

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 17 NOVEMBER 2010

GLOBAL SCHOOLS EXCHANGE AND PARTNERSHIP WITH SRI LANKA

Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for a Global Schools Exchange and Partnership between East Ayrshire Council schools and Gampola, Kandy District, Central Province, Sri Lanka.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Scottish Government aims to ensure that all young people have opportunities to 'develop a knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it'. This aim is integral to the philosophy of a Curriculum for Excellence.
- 2.2 The British Council approached East Ayrshire, as one of six Scottish Local Authorities Education Departments whose schools were underrepresented in existing southern hemisphere school partnerships funding programmes. The British Council provides advice and guidance, accredited professional development opportunities and grants to schools in the UK and in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America that use school partnerships to develop a global dimension in the curriculum.
- 2.3 Global School Partnerships aim to motivate young people develop commitment to a fairer, more sustainable world. Partnerships are built around a core set of values, reflecting a common belief that if they are to be effective in raising awareness of global development issues, school partnerships must be based on mutuality, equality, learning and sustainability.
- 2.4 Effective and sustainable Partnerships need to be a two way relationship; where both schools share ideas and expertise. Establishing good, honest working relationships between partners should be one of the priorities for a partnership in the early years.
- 2.5 A direct school to school partnership, with reciprocal visits by teachers, joint curriculum activities and the involvement of local communities can breathe life into the classroom learning experience. The personal contact generated between young people separated by thousands of miles can have a transforming impact in building understanding and unity.
- 2.6 School's engagement in the Global Schools Partnership programme will contribute to the realisation of the following Community Planning Partnership and Single Outcome Agreement (2008-2011) targets:

- Outcome 3 - Access to learning opportunities to improve quality of life and well being increased
- Outcome 4 - Educational and skills attainment in schools increased
- Outcome 4 - Educational wider achievements (non-academic achievements) and skills for work/vocational programmes increased as defined by the four capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence
- Outcome 4 - Participation by young people in community based learning and active citizenship increased
- Outcome 12 - The natural and built environment through sustainable development improved.

3. FUNDING IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The programme is funded by Ukaid from the Department for International Development and managed by a consortium of the British Council, Cambridge Education Foundation, UK One World Linking Association, and Voluntary Services Organisation. The British Council is the lead partner in Global School Partnerships, and manages the programme from their office in Edinburgh, Scotland.
- 3.2 East Ayrshire and Gampola have been successfully awarded the maximum Local Authority grant of £6,300 and 2 teacher development events. This grant is designed to create international relationships that can broker and support 10 school partnerships with a focus on global education. The grant will fund 3 delegates travel and accommodation from Sri Lanka to visit Scotland in early 2011 and 3 delegates from EAC to Sri Lanka following this exchange. British Council requires delegations to comprise of 1 local authority representative and 2 school representatives.
- 3.3 East Ayrshire would host a week visit of 3 Sri Lankan delegates around our participating schools to match suitable school partners. Auchinleck Academy, Loudoun Academy, St. Joseph's Academy, Park School, Patna Primary, Dalmellington Primary, Shortlees Primary, Fenwick Primary, Hurlford Primary, Onthank Primary, Galston Primary, Ochiltree Primary and Onthank Nursery have expressed an enthusiasm to establish partnerships with Sri Lankan schools.
- 3.4 East Ayrshire staff in turn, will be required to visit Sri Lanka to initiate curriculum projects between partner schools. To minimise any cover costs this would take place during the February holiday extending to the weekend and also falls on the two In-service training days.
- 3.5 Additional future British Council funding available to sustain these school partnerships includes:
- *Reciprocal Visit grants* are for partnerships that are laying the foundations for long term collaborative work that will embed a global dimension in the schools' curricula.

- *Global Curriculum Project grants* enable well established partnerships to further develop joint curricular activities with a global dimension theme.

4. SRI LANKA

- 4.1 The British Council have permanent staff in Sri Lanka who have considerable experience over a number of years of supporting UK school partnerships and staff and pupil visits.
- 4.2 East Ayrshire officers identified a partnership with Sri Lanka from a range of potential partner countries because Sri Lanka was considered to have significant curricular opportunities for international education and sustainable development education.
- 4.3 A free education system was initiated in 1945, which dictates 9 years of compulsory schooling for every child, with 99% of the children entering the first grade and 83% of the total population having had Secondary Education. With a literacy rate of 92%, Sri Lanka has one of the most literate populations amongst developing nations.
- 4.4 Sri Lanka, officially the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and known as Ceylon before 1972, is an island country in South Asia, located about 31 kilometres off the southern coast of India. As a result of its location in the path of major sea routes, Sri Lanka is a strategic naval link between West Asia and South East Asia. It has been a centre of Buddhist culture from ancient times, as well as being a bastion of Hinduism. The Sinhalese community forms the majority of the population; Tamils, who are concentrated in the north and east of the island, form the largest ethnic minority. Other communities include Moors, Burghers, Kaffirs, Malays and the indigenous Vedda people.
- 4.5 The country is famous for the production and export of tea, coffee, coconuts, rubber and cinnamon - which is native to the country. It is also famous for the natural beauty of Sri Lanka's tropical forests, beaches and landscape. The island consists mostly of flat-to-rolling coastal plains, with mountains rising in the south-central part, reaching 2,524 metres (8,281 ft) above sea level.
- 4.6 It has a warm climate moderated by ocean winds and considerable moisture. The temperature ranges from frost in the Central Highlands in the winter, to 33 °C in low-altitude areas. The rainfall pattern is influenced by monsoon winds from the Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal.
- 4.7 Parts of Sri Lanka, particularly the South and East coast, were devastated by the 2004 Asian Tsunami.

5. GAMPOLA, KANDY DISTRICT, CENTRAL PROVINCE

- 5.1 Sri Lanka is divided into 9 provinces and 25 districts. Each province is administered by a directly elected provincial council. Each district is administered under a District Secretariat.
- 5.2 British Council staff in Sri Lanka identified Gampola town, Kandy District, Central Province as suitable for partnership with East Ayrshire.
- 5.3 The Central Province of Sri Lanka consists primarily of mountainous terrain. The province is agricultural and produces much of the famous Ceylon tea, planted by the British in the 1860s.
- 5.4 Kandy District has a population of 1,279,028 with the towns of Kandy and Gampola having populations of 119,186 and 26,481 respectively.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial implications all costs will be covered by the grant.

7. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 If Cabinet approve the exchange and partnership, all of the appropriate risk assessments would be fully conducted prior to any exchange taking place. The Council's Risk Manager would play a central role in this exercise.

8. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no policy or legal issues associated with this proposed partnership.

9. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 This proposal supports the priorities of the Community Plan: Promoting Lifelong Learning with a cultural focus.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Approve a Global Schools Exchange and Partnership with Sri Lanka.
- (ii) Receive a delegation of teaching staff from Sri Lanka to East Ayrshire schools.
- (iii) Approve a staff delegation from East Ayrshire visit Sri Lanka early next year; and
- (iv) Otherwise, note the contents of this report.

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AS/WW
October 2010

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Members requiring further information should contact Andrew Sutherland, Head of Service: Schools Tel: (01563) 576126

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