



Connecting Classrooms Comparative Report - Reviewing Bangladesh and Pakistan

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1 Executive Summary

Objectives

The two reviews conducted between November 2011 and April 2012 focussed on how the British Council (BC) programme Connecting Classrooms (CC) has influenced community cohesion across the Bangladeshi and Pakistani school clusters including change in school and teacher practice. The reviews also aimed to evaluate the project's school based work, to identify the "lessons learned", and recommend pivots or change in direction to ensure success in further iterations of the programme.

The purpose of this report is to compare the effect Connecting Classroom has had in both countries and to draw lessons across national boundaries.

As can be seen from the summary tables below there is a long list of successes and the few things that did not work so well can be changed or fixed relatively easily.

Main findings – similarities and differences

	What did not work well	What worked well
Both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cascade training model did not work – teachers who took part in CC training did not share their learning with peer. Needs formalisation of dissemination and recognition for achieving this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence of the students increased. • Teachers internationalising the curriculum. • Gender and class barriers overcome within schools as well as within clusters. • High student participation across all ages. • Significant change in getting to know schools from other sectors. • The schools serving the poorer sections of society benefited most from the cluster model through resource sharing as well as informal teacher knowledge exchange. • Development of a wider world view (students) and global citizenship context.
Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significantly less teacher¹ involvement due to school and cluster coordinators shouldering almost all of the workload. • Teachers were not given dedicated time in the school day, wanted compensation for Connecting Classrooms time spent. • Struggled to get parents on board. • Significantly less involvement of principals. • Religious and ethnic differences were not recognised and hence were difficult to bridge. The official ‘Bangla narrative’ is largely to blame for this as Bangladesh was created on the basis of a unifying Bangali culture and neither differences nor discrimination is acknowledged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cluster coordinators were ordinary teachers who were given dedicated time to implement Connecting Classrooms. They became the leaders and drivers of the project. • Creation of leaders in the student community. • Leadership skills of school coordinators developed. • Dedicated classroom space for Connecting Classrooms activities. • Regular meeting schedules which rotate across schools. • Madrassas excited to take part and local community was involved. • The training solidified the participatory teaching style across the classrooms of participating schools. • Projects coordinated across the whole country produced high quality outcomes through cluster competitions. • Inter school contact for students in each cluster resulting in wider student participation.

¹ This refers to teaches who were neither school nor cluster coordinators.

Pakistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most cluster coordinators were head teachers and struggled with time management. • Meetings often ad hoc, and locations indeterminate. • Lack of inter-cluster competition/collaboration produced poorer quality projects in some cases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent workshops/information sessions worked well in certain clusters. • Teachers were given dedicated time in the school days to do Connecting Classrooms activities. • Parents were more involved in solving school problems (such as repairs) as schools actively tried to engage them in school life in new ways. • Connecting Classrooms helped transform teaching methods. This was due to both CC training and UK visits. • Social networks created within the clusters were much bigger (and sustainable) than in Bangladesh.
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What can one country learn from the other

	What Bangladesh can learn from Pakistan	What Pakistan can learn from Bangladesh
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get BC support and build confidence to run parent workshops/ information sessions as the outcome was favourable in Pakistan. • Create greater engagement of teachers through workload management and creation of specific time set aside for implementing Connecting Classrooms. • Mobilise principals to be more involved and to apply leadership techniques they have learnt. Not everything should be left to the school and cluster coordinators. • Get parents more involved in solving school problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure cluster coordinator role is not played by a head teacher. • Dedicated classroom space for Connecting Classrooms activities. • Schedule meetings in different locations by rotation. • Coordinate projects across the whole country and organise cluster competitions to improve quality and cohesion. • Increase inter-school contact for students through intra and inter-cluster activities.

2 Objectives of the Project

The purpose of this report is to compare the impact of Connecting Classroom in both countries and in particular what effect the cluster model has had on community cohesion based on the two reviews carried out in the field.

The purpose of the two reviews conducted was to focus on how *Connecting Classrooms* has influenced community cohesion. The reviews also aimed to evaluate the project's school based work and to identify the 'lessons learned' to date. In addition the reviews focused on how *Connecting Classrooms* has changed school and teacher practice.

Methodology of the 2 reviews

The research in *Pakistan* was conducted over 30 days in November and December 2011. Individual semi- structured interviews were conducted with principals and coordinators in 24 schools. Most of the schools were secondary schools, however there were a few primary schools as well, or schools which had both primary and secondary sections and where Connecting Classrooms was deemed to have affected both sections. The schools were located across 11 clusters in Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Azad Kashmir. The schools in Balochistan could not be visited due to the early end of the school term in December. However teachers and principals were met both in Karachi and in Quetta at a hotel. Care was taken to choose clusters which had a variety of different types of schools and the research team visited government, private, and trust schools as well as madrassas and charitable schools serving the poorer sections of society in urban and rural areas. Focus groups were held with 123 teachers and 71 parents or grandparents across the selected schools. Interviews were also held with a number of members of the local community who had been invited by the schools.

In *Bangladesh* the research was conducted over 15 days in March and April 2012. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with principals and coordinators in 14 schools. Most of the schools were secondary schools, however there were a few schools which had both primary and secondary sections. The schools were located across 7 clusters across five divisions. Care was taken to choose clusters which had a variety of different types of schools and the research team visited government and non government schools as well as madrassas. Focus groups were held with 93 teachers and 85 parents, siblings or grandparents across the selected schools. Interviews were also held with a limited number of members of the local community who had been invited by the schools.

In both countries a classroom exercise was conducted with around 20-30 students who had taken part in Connecting Classrooms in each school. Students were grouped into 5 groups – usually each group comprising 5-6 students, and were asked to write on a chart what similarities and differences they perceived at local, national and international levels. All students in each group were asked to participate and within minutes discussions and debates took place at every table, crossing gender and age barriers. The research team explained that there were no right or wrong answers. Each group was then asked to present their chart to the rest of the class. Some chose one spokesperson; others had one student present one part of the chart. At the end of the presentations

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the group was asked to explain if they thought similarities or differences between people and communities were more important and why. Again it was made clear that there were no wrong answers as the research team was more interested in the reasoning behind the choice of each group.

Overall the review wanted to gain an understanding of Connecting Classrooms on the ground and give a voice to those who had participated. Their reflections, suggestions and concerns primarily inform this report.



3 Connecting Classrooms and its aims in Bangladesh and Pakistan

Connecting Classrooms started in Pakistan in January 2008 and in Bangladesh in May 2008. It is one of the very first British Council programmes that tried to work with schools across the education sector involving different types of schools catering to different classes.

The 21 success indicators below were set as benchmarks for the programme. Both this review and the larger evaluation exercises which have taken place over the last three years, show that the programme in each country is meeting many of these objectives, and that it is just a matter of the programme running for a longer period for these to become entrenched.

1. Education Ministries and schools recognize the importance of international dimensions in education and actively support its inclusion.
2. The public-private partnership agenda in the school sector is encouraged as policy and welcomed by communities
3. Schools and communities work more closely, with communities becoming more involved in school planning and activities, and schools more involved in community and social issues.
4. The connection between school education and skills for employability is improved
5. School partnerships are seen as an important contributor to community cohesion, ICD and increasing understanding and trust between people in the UK and other societies.
6. Collaboration with the UK is significantly enhanced.
7. Learners, teachers and policy/decision-makers in the UK and CSA participating countries have more realistic and informed perceptions and understanding of each other's cultures and society, achieved by taking part in open dialogue with each other and having perceptions and views challenged through this.
8. Schools in the UK and in participating CSA countries are viewed as valued partners for internationalism in education and community inclusion.
9. Teachers and head teachers have reflected on the role of the school in communities and on effective teaching practices and adapted their approaches accordingly.
10. Learners have a more active approach to understanding global issues through enhanced skills in critical thinking.
11. Standards in teaching and learning are improved in participating schools
12. Learners have developed skills relevant to their employability
13. Teachers develop the skills to internationalise the curriculum
14. Learners have leadership skills which enable them to organise and lead a team to achieve a project goal, putting their ideas and talents to action
15. Head teachers have improved their knowledge and skills in school leadership
16. Teachers' improve their knowledge and skills in ICTs and English (CSA teachers)

17. Schools instil a strong global dimension into the learning experience of young people through the curriculum and the ethos of the school
18. Training and development opportunities for teachers and head teachers have been positively influenced
19. Schools actively engage with their communities, and in the UK enhanced recognition of community languages and ability for schools to show how community cohesion can be delivered through the partnership
20. Schools value and encourage student participation and provide space for students to voice their views and opinions within the school
21. Links and partnerships between state, private and faith-based schools lead to improved school effectiveness and sharing of skills

The official global outcomes that Connecting Classrooms is aiming to achieve across all countries where the programme is running are listed here below:

- Systems prioritise the knowledge skills and understanding required to equip young people for life in a global society and work in a global economy
- Institutions give increased priority to internationalising the curriculum and create an institutional ethos that supports the global dimension
- Practitioners demonstrate the leadership skills necessary to support the instilling of a strong global dimension into the learning experience of young people
- Learners demonstrate a critical understanding and knowledge of society, the world and their place in it, contributing to positive social change
- Communities give recognition to elements of the following agenda for schools and young people: community cohesion / challenging misconceptions, challenging attitudes and environments that may give rise to extremism

As a part of this review the research team wanted to collect the voices of those taking part in the project and reflect their views on how the aims of Connecting Classrooms were perceived and how the programme was viewed by the principals, teachers and parents of the schools that were involved. The research uncovered a wide variety of views. In some cases these views did reflect what the British Council had in mind, in other cases the aims are seen as more limited.

The *perceived aims* can be summarised under the following headings:

To be globally connected: Most of those interviewed in both countries felt that the programme's main aim was to open the eyes of the young on a world beyond Bangladesh or Pakistan. Some said that this was specifically to get to know the UK culture, others said that it was to get to know other cultures including the UK and a few said that it was also for the UK to get to know Bangladesh or Pakistan and its culture through the visits and exchanges of materials. The increased awareness of a world beyond their own locality- sometimes expressed as 'more information' or 'to learn about

other countries' was seen as important. Another central theme was that of 'changing perceptions', 'remove misconceptions' or 'reduce prejudice'. Interestingly whilst in Pakistan around half saw political objectives driving the funding, in Bangladesh only one principal felt that Connecting Classrooms was a follow up on colonialism and the Commonwealth, with the UK trying to increase its influence, albeit in a friendly way. Otherwise all saw the aims in a very positive way.

To foster Global Citizenship – When it came to *global citizenship*, the term was understood in a rather limited manner - mainly encompassing 'being in touch and sharing ideas and experience through e-mails or skype'. This is the case because it is a very new concept in both countries, and not something covered in school curricula. In both countries more than half of those interviewed explained that they felt the main purpose was to create global citizens and in this light for students to understand that their responsibilities go beyond their own country and that they need to understand global problems and work towards their resolution with other young people across the globe. The issues that need addressing include amongst others global warming, international peace and international trafficking. They felt that the project offered a platform to discuss these issues and broaden minds. A subtheme of this was **to create a peaceful world and create friendships across schools internationally**.

The term 'active citizenship' was again only understood in a rather limited way – possibly even less in Bangladesh than in Pakistan. This reflects the political culture of the country where a social contract between state and citizen simply does not exist. The project is actively changing the understanding of citizenship in those schools who are taking part in Connecting Classrooms. In a few schools principals would talk about how the project helped students and teachers to learn that they can 'do' things to change society. But when pressed, in most schools this 'change' had more to do with personal and civic responsibilities such as cleaning up the classroom and not jumping traffic lights. A more comprehensive view of citizenship is still not widely held (or taught).²

To have role models – Around a third of those interviewed in both countries spoke in some form or another about how the project allowed them to see what others do better, learn and apply it to their own school or environment.

21st Century skills for students and employment skills – many of those interviewed in both countries felt that one of the Connecting Classrooms' aims (or side effects) was to help develop, practice or entrench relevant skills for the future for all those who took part – this included improving English skills, improving ICT skills and improving teaching methods (entrenching more child centric methods).

To overcome discrimination – During the interviews many principals in Pakistan and coordinators in Bangladesh would as the discussion progressed explain how the cluster concept had in fact broken down some local barriers both within the classroom and between schools – these included religious, racial, gender and class barriers. Very few saw cluster cooperation or connections between different types of school both in Pakistan or Bangladesh as an objective, but in almost all the schools either the principal or the coordinator said that they had found working in

² Lall, M. (2012b) Why education matters – school 'choice' and differing views on citizenship in Pakistan, *Citizenship Studies*

clusters generally helpful. The project therefore has been instrumental in helping overcome discrimination.

To create leaders – In Bangladesh just under half of the coordinators interviewed felt that the programme aimed at developing leadership at all levels. This went beyond the principals who all received leadership training, but meant learning how to become leaders themselves as well as helping some students to become leaders through the projects. This included fieldtrips and working on different aspects of joint projects.



4 The schools and Connecting Classrooms in practice

This section will review the findings related to the main stakeholders of Connecting Classrooms, looking at the schools, the teachers, the training they received, the projects the schools implemented, the effects on students their parents and the wider community.

4.1 The schools and their clusters

Connecting Classrooms works on the basis of school clusters, where different types of schools, often located in different areas of the town or city are linked up with each other to work towards a set of agreed projects together. The intention behind this clustering model is to bring together different types of school who may not otherwise have much or any contact, allow for schools with better facilities to help those where the facilities are less abundant and to break class barriers. The hope is that in working together, differences between schools and between the students attending these schools can be overcome.

The composition of the clusters varied between the two countries, as Bangladesh has few government secondary schools and most secondary schools are non-government (with government financial support). In Pakistan however, the bulk of secondary education is still taken care of by the public sector. Consequently more Pakistani government schools were involved, as each cluster had between two and three of these; in Bangladesh there are clusters with one or no government schools.

The schools visited explained that it was the Connecting Classrooms cluster model which had allowed them for the first time to work with other types of school. In Bangladesh the private schools saw inter-school cooperation as more valuable than the government schools and government schools on the whole seemed a little less engaged than the non government schools, citing parental pressures for good exam results and a tight curriculum as reasons. In Pakistan it was the opposite, with government schools explaining how they had benefitted from the clustering model. It seems that what can be concluded is that schools with less resources and serving the poorer sections of society benefitted from being linked up with schools that had better means and served the middle classes. However government schools in both countries suffered from less autonomy than their non government/ private counterpart.

Collaboration and cooperation is driven by the cluster coordinator (generally not a head teacher) in Bangladesh and by the head teacher – often also the school and cluster coordinator in Pakistan. The role of the head teacher in both countries is key, and the project was most successful in those schools where the head teacher was personally involved or took a keen interest. In Pakistan where many cluster coordinators were head teachers, this often proved too much work for one person. It seems from this that the model of a ‘separate’ cluster coordinator, but who is respected by the cluster principals works best. This is corroborated by the one cluster in Pakistan that was visited that had this model as well.

In Bangladesh inter-cluster meetings were much more organised and systematic than in Pakistan. In many cases the local District Education Officer (DEO) called the meeting. The meetings are held in each school on a rotational basis. This structure helped to keep the project running even if principals or teachers/coordinators were transferred to other schools (as is most often the case in

government schools). In Pakistan meetings seemed much more haphazard in that there was generally no regular schedule and depended on the cluster coordinator calling the others. In some cases the Executive District Officer (EDO) was also invited.

The inter-cluster collaboration structure differed again between the two countries. In Bangladesh the coordinators worked with each other, and then collaboration moved directly down to the students of the various schools, as groups of students from each school were selected for different projects to work across school lines. In Pakistan cluster connections and network creation generally started between principals or coordinators, later, through certain projects inter-school links move down to teachers; however not all were involved. There were hardly any intra-cluster student connections. However in Pakistan most principals interviewed learnt to use the support mechanism of the cluster, getting advice from other principals and also call on parents to help. This was particularly the case in girls' government schools. The networks created in both countries also extended beyond the cluster with principals, coordinators and teachers who had taken part in British Council training outside of their own city, maintaining connections with their counterparts from other clusters.

In both countries some clusters became particularly close. In Bangladesh this was usually in small town communities where staff had known each other for a while, but were now linked by a common goal; in Pakistan this was driven more by externalities such as cooperation during the floods.

In both countries there was a strong sense of a Connecting Classrooms community with schools wanting to do more work nationally across clusters. There are already inter-cluster connections in Pakistan for example with inter cluster skype sessions to share and discuss issues between Balochistan and Punjab. In Bangladesh it is the national competitions which bring the clusters together.

4.2 Teachers

The report distinguishes between ordinary teachers and those who have become school or cluster coordinators.

School and cluster coordinators

In both countries school coordinators were mainly ordinary teachers who had either volunteered or who had been suggested by their head teacher. Cluster coordinators in Pakistan were often head teachers, whilst in Bangladesh cluster coordinators were mostly again ordinary teachers who cooperated closely with the head teacher.

The school and cluster coordinators are the backbone of the project. Whilst head teacher support is needed, indeed essential for success, most of the work is done by the coordinators. Consequently the project has had most effect on them. In both countries the coordinators created efficient and valuable networks to work together and often also to help each other beyond Connecting Classrooms issues. Their trips to the UK opened their eyes to the outside world and in all cases they were the ones who drove the internationalisation of the curriculum in schools. They also created intra-cluster connections through the trainings they attended as well as through sharing their experiences as coordinators.

This was particularly strong in Bangladesh, where intra-cluster competitions brought schools together.

In Pakistan the school and cluster coordinators were more successful in motivating staff to take part in the Connecting Classrooms project. This was mainly due to the fact that in Pakistan teachers were given extra time to do Connecting Classrooms activities, whilst in Bangladesh only the school coordinators and cluster coordinators were given extra time.

Ordinary teachers

The biggest difference between the two countries seems to be in how ordinary teachers were affected. Connecting Classrooms affects mainly teachers who take part. In many schools, teachers were either selected or volunteered to take part. In some cases the nature of the project determined which teachers would be most involved (for example if the school focused on a geography project, the geography teacher would automatically be involved, in many schools art and sports teachers would be involved due to art and inter schools sports competition, and English teachers were often the ones chosen for training due to the link up with the UK).

In Bangladesh teachers were a lot less involved than in Pakistan and hardly any networks between schools were created. In around a third of the schools visited the selective nature of teacher involvement created jealousies as some teachers felt more of them should have been included. This depended often on their relationship with the school coordinator. Jealousies also seemed to be based on the fact that the coordinator had at least one chance to visit the UK, something more senior teachers felt would have been their due. In more than half the schools visited the teachers admitted that they had absolutely no time for extracurricular activities and many admitted they felt they should be paid for the extra work they had to put in for Connecting Classrooms projects.³

In contrast in Pakistan, in more than half the schools it was not the nature of the project that determined teacher involvement, but rather teacher interest or selection by the principal. Teachers interacted across schools through the projects or created networks through the British Council training. Those who were selected to take part in trainings felt they had benefitted most. Most teachers who took part in the focus groups spoke how the project had affected their teaching. In all focus groups across all schools teachers spoke unprompted about more child centred methods (CCA) they had started to use in their classrooms. When asked how this was related to Connecting Classrooms, some described workshops they had attended and others spoke of the observations and method sharing sessions they had had either with their UK partners, or more often with their other cluster schools.

Sharing of the new knowledge within a school hardly happened in either country. In some schools the teachers would speak to their friends in break time, but only in two or three schools formal training seminars would be organised. This was largely due to internal hierarchies and the cascade model not taking into account how these could overcome.

³This reflects the very poor pay that Bangladeshi teachers receive across the board, and that is so much less than in other countries across the region. A teacher has to take on tuitions in order to make ends meet and any project outside of school hours means that time for extra earnings is taken away. It is also interesting that this view was most prevalent in the north and eastern areas which are the poorer regions of Bangladesh. The teachers in schools in the richer south did not complain in the same way.

In Pakistan many teachers felt that Connecting Classrooms had enriched their world view and made their teaching more interesting. The fact that there was a 'tangible' wider world out there and that they were able to do other, interesting things with their students was seen as universally positive, even if it took more time and effort. A number of government teachers also spoke about how the project had spurred them on to show that they could be just as good as private schools. In Bangladesh however these feelings were only voiced by the coordinators, principals and students.

One can deduce that the project structure affected teachers in both countries differently – making a real difference in Pakistan, but much less impact on the Bangladeshi teachers. Interestingly it is the reverse when it comes to students.

4.3 Training

All schools involved in both countries were offered some British Council training that focused amongst other things on leadership techniques, classroom management, lesson planning and internationalising the curriculum. This was generally received by the principal, the coordinator and between 2 and 6 other teachers. In the teacher focus groups, the teachers who had been trained spoke about the usefulness of the training and how what they had learnt helped them change classroom practice.

In Bangladesh the Ministry of Education has officially changed teaching methodology nationwide from 'lecture method' to 'participatory method'. This recent national policy change has been accompanied by some limited training for all schools. The BC training reinforced this new methodology.

In Pakistan, where the Child Centred Approach is not part of government policy, teachers who had taken part in workshops found that they had changed their teaching practice. In some cases this was spread around the whole school, but in many cases the benefit was limited to the participants. Most found training where they mixed across clusters most useful and interesting. Across schools teachers asked for more training, in particular with regard to English and IT and for more teachers to be trained. Those who had not been selected to take part felt left out.

The principal lesson learnt in both countries seems to have been the internationalisation of the lesson plan with most teachers admitting that they now made a special effort to include international examples. This was one of the most important global success indicators and was met in all schools.

4.4 Projects

There were a wide variety of projects that were taken up by the schools ranging from in-school work to inter-school competitions across clusters and inter-cluster competitions.

In Bangladesh most clusters had similar projects, and it looked all centrally coordinated, with schools having a clear direction of what they were supposed to do and achieve every year. In Pakistan the projects each cluster decided to undertake differed widely. Sometimes there were marked differences between schools within a cluster as well as some schools were more active or engaged than others. In one case the projects seemed to depend entirely on the UK partner schools (who were seen as dictating what they wanted to do). However in most cases the schools across a cluster decided on the projects together and in the course of this also saw what activities schools

could undertake together. Many projects related to the environment and another central theme was different cultures (both within Pakistan as well as with regard to the wider world). There were different categories of projects- some taking place during lessons and integrated into the lesson plans (such as writing letters to the UK partner schools during English lessons) as well as projects done as extracurricular activities such as international days or sports competitions.

In both countries celebrating international days within schools and across schools with each other became a standard routine. Teachers used these international day celebrations to teach children about various issues – ranging from workers’ rights to climate change. All schools marked a UK/ Scottish/ Welsh day – depending on their UK cluster counterpart’s location and cards were exchanged for religious festivals such as Eid or Christmas. The students that were selected to take part were all very enthusiastic and happy to participate. Through national day celebrations and as audiences for plays, art and sports competitions many more students were affected even if not directly involved. In both countries the level of involvement of a school largely depended on the coordinator’s enthusiasm and the support of his or her head teacher. In Bangladesh this meant more interschool contact for students than in Pakistan where students did not tend to visit their partner schools apart for competitions on sports days.

In Bangladesh 36 schools used the opportunity of the projects to apply for the International Schools Award, and 26 of the schools achieving the goal.

All schools displayed students’ work and often also project work, photos or cards that had arrived from the UK. They in turn sent hard copy and electronic versions of their work and celebrations.

4.5 Students

Connecting Classrooms has had a different impact in each school. Whilst most schools in both countries emphasize that there is no discrimination between student from different religious, ethnic, linguistic or class/ caste backgrounds; the reality on the ground is often that minorities keep a low profile. This is particularly the case in homogeneous schools. Through Connecting Classrooms students from different communities have been able to work with each other within the school. This had a particular effect in Pakistan which will be discussed in the community cohesion section.

In both countries the number of students involved in Connecting Classrooms varied from school to school depending on the energy of the school coordinator, on the support of the principal and on parental acceptance of extracurricular activities. In all Bangladeshi schools however a certain number of students mixed with students from other schools. This resulted in gender and class barriers being broken as children from single sex schools mixed with those from mixed schools and middle class students from government schools mixed with poorer students from private schools.

4.5.1 Results of the group work

The classroom exercise was conducted with students from all age groups who had had some involvement with Connecting Classrooms. The enthusiasm in all schools was palpable and different age groups worked with each other, all contributing. There was mostly a very open mind and a good awareness of the outside world. All students worked well in groups and then gave

short presentations about the discussions they had had amongst themselves. In all schools the students were very confident in presenting their work either in Bangla/Urdu or English. In more than three quarter of the schools the groups clearly articulated why they thought similarities or differences between people were more important and in all cases a very positive note on global collaboration was struck. It was evident that the Connecting Classrooms project work had given the students a wider world view, not only of the UK. The fact that basically 'we are all human and have to work out their differences' was a prevailing theme across all schools.

In Pakistan teachers confirmed that the increase in student confidence was due to the Connecting Classrooms project work that had been undertaken. In Bangladesh the school coordinators confirmed that a number of students had picked up leadership skills through the Connecting Classrooms projects.

It is noteworthy that the type of school visited in Pakistan had a significant impact on the answers given. In most government and private schools the students believed that differences between people globally could be overcome and had to be overcome. However in two or three more conservative schools, one of which was a religious school, this was not the case and students would argue that differences between Muslims were the only ones which could and should be overcome. This was not the case in Bangladesh, where the type of school did not seem to matter that much and the positive effect of Connecting Classroom was felt across the board – even in madrasahs.

4.6 Parents and the wider community

In both countries parents were a 'mixed bag' from those very supportive of the project to those who did not know much about Connecting Classrooms or the British Council at all. Many parents were not aware of Connecting Classrooms. Those who knew about the project, were usually middle class. However many parents were aware of the projects that had been undertaken as a part of Connecting Classrooms. In private schools in Pakistan there were projects that went beyond their involvement in Connecting Classrooms, and parents often could not distinguish between the two. Parents of children in government schools often wondered if the focus of teachers should not be exclusively on exams. Many were not that convinced of the value of extracurricular activities and needed time to come around to the idea.⁴ In Bangladesh the principals explained that in many cases it had been a struggle to get parents on board because their focus was for their children to excel at the national exams and any extracurricular activities could detract from this goal. In many schools an information seminar had been held at the start to inform parents and any board members of the aims and objectives of Connecting Classrooms. However this lay a few years back and not everyone could remember or had attended.

A small number of schools in both countries started to build relationships with their local community outside of the Connecting Classrooms project, yet admitted that the catalyst had been taking part in Connecting Classrooms. In one case in Bangladesh a biannual mothers' meeting was held in order for mothers to become more involved in their children's education. The Connecting

⁴ Principals in government schools often had a very hard time convincing parents and many therefore decided not to give away too much detail about the project; their parents engagement was limited to getting parental permission for projects and outings.

Classrooms projects were explained at this meeting as well. The fact that this was a poor school in a semi-urban area meant that it changed the school-parents dynamics. In Pakistan some projects implemented in Connecting Classrooms allowed for a more direct connection between the school and its immediate environment. Examples reach from the cloth bags being distributed and shopkeepers asked to provide those not requiring plastic bags with a discount, to cleaning the local park, to visits to the local slum where students would teach locals how to clean their drinking water. The floods also brought a chance for local connections as some schools became relief camps and other cluster schools brought food and blankets.

But generally direct links with the local community (beyond parents) remained limited. This was also due to security concerns, particularly in girls' schools, where no principal in either country wanted to see strangers coming into the school. In some schools in Pakistan the project had to be explained publically as either the press or other outsiders were spreading stories that the British Council was trying to 'convert' students and teachers at a particular school. This is why in some cases schools preferred to keep a low profile and not advertise the fact that they were taking part.

4.7 Madrassas

Madrassas in Bangladesh and Pakistan are very different. In Bangladesh the *Alia* madrassas teach the national curriculum⁵ in addition to the madrassa curriculum, regulated by the national madrassa board. Many of these madrassas are co-educational and have female teaching staff. In Pakistan most of the madrassas are run on donations and managed by a committee responsible for administration as well as collecting the funds. Madrassas are attached to mosques, have boarding and lodging facilities and students are charged no fees. Madrassas focus on religious studies and only few madrassas teach the national curriculum, but even those which do are not linked into the state education system as they are in Bangladesh. Madrassas there are not co-educational and staff are of the same gender as their students.

Connecting Classrooms is a unique project in that it tries to work with mainstream government schools and faith schools. The Bangladeshi madrassas seemed to be more open to Connecting Classrooms than in Pakistan. The interviews in Pakistan revealed that at the beginning the madrassa principals were not very interested in taking part in Connecting Classrooms. This was in part due to the low exposure to the outside world that madrassas have, both within Pakistan and to foreign countries. Interaction at a national or international level was not seen as a priority. The implementation of Connecting Classrooms depended in part on the principal, but due to their administrative structures, madrassas also face restrictions with regard to their ability to take decisions, as the board has to be consulted and the donors yield significant influence.

In Bangladesh in contrast the relatively liberal stance of the schools reflected the leadership of progressive principals who believe that their role is also to open the minds of students and teachers. The madrassas were particularly enthusiastic both about the links with the UK as well as their involvement with other schools within their clusters. The principals felt that through

⁵ Qomi madrassas are under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and do not have to follow the national curriculum. The BC only work with alia madrassas.

Connecting Classrooms their students were able to discover the wider world by interacting with others outside of the madrassa or by being host to others within their walls.

In Bangladesh the madrassas also seemed to have closer links with the surrounding wider community. This seems to be the case because the community usually co-funds the local madrassa. Not only parents were aware of Connecting Classrooms, but non parent members of the community as well. In Pakistan however it was observed that donor influence could have a negative impact, particularly when it came to the installation and use of internet facilities. Neither the madrassa teachers nor the students have the freedom to what they want and the use of private USB sticks with materials brought from the outside was restricted or forbidden. Even where computers were available the use of the equipment and the internet was limited and controlled. In one case the principal of the madrassa encouraged his students to access the internet, e-mail and English classes in their free time outside of the madrassa, so as to not contravene donor instructions.

Both in Bangladesh and in Pakistan the madrassas still had very traditional teaching methods. They explained that they found it difficult to change to more modern teaching methods. However in a few, the teachers did start to implement more child friendly teaching methods. Change in essence was seen as having to happen slowly and could not be brought in overnight by an external programme.

In Pakistan the madrassas felt that a barrier of collaborating with the other cluster schools was the differences in school timings as well as the difference in weekly and annual holidays. This was not mentioned as a problem in Bangladesh.

The impact of Connecting Classrooms varied from madrassa to madrassa depending upon the willingness of teachers and students to accept change, the extent to which the use of new technologies was allowed and modern teaching methods were being implemented in the classrooms. In Bangladesh however it seems that there has been a greater impact, possibly due to these madrassas already being integrated into the 'state' system through the national curriculum and teachers who are paid by the government on monthly payment orders (MPO).

4.8 Achievements and lessons learnt

The perceived achievements and lessons learnt varied from school to school, as well as between principals, teachers and coordinators. A few themes emerged, most of which are discussed in more detail across the report. This section allows for the personal views of teachers and principals to be heard.

Broadening the mind and tolerance – One achievement mentioned in almost all schools in both countries was how the projects had helped broaden the mind of the staff. This was most often mentioned by coordinators, but also by a large number of principals. Part of this were the trips to the UK, the visits of staff from the UK, the interaction with UK schools, the interaction with different types of schools and the developing of projects which lay outside of the curriculum but addressed key themes of global citizenship. In Pakistan tolerance towards others (in particular vis-a-vis other systems, gender and class barriers) received a particular mention in most establishments.

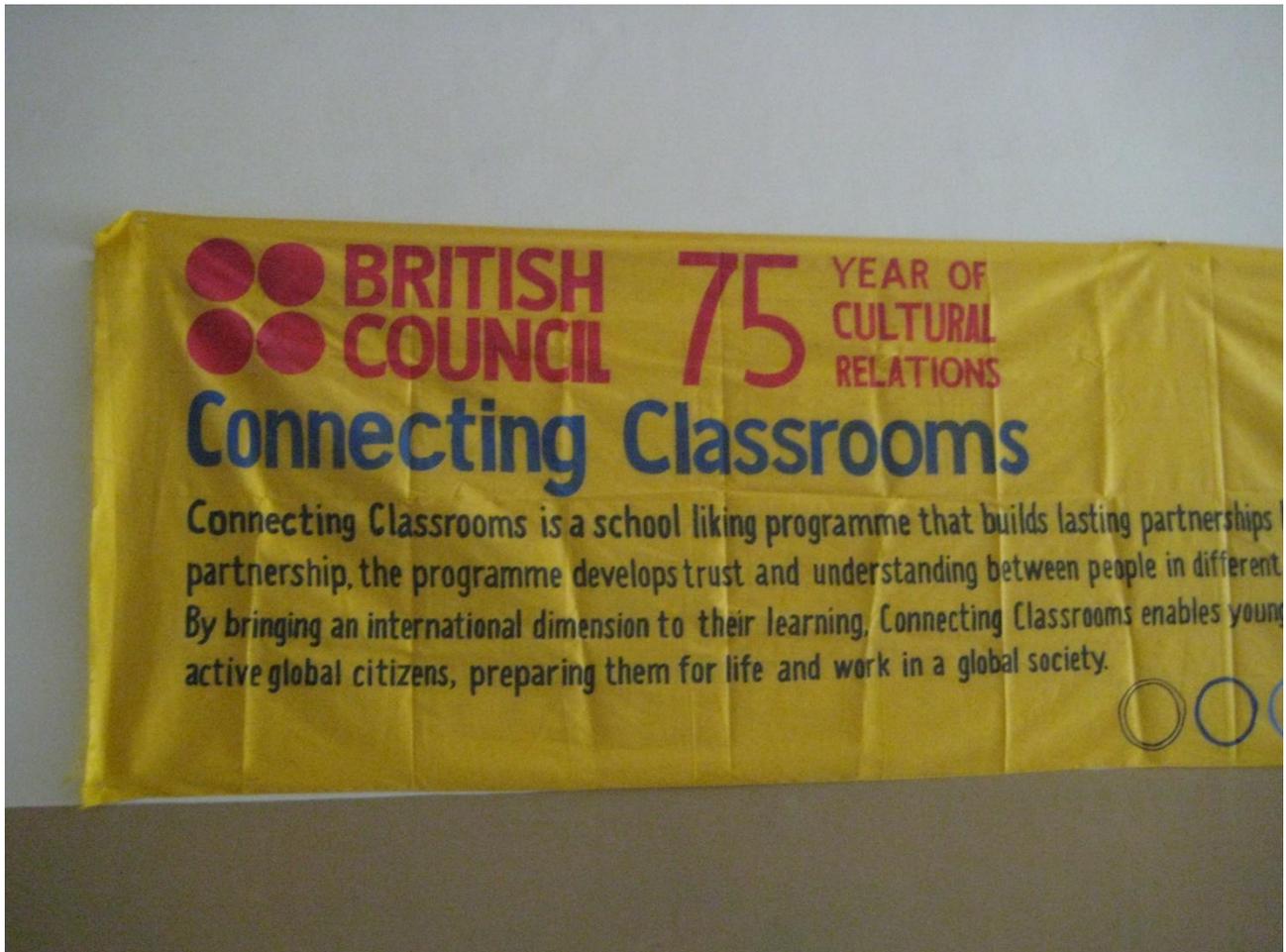
Internationalising the curriculum – The biggest achievement in Bangladesh mentioned in almost all of the schools was the fact that those who had received the specialised training now felt empowered to internationalise the curriculum, to add international examples and to give their students a view of the wider world. In Pakistan this was mentioned as well, but not as emphatically.

IT skills and English skills – Skills were mentioned by most teachers in Pakistan and Bangladesh. All coordinators felt that their confidence increased in using the English language and in using computers to communicate with the UK. It should also be noted that schools which had a good IT lab generally were more interactive with the UK. The lack of IT facilities did not however hamper intra cluster interaction. Many who were interviewed felt they needed much more training than what was on offer and those schools who did not have IT labs or an IT teacher suffered most.

Increased confidence and sharing of ideas – One of the most frequent achievements mentioned was increased confidence of anyone who took part in the projects – coordinators, teachers and students. Coordinators felt that in particular their ability to develop a network with other coordinators and share ideas was a highly prized lesson learnt from Connecting Classrooms. Many teachers in Pakistan mentioned the fact that they had learnt new things from their training, in some cases from their UK partners and in some (isolated) cases from colleagues as their biggest achievement. This had changed teaching practice, teacher exposure and teacher attitude as teachers were now working beyond the curriculum.

Leadership skills of students – In Bangladesh over two thirds of the coordinators had direct interaction with students from all participating classes. Most of these mentioned that the biggest achievement had been the skills the students developed – in particular leadership skills when it came to executing projects. This is not something that was mentioned in Pakistan.

Learning to think outside the box: This was mentioned only in Pakistan. This included certain schools learning how to engage parents to solve problems, or learning how to work with other types of schools.



5 Community Cohesion and overcoming barriers

The social barriers in Pakistan and Bangladesh vary widely as Bangladesh is a comparatively homogeneous society, whilst Pakistan is much more multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic and multi-religious. That does not mean that Bangladesh does not have minorities - Hindus, Christians and ethnic tribal minorities are present, but these social divides are much less prominent than in Pakistan. It also should be remembered that within all more homogeneous societies, it is harder for minorities to assert a different identity and many prefer to integrate or keep a low profile rather than challenge the national identity. What Bangladesh and Pakistan share however are gender and class barriers.

Given that Connecting Classrooms was devised to help overcome faultlines and barriers at local level, the first step has to be that these differences are acknowledged. In Bangladesh any differences were much less acknowledged than in Pakistan. Connecting Classrooms' aims go well beyond the global aim of reducing the information and understanding gap which underpins many of the problems between Bangladesh/Pakistan and the West/ the UK. It is also a much more ambitious aim for an international programme to want to improve tolerance not only internationally but also at a local level, without however interfering either in the curriculum or in the ways the schools operate. In fact many schools saw Connecting Classrooms primarily as a platform to improve the relationship between their country and the UK through the mutual understanding and sharing of information. Only in discussion did many then admit that the Connecting Classrooms platform had been as important if not more important in bridging local barriers as well.

In order to understand how Connecting Classrooms was able to reduce local faultlines and bridge gaps within the South Asian clusters, it is important to remember the 'low base' from which many taking part in Connecting Classrooms were starting off. This section reviews the different local barriers within schools and clusters and discusses how Connecting Classrooms has helped some of these to be reduced or even overcome. The main issue here is that the barriers are different for every cluster and within every school/ local community. At some level there are always a number of different, overlapping barriers, but one is generally perceived as more prevalent or important than the others (depending of course on who was asked).

5.1.1 Bridging gaps within schools:

All principals reiterated that whilst they did not feel there was any active discrimination between different students, the projects engendered through Connecting Classrooms created a platform where students were able to work with each other and that this in itself helped reduce any differences and misconceptions. In either country there were rarely big class differences within schools.

In Bangladesh most schools were quite homogeneous. (Cantonment schools, were the principal exception because the army schools cater to all sections of the army from cleaners' to officers' children as well as the local community). In that sense community cohesion within the schools was not seen as much of an issue. In madrassas the project helped overcome the gender barrier. Although many are co-ed, girls and boys usually don't interact with each other. The Connecting Classrooms project was a platform for madrasa students to interact across the gender line within

and across schools.

In Pakistan most schools proclaimed that the teachers treated all students the same way. This is particularly the case in very homogeneous schools with small minorities where it seems that the minorities tend to keep their head down. In more heterogeneous schools the principals admitted that the project had given them a platform to discuss differences. This was particularly the case with regard to religious festivals and many schools now celebrate Christian as well as Hindu festivals (such as Christmas, Easter and Diwali), with all children taking part. Gender differences do not play much of a role either as in mixed private schools boys and girls work and play together. Most other schools are in any case single gender as of secondary level. It is therefore fair to say that Connecting Classrooms allowed for a certain religious gap to be addressed in more heterogeneous schools with larger minorities.

5.1.2 Overcoming differences between schools within clusters

In all the single sex schools in both countries the project was credited with bridging the gender gap as students from boys' and girls' schools had a unique chance to interact with each other. This was particularly significant in Pakistan. Girls' schools and female teachers had for the first time the possibility to interact with boys' schools. The international travel which was a part of the Connecting Classrooms project linking the clusters to the UK saw female teachers travel with male colleagues (without being accompanied by their own male relatives).

The other gap which was seen as bridged by the project was that of class. Both countries have a highly stratified society and middle class parents will make sure their children attend the most highly achieving schools. By mixing students across schools, those from richer and poorer backgrounds interacted with each other.

In Bangladesh the clusters with a madrassa those students from more traditional, religious backgrounds were also able to interact with students from more secular families. This seems to have been less the case in Pakistan where madrassa students and teachers had fewer opportunities to interact with the non religious institutions. In Bangladesh parents made it a point to discuss that they felt this cross school interaction has broadened the mind of their children.

5.1.3 The students – differences and similarities between communities

The students at all schools were very aware of what similarities and differences there were at local, national and global levels. Most students had a very open world view, aware of differences but also very accepting of them. Many groups either argued that the basic humanity between people was more important than any difference dividing them, or that in fact it was important to understand differences in order to be able to respect them and reduce misunderstandings. In all of the schools they discussed in very articulate ways how differences could be overcome and how similarities needed to be built on.

When doing the exercise many children were clearly influenced by the various projects they had undertaken as a part of Connecting Classrooms as the issue of climate change, recycling and pollution as communal problems which the whole world had to solve together came up repeatedly. The students of the schools which had less resources, or had had less chance in taking part in cross school activities tended to refer less to the project work.

In Bangladesh religious differences were never seen as a barrier. In a few schools the issue of solving global problems, in particular climate change was seen as a major joint challenge. There was a general excitement when it came to discuss the wider world and what they felt was held in common. The enthusiasm of each group working together on the exercise was palpable in all schools and only in one school on one table were there issues with boys and girls working together.

In Pakistan however there were clear differences between students at different types of schools, with students at a particularly conservative Muslim private school arguing that there was only one community – the Muslim one and that differences with others could not be overcome.⁶ Overall however it seemed as if the worldview of many of the students was wider and more open than that of even their teachers or parents.



⁶ Unfortunately these views are becoming more prevalent, as are these types of schools. It will depend on the BC if they feel that they can have an impact with CC in such schools.

6 Other Emerging Themes

This section describes the crosscutting themes which were identified from the interviews of the various stakeholders. They reflect what teachers and parents as well as head teachers commonly said.

6.1 Changed children's attitudes

One of the main themes that emerged from all interviews in both countries was that the students who had taken part in Connecting Classrooms activities had a greatly increased sense of confidence. In every school someone mentioned that children were now more curious as they realised a wider world beyond their own country. An increased engagement with global issues such as climate change seems to have been another positive outcome.

The visits from the UK as well as the visits of their principals and coordinators to the UK brought the wider world a bit closer to home. Many realised that they were in fact not that different from students in the UK. The confidence of the students was witnessed by the research team as all students were put into random cross class and cross age groups and asked to complete a chart together, after which they were asked to present their discussions either in Urdu/Bangla or English. In all cases the presentations were delivered with a lot of enthusiasm and energy and most students turned out to be surprisingly good public speakers.

6.2 Improved teaching methods

Both the interviews with the principals and the focus groups with the teachers brought up the theme of teaching methods and how taking part in Connecting Classrooms had impacted the classrooms. Most schools visited stated that they now used more child centred teaching methods, allowing children to work in groups and ask questions. In Bangladesh, the Ministry of Education has stipulated that teaching methods have to change nationwide to be more child friendly. The teachers who had been trained as well as the coordinators and the principals all felt that the BC training had solidified the use of participatory methods in their school. In Pakistan child centric methods are more likely to be applied in private schools, and the teachers in government schools experienced it as a cultural shift. The sharing of ideas between teachers in break time also meant that other teachers would learn in an informal way for their trained colleagues and in many cases it was hoped would start to apply some of the new ideas.

6.3 Extra work for teachers

In both countries extra work for teachers was mentioned. However it seems to have been a bigger problem in Bangladesh, where it reduced the number of teachers taking part. The fact that many Connecting Classrooms projects are not integrated into the curriculum and cannot be completed during class-time, means that any teachers or students involved have to stay back after school hours. Teachers in particular feel that this expectation is unfair as they need this time to earn extra money with tuitions. They also felt that they were not being compensated for their extra work as only the coordinator and the principal were able to travel to the UK. In Bangladesh coordinators often found that they had to run the projects on their own with the students directly, bypassing the teachers.

In Pakistan teachers did not complain but did mention that taking part in Connecting Classrooms increased their workloads. When this was supported by the principal, and the whole school was taking part, the result was positive for all. However teachers and principals did point out that time is a big resource in a country where the syllabus is tight and where parents demand to know why extracurricular activities are run when the exam preparation should be the priority. Private schools generally found managing extra projects and making time easier than government schools that were hampered by red tape and hierarchies. Those teachers who did take part found that they gained a lot and even asked for the project time to be extended. There was a lot more teacher enthusiasm in Pakistan than in Bangladesh.

But in both countries teachers made good progress with incorporating an international dimension into lesson planning. They still need BC support to design Connecting Classrooms projects that could be linked more strongly with the curriculum.

6.4 Getting to know the other sectors – non government/private, government, and madrassas

Connecting Classrooms in effect became a platform for different types of schools to get to know each other and work together. Most schools declared never having had links with other schools prior to joining Connecting Classrooms. It helped reduce misconceptions: Many private schools were very surprised at what they found in government schools and vice versa. In Bangladesh non government schools and madrassas seemed to find this one of the key features of the project – not in that they were getting to know government schools, but that government schools were learning about them. However in the government schools visited the value of ‘getting to know other schools’ was not emphasized. In Pakistan the presumption that government teachers did not work hard or did not know their subject well was quickly thrown out of the window. Government schools felt they benefitted from the cluster concept but were held back by a lot of red tape. The collaboration seems to have reduced prejudices and helped schools gain a better understanding on how the different sectors operate. In the clusters with madrassas, schools felt their eyes were opened with what madrassas were achieving. Madrassas expressed how delighted they were to be linked into a network.

6.5 Creating a Social Network

In both countries social networks were definitely created. In Bangladesh this was more at coordinator level and in Pakistan at principal level. In Pakistan this became a social resource as the links between schools went beyond the ‘knowing’ and ‘understanding’. During the life of the projects there was an increased mutual sharing of problems. Of course this was more prevalent in some clusters than others, and largely depended on the personalities of the cluster coordinators and the principals. Sometimes the social network extended across clusters as teachers met for training outside of their city. Connection was more likely to be via mobile phones.

6.6 Adding their own resources

In Bangladesh all schools visited had dedicated a classroom to Connecting Classrooms. In all schools visited the principals allowed the school/ cluster coordinator extra time to undertake the

projects. In Pakistan the time was also extended to many teachers who were taking part in the project. In many schools other resources were made available as well, with schools that had the means also paying for project materials.

6.7 Issues and difficulties

It needs to be reiterated that overall the schools felt that the project was worthwhile and many wanted it extended and expanded. However as with all projects difficulties were faced, some of which were harder to overcome than others.

Selective involvement of both teachers and students: In most schools in both countries only a selected number of students and teachers were involved. It was unclear how those taking part were selected and the number of participants varied widely from school to school. The assumption that the teachers who had been trained would be able to share their knowledge (cascade model) worked in very few schools, not least because of teacher transfers, the lack of time and facilities and hierarchical structures which had not been taken into account. In Bangladesh both teachers and parents needed to be convinced of the value of taking part in such a project and what they could gain from it. In contrast it seems that students did not need much convincing and that in all schools visited the students were very keen.

Difficulty in integrating the projects into the curriculum: Many schools mentioned the fact that the wide variations in what was being taught did not provide a common ground to develop coherent, curriculum related projects with each other. However they also felt that in order for the project to be sustainable the projects should increasingly be linked to their curriculum and allow it to be 'widened' in this way. Both the Bangladeshi and the Pakistani National Curriculum is very tight and very exam oriented. There is generally a lack of time to get through the mandatory subjects and there is great parental pressure on achieving good grades. Whilst many teachers explained that they been successful at integrating an international dimension into teaching and learning, they need to link projects more closely to their curriculum learning outcomes – something which can only be done through school leadership.

ICT Facilities: Levels of available IT hardware varied widely between schools and often there was a lack of IT teachers and support. The grant did not allow for much hardware investment.⁷ More than half the schools visited did not have adequate ICT facilities, making communications with the UK difficult. Within the cluster the communication is usually via mobile phone. Only in a few more advanced clusters will the coordinators do everything via e-mail.

The difference in IT facilities also makes the difference between government and non government schools hard to bridge (although in Bangladesh it is the other way around as government schools are often better equipped than non government schools. In Pakistan it is the opposite). There is a very low level of usage or understanding of the internet especially with the older teacher generation. In some cases principals, coordinators and teachers had to use their own computers or internet connections at home in the evening if they wanted to be in touch with other partner

⁷ The team was told that originally all money had to be spent on programmes, however the BC offices did agree to IT related expenses when some schools were able to prove that they could not take part unless they were given access to the internet and possibly a few computers as well.

schools.

Hierarchy: Hierarchies played a big role in who was selected for training. In Pakistan hierarchies meant that most cluster coordinators were principals as well – usually making their workload too heavy. Since teachers are not trained to train their peers and there are hierarchy issues the cascade model does not work well. Trips to UK were mostly made possible for the oldest/ most senior teachers, not necessarily with the greatest effect.

Understanding the terminology: The key words of the project *citizenship* and *global citizenship* are not commonly understood because they are new concepts in societies that traditionally have not had much of a social contract. They are generally very thin concepts and not linked to the state or wider societal responsibilities. *Citizenship* means cleaning up after oneself, personal responsibility, obeying traffic rules and being polite. The understanding of rights and duties is limited to the local sphere – not to the national or state sphere.⁸ *Global citizenship* means being interconnected with another country or school via the internet/e-mail and skype. In some cases both citizenship and global citizenship have a connection with recycling, the environment and climate change and personal responsibility vis a vis these issues. But issues of rights, duties and political participation do not generally figure in the discussions around these themes (because they have never been taught in that way). However, most principals and coordinators discussed global citizenship as the BC's main aim in rolling out the project. In Bangladesh responsibility at a global level, especially with regards to pollution and climate change was well understood. Those who were asked about their understanding of global citizenship felt that it was a sense of international shared responsibility and that especially the younger generation would have to find cooperative ways to solve global problems together. International understanding and communication were seen as an essential part of this. Most schools did however have local projects which arguably had a local citizenship impact as well, regarding hygiene (such as hand washing day) or local responsibility (tree planting and cleaning up of the local environment).

Facilities: Differences between the facilities in different types of schools as well as difference between Pakistani/Bangladeshi schools and UK schools can be difficult with poorer schools feeling that they cannot possibly measure up. In some cases the private schools (in Pakistan) and government schools (in Bangladesh) were quite 'arrogant' as they felt superior.

Government red tape: Government schools have particular problems that do not seem to be taken into account. These vary between Pakistan and Bangladesh – but teacher transfer where the teachers who had been trained (or who had travelled) had left the school for another one (or to get married) and it was felt that the benefits had been lost, is common for both countries.

More time: Invariably the schools felt that they had progressed. In many they listed an impressive list of achievements and lessons learnt (which have been discussed above). However in all cases they felt time had been limited and they felt that for the benefits of the project to really take root a lot more time was needed (as well as an increase involvement of schools with many more teachers

⁸ This is an issue across Pakistan. See Lall, M. (2012b) Why education matters – school 'choice' and differing views on citizenship in Pakistan, *Citizenship Studies*.

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receiving training and more students taking part). Time was mentioned a number of times also with regard to finishing projects, organising trips etc. Many coordinators felt the timelines were too tight and felt more time would allow for better achievements.

In **Pakistan** a few other difficulties were mentioned that were not seen as issues in Bangladesh.

UK response: One issue mentioned frequently was that the response from UK partners in many places was poor. Time difference is partly to blame but in many cases there seems to have been little interest. The excitement from Pakistan was not perceived as matched. Many private schools were more interested in links with the UK and saw this as the main benefit for their school. In fact some private schools had had international cross school links before.

Sustainability beyond end of funding: In schools which felt that the project had finished the project materials had to be taken out of store room again for the research team to see. All schools professed they would continue but it is questionable if they will without external drivers.



7 Conclusions and Recommendations

The project is being implemented in schools that are starting from a very low baseline. Schools to date have focused almost exclusively on curriculum delivery and exam preparation. Engaging with topics outside of the curriculum and the wider world is new to many. The objectives are big and a lot of time is required for such aims to be achieved even in more favourable circumstances. What has been achieved is commendable but needs to be sustained as a short programme will fall apart if the funding stops. The role of the external funding agency is key – especially if it continues to be accepted as supportive and ‘neutral’.

The 21 British Council success indicators listed earlier were set as benchmarks for the programme. Both the two reviews, this comparative report and the larger evaluation exercises which have taken place over the last three years, show that the programme in each country is meeting many of these objectives, and working successfully towards others. It is just a matter of the programme running for a longer period for these to become entrenched.

As can be seen for the long list of successes and what worked well in the tables below – the programme has been essentially a great success. More than 90% of the schools visited asked for the programme to be extended.

The tables below summarise what worked well, what worked less well and what each country can learn from the other.

7.1 Main findings – similarities and differences

	What did not work well	What worked well
Both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cascade training model did not work – teachers who took part in CC training did not share their learning with peer. Needs formalisation of dissemination and recognition for achieving this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidence of the students increased. Teachers internationalising the curriculum. Gender and class barriers overcome within schools as well as within clusters. High student participation across all ages. Significant change in getting to know schools from other sectors. The schools serving the poorer sections of society benefited most from the cluster model through resource sharing as well as informal teacher knowledge exchange. Development of a wider world view (students) and global citizenship context.

Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significantly less teacher⁹ involvement due to school and cluster coordinators shouldering almost all of the workload. • Teachers were not given dedicated time in the school day, wanted compensation for Connecting Classrooms time spent. • Struggled to get parents on board. • Significantly less involvement of principals. • Religious and ethnic differences were not recognised and hence were difficult to bridge. The official ‘Bangla narrative’ is largely to blame for this as Bangladesh was created on the basis of a unifying Bangali culture and neither differences nor discrimination is acknowledged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cluster coordinators were ordinary teachers who were given dedicated time to implement Connecting Classrooms. They became the leaders and drivers of the project. • Creation of leaders in the student community. • Leadership skills of school coordinators developed. • Dedicated classroom space for Connecting Classrooms activities. • Regular meeting schedules which rotate across schools. • Madrassas excited to take part and local community was involved. • The training solidified the participatory teaching style across the classrooms of participating schools. • Projects coordinated across the whole country produced high quality outcomes through cluster competitions. • Inter school contact for students in each cluster resulting in wider student participation.
Pakistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most cluster coordinators were head teachers and struggled with time management. • Meetings often ad hoc, and locations indeterminate. • Lack of inter-cluster competition/collaboration produced poorer quality projects in some cases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent workshops/information sessions worked well in certain clusters. • Teachers were given dedicated time in the school days to do Connecting Classrooms activities. • Parents were more involved in solving school problems (such as repairs) as schools actively tried to engage them in school life in new ways. • Connecting Classrooms helped transform teaching methods. This was due to both CC training and UK visits. • Social networks created within the clusters were much bigger (and sustainable) than in Bangladesh.

7.2 What can one country learn from the other

What Bangladesh can learn from Pakistan	What Pakistan can learn from Bangladesh
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⁹ This refers to teaches who were neither school nor cluster coordinators.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get BC support and build confidence to run parent workshops/ information sessions as the outcome was favourable in Pakistan. • Create greater engagement of teachers through workload management and creation of specific time aside for implementing Connecting Classrooms. • Mobilise principals to be more involved and to apply leadership techniques they have learnt. • Get parents more involved in solving school problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure cluster coordinator role is not played by a head teacher. • Dedicated classroom space for Connecting Classrooms activities. • Schedule meetings in different locations by rotation. • Coordinate projects across the whole country and organise cluster competitions to improve quality and cohesion. • Increase inter-school contact for students through intra and inter-cluster activities.
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Acronyms

BC British Council

CCA Child Centred Approaches to teaching and learning

CC Connecting Classrooms

DEO District Education Officer

EFA Education For All

GDP Gross Domestic Product

GoP Government of Pakistan

GPI Gender Parity Index

IT Information Technology

KP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

MDG Millennium Development Goals

MPO Monthly Payment Order

NGO Non Governmental Organisation

NWFP North West Frontier Province

ToR Terms of Reference

UK United Kingdom

8 Appendix - Literature review

8.1 Definitions and the broader literature relating to social cohesion, community cohesion and education

8.1.1 Definitions

Society: is based on interactions coordinated through anonymous, rule bound, transparent exchanges (Storper 2005: 32).

Social cohesion focuses on inclusion and deals with inequalities and long term poverty (Gaffikin and Morrissey 2011). Social Cohesion refers to a relatively harmonious society characterized by low levels of crime and high levels of civic co-operation and trust (Green et al. 2006:4); the different constituency elements however can be combined in different configurations (ibid:179). For most people, in most societies, social cohesion is probably a desirable state, so long as it is based on equality, or at least relative equality, of access to goods, opportunities and power (ibid:10). Jenson (1998:1 in Green 2006) argues that social cohesion does not necessarily involve shared values (bonding) but rather relies on the legitimacy of democratic institutions, effective institutional mechanisms and active civic participation. Maxwell (1996:3 in Green 2006) on the other hand argues that social cohesion is built on shared values and community interpretation, reducing disparities among members.

Community: forms of collective life in which people are tied together through interpersonal contact, informal relationships and particularistic affinities (Storper 2005:31).

Community cohesion deals with intracommunity and intercommunity tensions (Gaffikin and Morrissey 2011). Refers to a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging, in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued, where similar life opportunities are available to all and strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider context (Johnson 2006). Indicators that reflect Community Cohesion include amongst others associational membership, tolerance and political engagement (Green et al. 2006: 52).

8.1.2 Community cohesion, education and social networks

The role of community cohesion has emerged in the UK predominantly after the 2001 disturbances in Oldham and Burnely, led by fractions within local communities. Following these episodes, the UK Government implemented new policies for the building of 'cohesive communities'. The introduction of citizenship education in the school curricula lies within this broader framework. Many reports submitted during the last decade (2001-2010) have defined schools and education as instruments to build trust in students through dialogue and active engagement with the larger community.

Woolcock and Narayan (2000) define social networks as "norms and networks that allow people to act collectively" and provide three features of the interpersonal dynamics that characterize these

networks:

Bonding: social networks among homogeneous groups (family, close friends)

Bridging: social networks among heterogeneous groups (professional acquaintances, classmates)

Linking: links between people in dissimilar situations, outside of the community (political parties, group membership)

While bonding capital is more inward looking and tends to build cohesion among members of homogenous communities, bridging is more inclusive and enables the linkages among members of different social divides.

For Robert Putnam (1993) social capital represents a shared set of networks, norms and trust. He adopted social capital to explain economic and institutional development in different countries, arguing that levels of social capital determine civic life and the level of democratic trust. Putnam differentiates between two forms of capital, physical and social and argues that 'Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to the properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called "civic virtue." The difference is that "social capital" calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a sense network of reciprocal social relations. A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital' (Putnam 2000: 19).

In this perspective social capital represents the formal and informal ties that link together people and enables the building of trust, cooperative behaviour and civic engagement. Societies rich in social capital are more harmonious and citizens more engaged with their civic responsibilities. However, in his work Putnam does not effectively discuss the implication of different forms of social capital (bonding/bridging/linking) leaving an open debate on the external validity of his assumptions.

Andy Green (2003) argues that social cohesion differs from community cohesion; while the latter one is generally measured with social capital, the former one requires other indicators.

There has been a substantial shift from the macro societal perspective on social cohesion to the micro individual and community level (Green et al. 2006:24). Theories of social integration have been superseded by social capital discourses that focus on community renewal rather than social solidarity (ibid). Putnam argues that social capital is good for social integration and it represents the levels of voluntary participation and civic engagement. However, these two features are facilitated among groups with higher levels of bonding capital rather than bridging, which in turn relates to homogenous communities rather than larger social groups. This implies that Putnam's focus on social capital as a requirement for interpersonal integration should be applied at community level rather than to societies (Storper 2005).

Globalisation and new technologies enforce interconnectedness in the world and generate

centrifugal forces that dislocate traditional bonds and create fragmented societies (Green et al 2006:1). The assumption common among social capital theorists that countries with communities rich in social capital will also usually be more cohesive as societies is largely unexplored in the literature and highly debatable, because, in reality, this all depends on the norms and values of particular constituent communities and whether the different communities are at war or at peace with one another (Green 2001: 249).

Putnam (1995) argues that education has a very powerful impact on social and political participation (Putnam 1995:667). More educated individuals tend to join voluntary associations, show greater interest in politics and take part in political activities. They are more likely to express trust in others and in institutions. Social capital has an impact on political participation, but the dynamics and outcomes of this relationship need to be questioned. Social capital refers to our relation to one another, while political participation refers to our participation with political institution (Putnam 1995:665). Civic engagement on the other hand is the engagement of people within their own community (ibid). Education has a strong impact on building trust and associational membership, which in turn are indicators of social capital. Indeed, education seems to be strongly and positively correlated with civic engagement (ibid:667). Research shows that education has larger impact on civic engagement in the last two years of college; the impact is ten times higher on students aged 14 to 18 than on younger pupils. The same pattern is independent of gender, race and generation (Putnam 1995).

Puzzle: why is social capital level in the US declining while education is rising? Education is rising but civic engagement is declining. Putnam argues that this paradox is a generation related phenomena. After the '50s the increase of new communication technologies has generated new distances among community members which in turn cause reduced levels of social capital and civic engagement.

Andy Green (2006) addresses the social capital paradox discussed by Putnam (1995) sustaining that there may not be any link at all between associational membership and social trust. While Putnam refers to associational membership as key to social capital, there might not be any link between joining at community level and trusting at societal level (Green et al. 2006:30). Indeed, the building and type of social trust depends on the type of organisations and its objectives.

There is a significant link between levels of education and social capital (community cohesion) such as trust within a community but this is not reflected in aggregate data at national level, where education levels are not reflected in increases in tolerance (Green 2003). It is not the level of education that matters for social cohesion (trust, tolerance, political engagement and civil liberties) but rather how education and skills are distributed and the values¹⁰ that children and adults learn in education (Green 2006: 4). It does not automatically follow that because education raises levels of community participation among individuals, it will also increase cohesion. Nor does it follow that the mechanisms through which learning generates community participation and social capital

¹⁰ This is also relevant when thinking about the *type* of school

are the same as those by which it may help to promote societal cohesion (Green et al 2006).

8.2 School networks, community cohesion and citizenship education

The OECD defines “network” as the relation between different schools with a focus on the idea of community and common principles of connection between institutions (Chapman 2003). School networks are different from mere clusters (geographical proximity) or groups (accidental agglomeration) in that networks are established with the aim to achieve common goals and interests. (Chapman 2003:42). Communication can only take place in contexts with shared norms and conventions (Ackerman 1980 in Chapman 2003:43) and schools can be a perfect tool in this sense in that they are delineated as communities for the evolution of streams of thought and knowledge (ibid:43).

Networking refers to the systematic use of external and international communication, interaction and communication between people and organizations to improve performance (Van Aalst 2003). In education, networking may help to interpret codified information and enable to share these information more effectively (ibid). School networking therefore tends to be widely investigated as a means to improve education outcomes through shared knowledge.

McMeekin’s research (2003) aims to investigate the impact of school networks on education performance from the perspective of institutional Economics. His argument draws in particular on the role of institutions inside school organizations in reducing agency problems and facilitating transactions between actors in school communities. Based on results from school networks in Latin America and in the US he finds that: (1) the institutional climate in schools (formal rules, informal rules, mechanisms for enforcing both kinds of rules, clear objectives and an atmosphere of cooperation and trust) has a strong influence on school performance; (2) “networks” of schools such as the Accelerated Schools Project in the U.S. and the Fe y Alegría schools in Latin America help improve school performance in a variety of ways, and have been successful in providing good education to disadvantaged children; (3) that one of the reasons some networks are successful is that they promote the creation of sound institutional environments in member schools (ibid).

Feuerstein (2002) discusses the impact of school board voting for local school governance and it is therefore concerned with the teaching staff rather than with the student community. Interestingly though, he argues that a decreased level of trust in school boards is reflective of an adversarial view of democracy. In his article, Feuerstein suggests that deliberative democratic practices are alternatives to adversarial practices that rely too heavily on elections to create legitimacy. It relies on the continuous re-discussion with the voters of the positions promoted by the political representatives (Gutmann & Thompson 1996). This would happen through regular meetings and public discussion. Deliberative democracy practices ask citizens to do more than win elections and more to respect constitutional rights.

Lubbers (2003) explains that students networking is led by Homophily, namely the tendency to associate with similar others (Lubbers 2003:311). Indeed, similar others provide rewards for one owns actions and sharing similar values enables easier communication. McPherson et al. (2001) argue that homophily organizes social networks linking people with similar preferences; however, ties may also emerge as a consequence of shared social environment, e.g. being grouped together.

The composition of a class room therefore constitutes the constraints and baseline within which students are allowed to take their sociometric choice. I.e. ethnic heterogeneous classes provide students with wider opportunities to choose from in larger groups (Lubbers 311-312).

Kilcher and Jopling (2006) investigate how networks are formed and maintained based on the implementation of the Networked Learning Communities programme established in 2002 by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) in England. The programme was committed to four principles (NCSL, 2002; Jackson & Temperley, 2006): moral purpose (a commitment to the success of all children), shared leadership (e.g. co-leadership and distributed leadership), enquiry-based practice (evidence and data-driven learning), use of a model of learning (systematic engagement with the three fields of knowledge). The study highlighted that in order to be successful, three characteristics need to be managed within a school network:

- Establish network purposes, in order to implement motivation among group members
- Manage people in networks so that their roles are identified within the network
- Build network relationships in order to translate collaborative learning into expansive learning

The National College for School Leadership has investigated the role of school networks extensively. John West-Burnham and George Otero (2004) argue that social poverty plays a central role in educational outcomes and deprived communities tend to have lower outcomes. Attempts of schools to tackle the poverty issue internally, namely within the school environment, have been successful in building bonding networks among members of the same group. However, this also risks to undermine the capacity of students to engage in external networking (bridging) which is in fact the core of social capital (West-Burnham and Otero 2004:3). In order to reduce social poverty the focus should therefore shift from Institutional integrity (inner networking) to the building of Social Capital. Schools should be linked to the wider community through strategies that implement dialogue and build relational trust. The latter one in particular can be measured with: Respect, Competence, Personal regard and Integrity (Bryk and Schneider 2002 in West-Burnham and Otero 2004: 5). Without trust no bridging relationship can be establishment and the achievement of common goals for the community will be hindered.

Cordingley, Bell and Jopling (2005) have analysed the impact of school networks on pupils as well as on teachers. The study is still questioning the impact of school networks on school achievement, but takes a broader view to understand the dynamics at play and also discusses the role of social capital embedded in these networks. Among key findings (ibid:6):

- Networks can be effective if they have a specific goal and this is clearly specified
- More effective networks targeted socially excluded students and minorities and linked them to broader community
- The size of the networks did not seem important; what mattered was the quality of the collaboration between schools.

With regard to the impact of the networks on the schools, nine studies reported evidence of increased community liaison, changes in school and classroom organization and management (ibid:13).

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