is international development
- Section 5: School partnerships and teaching and learning
- Section 6: Partners in Development

Resources on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

If you are interested in incorporating the MDG's into your teaching and learning, Link is soon providing you with teaching resources on global learning for school partnerships. Our themed resources will contain 6 lessons plans per theme, and are designed to provide an initial stimulus to enable joint global learning to take place within the curriculum of both partner schools.

Lesson plans are provided with the aim of taking pupils on a learning journey of **EXPLORING, UNDERSTANDING, INVESTIGATING & SHARING, ENGAGING & REFLECTING**. Each lesson plan includes reference to the specific learning outcomes addressed in that lesson. Lessons will run in parallel in the two partner schools. This will enable pupils to send each other their work on the theme at the halfway point. Schools may also want to share what they have learned at the end of lesson 6.



'Developing countries are suffering most as a result climate change.'

The first of our resources on the MDG theme of the **environment** (focusing on climate change) ties in MDG goal 7 (ensure environmental sustainability); the second on **child health** ties in with the MDG goals 4, 5 and 6 (reduce child mortality, improve maternal health and combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases) and both will be available in the New Year, followed by the themes of education and global poverty.

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New Link Schools website

A new website dedicated to Link Schools is coming soon. On the site you will be able to download resources from a password protected area, interact with schools in the U.K. and Africa, read case studies on schools and the partnership work they are carrying out, find out more about Reciprocal Visits and other aspects of the Link Schools Programme, as well as read updated news on your partner school and the school improvement work being carried out in country. www.linkschools.org



FEATURES

Stride magazine, School Partnerships special edition

This month's Stride magazine features the Link Schools Partnership between Juniper Green Primary School in Edinburgh and Isago Primary in Kimberley, South Africa. Juniper Green teachers and pupils share how learning from their partners in Isago has helped them to develop whole school projects such as Eco Schools and how exchange visits between teachers has impacted on the both schools and their wider communities. www.lcdinternational.org/images/Stride_Article_Nov_2010.pdf

Moving forward with the Millennium Development Goals

The UN Summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) held in New York from **20-22 September 2010**, concluded with the adoption of a global action plan to achieve the 8 goals by their 2015 target date, and the announcement of major new commitments for women's and children's health and other initiatives against poverty, hunger and disease.



The summit recognised that developing countries have made significant efforts towards achieving the MDGs, and have had successes in realising some of the targets including combating extreme poverty, improving school enrolment and child health, reducing child deaths, expanding access to clean water and improving prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. However they acknowledged that much more needs to be done in achieving the MDGs as progress has been uneven among regions and between countries.



Slow progress was reported in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and providing basic sanitation. The summit recognised that progress on other MDGs must be sustained to avoid reversal. For more info visit the summit website www.un.org/en/mdg/summit2010.

'Rights Respecting Schools Award improves attainment and reduces bullying'

A three year evaluation of Unicef's Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) has found a 'profoundly positive effect on students', including improved behaviour, better teacher-pupil relationships, reduced exclusions and bullying, and a rise in attainment.

The evaluation, conducted by Brighton and Sussex universities, assessed the impact of the scheme in 31 schools in England. The researchers found that for some school communities, there is evidence that it

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has been a life-changing experience. The head from one infant school said, 'After 16 years as head teacher I cannot think of anything else we have introduced that has had such an impact'.

Many Link Schools have obtained the award together with their partner schools. For example, Craighead Primary School in East Dunbartonshire, which has achieved level 2 of the award, is using it to help staff and pupils become aware of the rights of children

within the context of their lives, to help partner schools to learn together, to develop a proactive approach for pupils and staff to participate in the giving and receiving of rights, and integrate children's rights into all areas of the curriculum and school ethos.

Why not work together with your partner school to achieve an RRSA and see the benefits it brings to your school's life. www.unicef.org.uk/tz/teacher_support/rrs_award.asp



Chikololere Primary School,
UNICEF Rights Respecting
School award workshops

Leith Academy teachers' life changing visit to Malawi

Teachers Andrea Campbell and Aileen Cairns visited Malawi as part of a Reciprocal Visit funded by the British Council and Link asked them about the impact of their visit on their school and the partnership.

'When we first started to plan our reciprocal visit to Malawi, **little did we think that it would take us nearly two years to organise.** Having gone through a rigorous planning operation of form filling, applying for grants and risk assessments, we finally managed to book our flights to leave Edinburgh on 22nd September 2010.

We had met our hosts from Malawi when they came to visit our school in August and had some idea of what to expect, however **nothing could have prepared us for the stark reality of life in Malawi.** The drive to St. Joseph's Demonstration School in Bembeke took over two hours and we travelled in stunned silence, as we began to take in the views of red dust and mud huts that spread out for miles. As we reached Bembeke turnoff, we left the tarmac road and headed up a dust track. We were wondering where were we going to be living?! We arrived as the sun set, our guest house was basic, but we were relieved to find a flushing toilet!



The following day we were warmly welcomed by all the staff and pupils at St Joseph's. As we toured the school we were amazed to find classes of up to 101 learners with only one member of staff. It was clear to see that even basic resources such as paper and pencils were in short supply. In some classes there were not enough desks or chairs for all of the learners, so a number have to sit on the floor. Many come with schoolbags made from plastic bags and string. They come though, with a willingness to learn and a happy, smiling face, glad to be one of the lucky ones who are learning.

Throughout our 12 day visit we visited classes and supported staff and we delivered workshops to offer ideas and good practice to our Malawian colleagues. **By the end of our visit it was clear that we had made new friends and had developed a better understanding of both cultures.** The visit will really impact on our ability to encourage our pupils to get on board with this project. Next we are planning assemblies, writing articles for newsletters, displays within our school and hoping to have a 'wear a chitenje' day early next year'.



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