

## A Guide to international school partnerships

- Set clear aims and objectives.
- Adopt an equity-based approach.
- Base plans on the strengths and needs of each school.
- Embed the partnership in school life.
- Secure support of senior management.
- Plan including a communication plan.
- Designate roles and responsibilities.
- Make contingency plans, especially how the partnership will continue if/when a key member of staff moves on
- Monitor and evaluate the partnership.
- Evaluate the impact the partnership is having on the school community

### Communication

Effective communication is key to a successful partnership

Write a communications plan and stick to it.

- Email, Skype, phone calls, text, video conference are all possibilities, as well as traditional post - don't forget to exchange addresses. Decide what will work best for your partnership in the beginning and be prepared to adapt.
- Be clear about the details - Who? How often? What number? Which addresses?



- Consider shared websites perfect for project-based discussions, forums, displaying project work.
- **Remember that communication in many countries in the majority world is not as quick as communication here. Children in school will expect a reply tomorrow to something they sent by post today! The reality is that communication with many of the countries we are actively encouraging links with is very slow and children need to be taught that this is the case. If you are fortunate enough to have a partnership with a school that has internet access and email, remember that the one computer in the school is probably used by everyone and that the material you sent may well not surface in the system for some time! Sending text messages has been found to be quite helpful, if only to inform someone that a parcel of pictures or writing is on its way to them**

## Making the project fun

If the project isn't fun, then pupils are unlikely to want to do it and it won't be sustainable! Think about the following:

- International Days within schools; have themed lessons, language classes, art or music workshops to get the whole school involved.
- Sport, dance, art or music-based projects.
- Share simple language work so the pupils get used to being global citizens
- Display boards are a great way for pupils to show off photos and create a focus for the partnership. Run a photo competition for the pupils on a project theme and see what you get.
- Any work you do to send to the partner school, make sure it contributes to your own pupils learning but is fun to do!



## Community support

This is a really useful way of getting additional support for your partnership so why not think about the following:

- How can you involve your local community through your global link?
- Hold an international day; invite parents, local community representatives and local businesses.
- Utilise the community you live in; if there are speakers of your partner language, or people in the parish who have visited the country where you have a partner school ask them to teach a class for the project. If there are parents who can teach dance/art/craftwork that relates to the country of your partnership

## Comparing Education Systems

**This is something to discuss with the DSA who will visit school to help set up the partnership**

Make time to discuss this as it will have a big influence on how the project will work:

- Who runs the school? What is the role of the headteacher/principal?
- What is the teaching style?
- Is the school facing changes or in a stable system?
- What type of school is it? State, private and faith schools?
- What age do pupils begin and end compulsory education?
- What subjects are compulsory and non-compulsory?
- How flexible is the curriculum - who decides how to teach the subject?
- How are pupils and teachers addressed?
- What are the ages of transition between schools?
- When are the school exams (national/local/school) and holiday times?
- What choices do students have following compulsory education?
- What are the employment issues for teachers; eg, permanent or temporary contracts/national?

