



National Foundation for Educational Research

Global School Partnerships Programme Impact evaluation report

Executive Summary

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GSPP

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Executive summary

1. Background and aims

NFER (the National Foundation for Educational Research) was commissioned by the Department for International Development (DFID) to conduct an impact evaluation of the Global School Partnerships (GSP) programme. This is the report of the initial ‘snapshot’ survey, carried out between April and November 2010.

Global School Partnerships aims to motivate young people's commitment to a fairer, more sustainable world. DFID supports partnerships that promote global education through the curriculum. Support and guidance is provided to teachers and grants to schools to make the most of a school partnership as a learning tool. Funding is available for visits between partner schools to enable them to develop curriculum projects together based on global themes.¹

Schools are supported in using their partnership to embed global dimension themes in the curriculum of both partnership schools. Grants to schools fund reciprocal visits between schools in the UK and schools in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, while teachers are provided with a wide range of professional development opportunities, some of which lead to accredited learning.

The DFID Global School Partnerships programme is delivered by a consortium of the British Council, Cambridge Education Foundation, UK One World Linking Association (UKOWLA) and Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO). Schools, both primary and secondary, throughout the UK can apply to the GSP programme for support grants to fund, in the first instance, reciprocal visits (RVs) between their school and a partner school in a developing country (RV grants). Thereafter, schools may apply for follow-up grants to fund the development of joint global curriculum projects (GCPs) over three separate school years (GCP grants – years 1, 2 and 3).

The overarching aim of this evaluation is to assess the impact of DFID’s Global School Partnerships (GSP) programme on levels of global awareness and attitudes to global issues in pupils attending GSP schools in the UK.

This main aim can be broken down into four subsidiary aims, namely:

1. to measure levels of global awareness and attitudes to global issues amongst pupils taking part in GSP programme activities
2. to compare awareness levels and attitudes among pupils in GSP schools with those of pupils in non-GSP schools

¹ <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Getting-Involved/For-schools/global-school-partnerships/about-gsp/>

3. to evaluate whether the impact of GSP on global awareness and attitudes to global issues differs depending on pupils' ages and educational stages (e.g. at primary versus secondary level)
4. to assess whether levels of awareness and attitudes amongst participating pupils change as the GSP programme becomes more embedded in schools (i.e. whether, over time, the programme has a positive, neutral or negative impact on pupil levels of development awareness).

The results of the evaluation will be useful to DFID and its partners in providing an evidence base to help inform decisions about the GSP programme going forward.

Although the GSP programme is specifically directed at developing teachers, this study is specifically focused on whether the investment can be seen to impact on pupils' learning.

2. Evaluation approach

The methods employed to meet the aims of the evaluation were as follows:

- **Questionnaire survey - 8519** pupils and 284 teachers in GSP schools and comparison schools in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales were surveyed, by online questionnaire.
- **School case-study visits** – 21 schools, GSP and comparison, were visited and focused interviews conducted with senior leaders, programme co-ordinators, teachers and pupils covering a wide range of ages and background characteristics.

Outcome measures

Factor analysis of pupils' responses to 102 attitude statements were analysed to develop 13 robust factor scales (or measures) that allowed the comparison of pupils in GSP and non GSP schools.

The 13 factors fell into three broad categories:

- **Awareness factors** (5): showing how much pupils felt they knew about global issues in general and, specifically about interdependence, human rights and social justice and sustainable development and conflict issues
- **Attitude factors** (6): showing pupil attitudes towards a range of different global issues such as diversity, global citizenship, interdependence, human rights and social justice, sustainable development and conflict resolution
- **Response factors** (2): showing pupils' critical reflections about the impact of their global learning and the extent to which they felt they could, as individuals, contribute to the global community

Pupil 'scores' on the factor scales were then combined to give overall measures of the impact of the GSP programme. Higher scores indicate more positive awareness and attitudes concerning global issues.

3. Key findings

GSP programme - Impact on pupil learning about global issues

- Involvement in the GSP programme has a significant positive effect on the awareness, attitudes and response of pupils about global issues at both primary and secondary school level.
 - In GCP grant years 1 and 3 of the programme, this difference was statistically significant (ie GSP had more impact in the first and third years of the GCP grants than in the second year).
 - The effect of the GSP programme is the equivalent of increasing the average pupils' mean score by around 8 to 12 percentile points on the factor scale measures described above.
 - The effect size for GSP was measured to be between 0.2 and 0.3. This represents much higher impact for the GSP programme than seen in many other educational initiatives.²
 - Pupils in both GSP and comparison schools showed positive attitudes to global issues, but pupils in GSP schools, generally, demonstrated a deeper understanding of a wider range of issues.
- Impact on pupils' **awareness** of global issues
 - the GSP programme was found to have a positive impact on pupils in both primary and secondary schools
 - in GCP (Global Curriculum Project) grant year 3 of the programme, this difference was statistically significant (with an effect size of 0.22, equivalent to an increase of 9 percentile points for the average pupil)
 - Impact on pupils' **attitudes** towards of global issues
 - the GSP programme was found to have a positive impact on pupils in both primary and secondary schools
 - in GCP grant year 3 of the programme, this difference was statistically significant (with an effect size of 0.24, equivalent to an increase of 10 percentile points for the average pupil)

² Effect sizes in other major educational evaluations conducted at NFER, if significant at all, have tended to be in the range of 0.1

➤ Impact on pupils' **response** to global learning

- the GSP programme was found to have a positive impact on pupils in both primary and secondary schools
- in RV (Reciprocal Visit) year, and in GCP grant years 1 and 3 of the programme, this difference was statistically significant (with effect sizes of 0.28 in year 3 and 0.16 and 0.18 in RV and grant year 1 respectively. These are equivalent to an increase of 11, 6 and 7 percentile points respectively, for the average pupil).

The GSP programme was seen to have a positive impact on pupils' learning about global issues. Differences were most significant in schools in their third year of GCP funding. Although effects were seen at all stages of the programme, they were more pronounced in schools where the partnerships were well established and the principles and values promoted by the GSP programme had had time to become embedded in whole school policy.

- Pupils in GSP schools generally had a clearer understanding of interdependence, and were able to give specific examples of instances where our actions impact on those in poorer countries, for example in areas of trade and the environment.
- Pupils from GSP schools tended to be more informed about the factors that contribute towards inequality amongst the countries in the world.
- Pupils in primary schools had the highest scores on most attitudinal factors although secondary pupils reported more awareness.
- Pupils in high achieving schools, girls and pupils born outside the UK also had significantly higher scores overall.
- Pupils in schools with high proportions of white British pupils, pupils in schools located in deprived areas and in urban areas had significantly below average scores.

GSP programme - Teacher responses

Teacher responses were examined for any patterns of response that might be linked with groups of pupils who achieved high scores on the factor scales. Teachers of the high scoring pupils were significantly more likely to be from GSP schools.

➤ **Teachers of high scoring pupils reported that:**

- the global dimension was fully embedded across their school
- global learning was seen as a school priority
- they had received training/professional development specifically in relation to global learning
- and that they specifically taught: global citizenship, sustainable development, interdependence and conflict resolution

➤ **Teachers in GSP schools were significantly more likely to report that global learning:**

- was seen as a priority in their school
 - was fully embedded across the school
 - was well developed in their whole school curriculum planning
 - played a significant part in their school ethos
 - was part of their school development plans
 - had brought vibrancy and relevance to the learning in their classrooms.
- Teachers in GSP schools reported high positive impact of the programme on their schools, their pupils and on their own personal and professional development.
- Teachers greatly valued the funding and support provided by the GSP programme and most believed their partnership would be sustainable and expressed a wish to maintain it.
- Many GSP teachers reported positive impact of the GSP programme on their local communities.
- All teachers in GSP schools believed that the reciprocal visits were a very important aspect of the GSP partnership.
- Teachers and senior leaders reported that it often took time for the GSP partnership to become properly established. Many reported initial enthusiasm followed by a period of trial and error in developing successful joint projects and discovering the most effective ways of working together.
- Many schools reported that having the GSP grants over a three year period allowed more staff and pupils to become involved in the programme and, therefore, to establish more of a whole school approach.
- Teachers and senior leaders commented on the importance of the programme in ‘opening the eyes’ of pupils living in areas where there was little ethnic diversity.

Teachers perceived importance of GSP funding

- Senior leaders and teachers in all GSP schools reported that the GSP funding was crucial to developing the partnership.
- Many senior leaders/teachers in the third year of their GCP grant stressed that it took the full three years of funding to fully develop a strong working partnership and felt that it would have been difficult or impossible without the GSP funding.
- Views were mixed on whether the partnerships could be sustained when the funding ended but all, unanimously, expressed a desire to maintain relations with their partner school. Some schools were exploring other ways of funding their partnerships in the future.
- All schools used the GSP funding to pay for reciprocal visits, mainly for staff but sometimes for pupils.
- Some schools used part of the GSP funding to buy supply cover to release teachers involved in the programme.

Differential impact

The GSP programme was seen to have a differential impact on pupils' from different groups.

➤ **Differential impact by year of GSP programme:**

- Greatest impact was found in schools where GSP partnerships were embedded, notably in grant year 3, but some significant effects were found in other grant years
- Least impact was found in schools in grant year 2 of their GSP partnerships. (The reasons for this are unclear, but case study data offered some possible explanations.)
- In all grant years of the GSP programme, a significant effect was found on the two 'response' factors, indicating that involvement in the programme encourages pupils to think critically and reflect on global learning and to feel able to contribute to the global community.

➤ **Differential impact on primary/secondary pupils:**

- Pupils in primary schools demonstrated more positive attitudes to global issues than their counterparts in secondary schools.
- The GSP programme, when fully established in the school, impacts positively on pupils at both primary and secondary levels.
- In both primary and secondary schools, effect sizes were consistently significant in terms of pupils' response to global learning (critical thinking), their sense of self-

efficacy (making a contribution) and in their attitudes to interdependence – indicating significant impact of the programme in each of these areas.

- Involvement in GSP activities, and with the partner school, is more widespread among primary school pupils.
- Participation in secondary schools may involve fewer pupils, but they are more likely to visit the partner school, so the level of involvement is often deeper.
- **Differential impact on boys/girls pupils:**
 - Girls, in general, demonstrated significantly more positive attitudes than boys to a range of global issues.
 - The GSP programme, when fully established in the school, impacts positively on both girls and boys.
 - For boys, the impact was generally in grant years 1 and 3 and particularly in relation to their awareness of most issues.
 - For girls the impact was mainly in year 3, in was more in relation to their attitudes.

General observations

- Instances of excellent global learning was observed in both GSP and comparison schools, particularly in terms of pupils' knowledge and understanding of diversity, human rights and social justice. Pupils in GSP schools, however, showed more evidence of a deeper understanding of a wider range of global issues.
- Both the quantitative and qualitative findings suggest that pupils in schools where ethnic diversity is celebrated are likely to have a broader understanding of global issues and more positive attitudes.
- Global learning generally was regarded positively in most schools, both GSP and comparison, but the degree to which it was prioritised varied considerably.
- In GSP schools, working with the partner schools was greatly valued as a way of engaging pupils, of making the learning more direct and challenging stereotypes.
- Having allocated time was issue for many teachers, and in many cases staff were seen to devote their own time to plan and develop global learning.
- The extent to which the relationship with the partner school is a two-way exchange is perhaps one of the most significant factors that separate GSP schools from non-GSP schools.

4. Conclusions

This survey represents an initial snapshot of pupil attitudes, alongside teacher perception and qualitative observations.

The Global School Partnerships programme aims to motivate young people's commitment to a fairer, more sustainable world. Initial findings indicate that pupils involved in the GSP programme do score more highly on measures of awareness, attitude and response to global issues. This would imply that the current level of funding has made a significant impact, at varying levels, on the attitudes of girls and boys in primary and secondary schools throughout the UK.

Both the questionnaire and interview data indicated strong, positive responses from teachers and pupils involved in the GSP programme.

The GSP programme is aimed largely at teacher professional development. This survey was designed to assess the impact on pupil awareness, attitudes and behaviours. As this is a snapshot survey, we have no earlier baseline measure. The study compares the current situation in a selected sample of GSP schools with a random sample of comparison schools. In order to fully attribute changes in pupils' learning to the GSP programme a longitudinal measure, over at least two points in time, would be necessary. (For example, it is possible that schools who apply for GSP funding are already predisposed to developing global learning, or have an ethos that celebrates diversity, etc.)

A longitudinal study that follows a number of pupils from the early stages of involvement through to their third grant year, and perhaps beyond, would give a more conclusive measure of the 'value added' impact of the programme. Such a study would demonstrate whether the GSP impact is sustained over time and would allow further exploration into the school level features that impact on pupil attitudes. It would also be of interest to examine whether the lower scores of secondary pupils represent pupils' natural maturational processes.