

THINK:

About the danger of paternalism in the attitude of one group towards another; watch out for 'ethno-tourism'.

REFLECT on:

What is more important to your partnership: giving and receiving material things (eg school books, computers); or providing opportunities for people of different cultures to share and exchange ideas.

QUESTION:

What are the implications if resourcing is very one-sided? We should explore the strengths of each partner in order to make the relationship more effective.

Checklist:

- ✓ Do you know the social, political and economic context within which your link community is operating?
- ✓ Have you considered the need for funding and support in all communities?
- ✓ Have you considered whether payment for participating teachers and other professionals is appropriate?
- ✓ Is the fundraising to ensure that resource needs for the link are met?
- ✓ Are resources being shared equally?
- ✓ Are those involved being encouraged to understand the wider global issues that may impact on a partner?
- ✓ How will you acknowledge and value non-material contributions?
- ✓ Have you thought about the ongoing costs of running and maintaining donated materials and repairing them as necessary?
- ✓ If you are sending materials are they of high quality and suitable?
- ✓ Are the materials needed or wanted?

If you are to give to those that have need, give only the best. *The Koran*

Next steps:

- Consider the different activities within your link.
- Look at the resource needs: staffing, time, communications.
- Consult on estimated running costs.
- Explore 'in kind' contributions and ensure they are acknowledged.
- Look at areas requiring funding.
- Consider any major areas of expenditure and plan accordingly.
- Look at joint ways of raising funds.
- Consult with partners to ensure every 'gift' is a wanted gift.

Partnership, not charity

It is a natural response for communities to want to offer 'help' to their link partners in the form of money and some partners may expect it. However successful partnerships depend on equality and mutuality and such charity can actually hinder development. The importance of reciprocity, or mutual exchange, must be recognised.

Charitable giving may:

- Reinforce stereotypes where one community has the power, control and money and regards the other as poor and needy.
- Increase inequality as one community becomes the active giver in the relationship and the other becomes the passive receiver.
- Foster reliance on income from one partner.
- Focus the link on finance at the expense of other forms of activity.
- Patronise the partner assuming that they need and want this help.

For young people fundraising for their partner school, rather than for the link itself, the issues outlined above are particularly relevant.

When the missionaries came to Africa they had the Bible and we had the land. They said 'Let us pray.' We closed our eyes. When we opened them we had the Bible and they had the land.
Bishop Desmond Tutu

Resourcing is a primary concern in any link. Links require the time, energy and expertise of individuals as well as the money to maintain communications and to carry out activities.

There may be enormous differences in economic circumstances between participants in a link, which may lead to a focus on finance and an undervaluing of other 'in kind' contributions such as travelling to collect and send materials, and to access computers, faxes and emails. Linking can provide opportunities for gaining an insight into the functioning of other cultures with different value systems. Some partners with less material wealth may regard money as less important than family and community, in contrast to their partners for whom material wealth and consumerism are a key factor in everyday life.

Some funding is of course necessary to manage a link and with only a few grants available at any one time, you will need to raise further resources to ensure the sustainability of the link. Administration costs should be low because of the volunteer nature of many links, but fundraising to maintain a link and fundraising for a partner community are different activities. Within your link both partners may consider fundraising to cover expenses, or one partner may share resources with another.

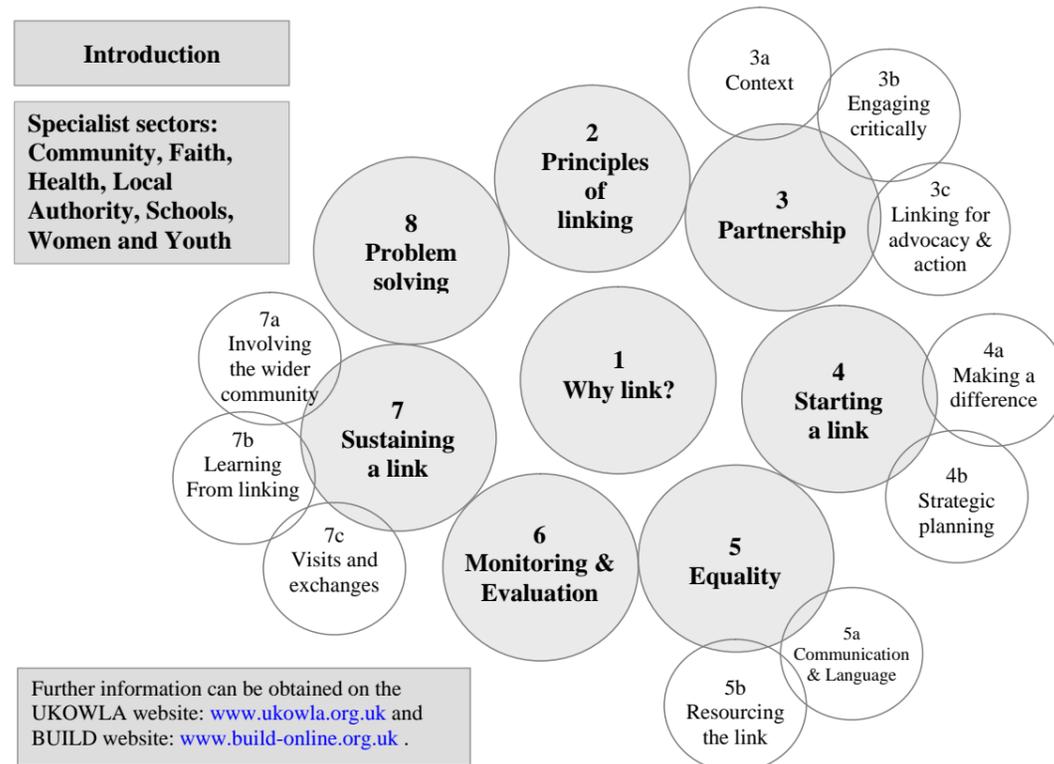
Funding is a sensitive issue because of the imbalance of material resources between communities and because the non-material resources are often undervalued. Fundraising for 'poor' partners may be at the expense of other forms of active participation and engagement. It may affect the balance of the relationship, prevent a dialogue on wider issues and leave little room for a new relationship to grow. It raises the question of 'whose needs are we satisfying?'

Charitable giving may lead people to believe that money is the solution and that there is no need to reflect on their own actions and decisions, and their consequences. It may foster reliance and dependency in partners and increase inequalities.

Partners may value the link as an opportunity to raise awareness of the global issues that influence livelihoods and increase inequality such as climate change, debt and trade. Links can enable others to gain an understanding of the interrelationship between local and global actions through providing a voice for partners.

There may be opportunities during visits in both directions to collaborate on fundraising and to visit businesses and other potential supporters. This can strengthen the partnership and demonstrate the partnership to potential donors.

Toolkit for Linking leaflets



What others say

Let us share who we are before we share what we have. *Sithembiso Nyoni, Zimbabwe*

Traditional aid diminishes the justice aspect of the poverty divide. *Stan Thekaekara, India*

There are considerable dangers in not listening to the South, and wasting money on projects which are not needed. *Stroud Consultation report, 1988*

Everyone likes to give as well as to receive. No one wishes only to receive all the time. We have taken much from your culture ... I wish you had taken something from our culture ... for there were some good and beautiful things in it'. *Chief Dan George, USA*

Inequality in the distribution of resources [notwithstanding], genuine partnerships can only be realised if both partners bring resources to the process ... *Volker Hauck, Germany*

We thought we were OK until our partners described us as poor. *Gambian linker.*

There are some people who only look at poverty as material poverty. I think we need to look at poverty as a lack of any need that is essential to life. Today we have material and psychological poverty, spiritual poverty, social poverty and cultural poverty. I have been in communities in the North where people are so lonely. I wish they would come to our villages for us to embrace them. *Sithembiso Nyoni, UKOWLA conf 2001*

We feel embarrassed about partnership if we talk about it purely in material terms. Partnership is really about sharing our common humanity: working together for a better world. *Paul Nyathi, Zimbabwe*

Stop dumping your unwanted old computers and clothes on us. *Gambian teacher*

Don't give anything to your partner that you wouldn't give to a friend. *Noel Treacy, UK*

Resourcing issues

Openness and accountability:

Financial matters can cause embarrassment particularly where the economic situation of one community is considerably different to the other. Partners receiving a grant may feel an 'entitlement' and ownership of the funds, ensuring openness in communications on funding issues.

Contributions in kind:

Links do not only need financing, but they depend on goodwill and engaging in activities outside work time such as the need to travel to access computers and to send and collect exchange materials, costs of hosting a visit, time spent on preparations. These are significant factors even if unquantifiable or 'unseen'. Remember also the often unrecognised burden on women, eg hosting visits.

Access:

Where funding is involved ensure that all potential beneficiaries particularly women and young people are involved in the discussions.

Sharing resources:

Link groups should consider covering appropriate expenses during their partners stay and take note of pre-travel costs to arrange visas etc.

Donations:

Donors need to carefully consider the resource implications to sustain use of any gift, e.g. whether batteries are needed, fuel, electricity or access to repair facilities and expertise.

Inclusivity:

The wider the range of people involved in the partnership the more sustainable the link will be in terms of expertise and finance.

Appropriate technology and low impact materials should be used wherever possible.

Every gift a wanted gift:

Do ask partners what is needed. Sadly partners are all too often the recipients of out of date resources including books, computers and medicines.

*Just one story out of many:
At the end of 2004 a Gambian secondary school received, as a gift, a 1992 Dell computer, 1988 RM Nimbus machine and 1981 BBC Microcomputer. This old, out of date equipment did not even have any accompanying software, discs or instructions.*

Fundraising for the link:

Material aid is helpful if both sides agree and if it helps to mobilise the resources of the community. But it should not be the main element in a healthy linking relationship. Partners should agree on how the fundraising is done, who is to do it and how it is to be sustained. A fundraising strategy, including publicising the link and developing a high profile, will help to ensure ongoing support. Making connections might appeal to local donors. Find out about local trusts and institutions, as well as individuals. Local businesses may be prepared to donate in cash or in kind.

Grants:

Grants can help a link but they may drive the agenda of the grant giver rather than partner community and because of their limited duration can threaten sustainability. Try not to become too dependent on one source of funding.

Representing your partners:

Consider how you present your partner – think about the image you will present. People feel shocked and hurt when they see themselves portrayed as being helpless and inactive or when the richness of their culture is overlooked. They find this particularly frustrating when this picture is given in the process of raising money on their behalf, so publicity material should always be checked with your partner before going to print.

Responding to requests:

Requests are sometimes focused on equipment to meet immediate needs. These can be hard to resist. But it may be even more productive sometimes to use the request as a basis for dialogue and to look together at what can be done to remove the causes of those needs or to bring about some long-term change. Discuss as many suggestions for help with as many people as possible at both ends of the link.

Support:

Many countries do not have organisations to support linking or may have limited support networks. This means that there is little opportunity for people to gain an understanding of what linking is about; to seek advice on linking; or prepare themselves properly before entering into links. In addition there will be few opportunities to exchange experiences with others within their own country. Although many Non Governmental Organisations are sceptical of the value of linking they may be able to offer support and advice.

If education is the road out of poverty, books are the wheels needed for the journey. *Richard Crabbe, African Publishers Network*

Books offer amazing opportunities for learning; but before collecting any books to be sent do please devote the necessary time and resources to consider:

- research and needs assessment
- partnership and purpose
- book selection
- viability and piloting

Books must be able to stand up to heavy use and not deteriorate quickly. In considering donations to partners:

- books must be new or 'as new'
- books must be appropriate and relevant to partners
- reference materials must be five years old or less

Advice from: *Book Aid International*
www.bookaid.org

Criteria for aid giving: Cologne Appeal

The 'Cologne Appeal' in 1985 proposes the following criteria and recommends local authorities to contact experienced NGOs, or development groups, for further advice:

- Equality, reciprocity, absence of paternalism
- Initiation and approval of project by the partner communities
- Recognition of the significance of women in the development process and ensuring that projects benefit and enhance the status of women
- The need to take into account the environmental impact of projects in advance
- Integration of projects into the overall development plans of the partner community
- Provision of the possibilities for development education in the donor community, related to the projects
- Establishing and maintaining communications
- There is a need to respect and maintain cultural diversity
- There should be a joint evaluation.