

Partner Ghana

Partner Ghana – Facilitating School Partnerships in Ghana

Introduction

By linking up schools in Ghana with partner schools in the UK, the Sabre Trust is aiming to facilitate meaningful exchange between students and teachers in both countries for the mutual benefit of both schools. These partnerships can bring a new dimension to lessons and extra-curricular activities as both sets of students learn about each others cultures and lives, sharing experiences and advancing their education.

How it works

As an organisation based in both the UK and Ghana, the Sabre Trust has existing relationships with a number of schools in both countries. Typically the initial interest in forming a partnership comes from the UK school, where the concept of international school partnerships is well established, and Sabre then works to identify a suitable partner school in Ghana.

Once two schools have been matched, Sabre will work with both schools to explore their aims and objectives for the partnership, and ensure that both schools have an understanding of what the partnership can achieve.

At the outset, the schools will be asked to nominate a link teacher with primary responsibility for progressing the partnership. The link teacher should not be the head teacher, as the responsibilities for school management will inevitably detract from the amount of time the head teacher can devote to partnership issues. Both schools will be asked to sign a partnership agreement which sets out initial roles and responsibilities for both schools and the generic goals of the partnership.

Generally, the partnership will begin with penpal communications between sets of classes about topics of mutual interest or common understanding to help students begin to appreciate how the partnership works. Themes for these penpal letters might include: my family, my favourite food, my favourite sport, my daily routine. The delivery of these batches of letters is facilitated by the Sabre Trust.

During the first year of the partnership, reciprocal teacher visits will take place, usually beginning with a visit to Ghana by the link teacher from the UK school. This visit helps to define the future activities of the partnerships as the teachers get to know each other and the UK teacher gains an understanding of the Ghanaian school environment and an appreciation of the curriculum.

Supporting Africa By Rural Endeavours

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The second stage of the reciprocal visit would be a visit to the UK by the link teacher from the Ghanaian school. Often there is a need to seek some form of external funding support for this visit, and the mechanism for securing this will be discussed between the partner schools with the assistance of the Sabre Trust.

Once the first reciprocal teacher visit has taken place, the schools will be encouraged to draw up a programme of partnership initiatives, covering both curricular and extra curricular activities. This programme will be regularly updated as new partnership activities are identified.

Some sample areas for partnership activities are included below, but each school partnership will be encouraged to identify activities that are most relevant to the schools strengths and interests.

Curricular:

History – the trans-Atlantic slave trade is a compulsory curriculum subject in the UK, the slave trade heritage of KEEA District and Elmina Castle makes this subject relevant to pupils in both Ghana and the UK.

Mathematics – the use of Owari as a counting and probability tool can make an effective addition to mathematics study, and for Ghanaian schools it can reawaken interest in this traditional game.

Extra-Curricular:

Textiles – by sharing techniques for patterning and decorating cloth as well as clothes making, pupils can collaborate on textile projects, with fabric prepared in one school made into articles in the other.

Music – learning about the musical heritage of each other's cultures can be a lot of fun, through its volunteering programme, Sabre has organised music workshops in partner schools.

Student visits

Through the Sabre Trust's Partner Ghana collaboration with World Challenge and ASCL, there is an opportunity for a group of pupils from the UK partner school to undertake an expedition to Ghana and spend time implementing school based projects with their Ghanaian classmates. Such visits can be immensely positive in solidifying the partnership as the interaction between both sets of pupils enhances their understanding of each other's lives and cultures.

As the partnership develops, and a programme of student visits is established, the schools will be encouraged to think about how Ghanaian students could also have the opportunity to visit their UK partner school. The costs for such an initiative are high, and careful planning is required.

Fund Raising

The school partnership is not a means of generating funds for school improvements in the Ghanaian school – any needs for infrastructure improvements or resources should be directed to the Sabre Trust for consideration under the Whole School Improvement Programme.

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The school partnership exists to further the learning and cultural development of the pupils themselves. Where there are costs attached to partnership activities (for example the purchase of materials for specific projects) there may be prior agreement for fund raising to be undertaken by the UK partner school to finance these projects; however, the Ghanaian school is also expected to contribute financially to the achievement of partnership goals.

Summary of Benefits

An international school partnership will:

- forge friendships with pupils from different cultures and countries
- help to extend a pupil's view of the world, broadening their own horizons
- provide a basis for bringing real and topical content into curriculum subjects
- enhance pupil learning by presenting lesson material in a more engaging manner
- encourage the development of extra-curricular activities
- challenge teacher and pupil perceptions of development and how people live in other countries
- help pupils to recognise connections and interdependencies in an increasingly global world
- offer pupils and teachers the chance to visit their partner school and experience a different learning environment

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