



global partnerships, local benefits

using international links to meet local government's six
commitments



LGIB International Reports

This publication forms part of a series of International Reports published by the Local Government International Bureau on international issues of particular interest to UK local authorities.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and cannot be taken as expressions of the policy of the Local Government International Bureau.

© Copyright 2002 Local Government International Bureau. All rights reserved

The contents may be reproduced only for the purposes of internal distribution amongst local authority departments, with acknowledgement of the source.

ISBN 0 90790 237 5

Published by
Local Government
International Bureau
Local Government House
Smith Square
London SW1P 3HZ

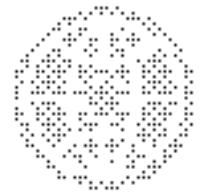
Tel 020 7664 3100
Fax 020 7664 3128
E-mail enquiries@lgib.gov.uk

Written by Susan Handley
Edited by Graham Welch

Design by HSAG Design
Printed by Manor Creative

Front cover photo
© Daventry District Council

Inside photos
© Bristol City Council, Laura
Tilling, Third Avenue,
Durham County Council and
Daventry District Council



Number 6
global
partnerships,
local benefits:
using
international
links to meet
local
government's
six
commitments

Foreword	2
Introduction	2
Supporting children and their families	3
Developing schools in the community	4
Helping the 'hardest to reach' into work	5
Helping older people to live independent lives	6
Delivering high quality, more reliable bus services	7
Transforming the local environment wherever people live	8
Contacts for further information	

foreword



Ken Bodfish

The challenges facing UK local government are not unique, but are universal. It is essential that we recognise the value of learning from each other, exchanging our experience, knowledge, skills and expertise. The benefits to be derived through technical cooperation, formal and informal links are mutual for all who participate in working together.

The Local Government Association and Local Government International Bureau have given cross party commitment to the importance of international development through the recent publication of a policy position. Through a series of examples, this booklet aims to demonstrate the variety and quality of activities undertaken by local authorities and their partners. It also aims to emphasise that international cooperation really is a two way process, in which we have as much to gain as we have to give.



CLlr Ken Bodfish OBE
Chair, Local Government International Bureau

introduction

In an increasingly interconnected world, where issues such as governance, economic and social wellbeing and the environment need to be considered on a global basis, it is important to recognise the significant role that international cooperation can play at a local level. The purpose of this publication is to demonstrate how international partnerships and networks can contribute not only to global issues, but also relate directly to the core objectives and corporate aims of UK local authorities.

The Local Government Association has identified six key issues that matter to local people and is working with government and local partner organisations to tackle these priority areas. This publication gives examples of international activities that have directly addressed these issues. As well as contributing to the UK Government's aims of alleviating poverty and building capacity in developing countries, international partnerships and projects can enhance service delivery and provide real solutions to problems.

Supporting children and their families

Mendip's HIV and AIDS project with Svetlogorsk in Belarus was its second activity to be funded by the EU but, like the first, Formulating a Local Agenda 21 Strategy, provided a two way learning experience. This second project trained key staff in Belarus working with HIV and AIDS, and involved partners from the Health Authority, the police, drugs agencies, the education authority and Narcotics Anonymous. As well as gaining from the experience of working with colleagues from overseas who have to face environmental, social and economic problems of enormous proportions, Mendip also benefited from strengthening domestic partnerships with key agencies and learned much about the futility of trying to consider such problems in isolation.

Contact Graham Jeffs Tel 01749 343399
E-mail jeffsg@mendip.gov.uk

For the last six years, officers from *County Durham* and Kostroma in Russia have been involved in a project to develop a new approach to children's services. Initially funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and currently by the voluntary sector, its focus has been on children in the care system and those with disabilities. As well as helping to establish a range of day care provision and family support services, the joint work has also helped create smaller, family based units in residential care and has begun to develop foster provision to care for younger children and to keep siblings together. The direct benefits to Durham include the increased knowledge and experience of project management and development and an insight into ways of developing low cost services at local level.
Contact David Shipman Tel 0191 383 3734
E-mail david.shipman@durham.gov.uk

Children and families in all three countries have gained from *Bristol's* twinning links with Puerto Morazan in Nicaragua and Beira in Mozambique. The local education authority has helped resource teacher and headteacher development, curriculum related projects and facilitate school links. Local



Bristol children have been working with their counterparts in Puerto Morazan in Nicaragua and Beira in Mozambique to produce a mural

charities have worked with schools on projects to help build the capacity of the overseas communities to improve social conditions. As well as the tangible benefits in Puerto Morazan and Beira, the links have increased the understanding and awareness of children in Bristol about other cultures and life styles.

Contact Alix Hughes
E-mail alix.hughes@uwe.ac.uk

Newtownabbey Borough Council in County Antrim, Northern Ireland, uses its partnerships with Germany and the USA to organise exchange visits which benefit the whole community by involving all religious groups. The link with Arizona allows young people the opportunity to experience a different way of life during a three week visit. Newtownabbey also receives funding under the International Fund for Ireland's Wider Horizons programme, which brings together unemployed young people from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The project lasts for six weeks and concentrates on preparing the young people for employment and higher education through computer training and work experience.

Contact Jackie O'Neill Tel 028 9034 0000
E-mail joneill@newtownabbey.gov.uk

"Mendip's involvement with its partner community has been the most intellectually stimulating activity I have ever experienced and I know the members and officers who have been involved are much the richer and better equipped to address our daily challenges"

Graham Jeffs, Chief Executive, Mendip District Council

Developing schools in the community

“One of the most inspiring events of my Council year was visiting Ansford School at the end of a visit by children from Mufullira. Watching the children work together to present drama and song, and then hearing from them what they now understood about each other’s culture made me wish we had a link like this for every school. It is a brilliant start to a wider project”

CLlr Baroness Sue Miller,
Somerset County Council
and Chair of the LGA
International Development
Task Group

Coventry City Council’s link with Jinan in China now involves secondary schools throughout the community. Twenty one students aged 16 to 18 spend twelve days in China and undertake projects that have been devised in collaboration with their teachers and Chinese partners relating to technological, political and social developments. They also spend time living in families, experiencing every day aspects of life including cuisine, school and leisure. On return to Coventry, their experiences are shared with others through a series of presentations at the schools. Contact Nick Jones Tel 024 7652 7509
E-mail nick.jones@coventry.gov.uk

Although youth exchange is the principal aim of *Somerset County Council’s* link with Mufullira in Zambia, the benefits have extended far into the wider community. Applicants are chosen from three of Castle Carey’s secondary schools to take part in the two way exchange. They prepare for the visits by working with young people from Zambia to draw up a theme and programme for the project. Funded in part by the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council, the young people from Castle Carey must raise the remaining funds themselves, both for their outgoing trip and for the incoming visit by their counterparts. Fundraising activities involve local groups such as the Red Cross, the Guides Association, churches and businesses. There is further community involvement as the young people from Zambia



Secondary school pupils from Castle Carey, in Somerset, and Mufullira, in Zambia, working together on a science project

stay with local families and, as part of their project, visit relevant local agencies. Primary schools are now encouraged to take part, developing links between younger children. The most recent project has focused on HIV and AIDS and healthy living and has involved the local health authority.

Somerset has also obtained substantial funding from the Department for International Development to create ‘Somerset goes global’, a strategic network to promote awareness of development issues within the Somerset Education Service and the wider community. Contact Jane Talbot Tel 01963 352112
Internet <http://www.somersetgoesglobal.org.uk>

As part of Socrates, the EU’s educational funding programme, the Welsh authorities of *Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire* have formed an extensive network with partners in Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, Italy and Sweden. As well as creating many school partnerships, the network also provides a resource for professional training and support to teachers, including in specific areas of the curriculum. One school project involved the celebration of a ‘Peace Day’. Pupils from Ceredigion primary schools worked with the local Theatr Felinfach to produce a CD of popular songs, which was put on a website so that partner schools across Europe could take part in the singing. The pupils also used balloons and labels to send out their own messages of peace. The event, which took place on Aberystwyth Promenade and involved more than 1,000 pupils, teachers, parents and wellwishers, was mirrored in the partner towns. Contact Christine Henshaw Tel 01545 572700
E-mail christineh@ceredigion.gov.uk
Internet <http://www.roots-and-wings.dk>

Helping 'the hardest to reach' into work

Brighton and Hove led the 'Youthemploy' project with partners from South Dublin in Ireland and Poznan in Poland. Funded by the former European ECOS-Ouverture programme, they studied different approaches to dealing with youth unemployment in each of the three cities, and then developed their own projects using this experience. South Dublin focused on special needs, while Poznan created a computerised careers centre. Brighton and Hove concentrated on computer training, working with the Youth Service, Sussex Enterprise-Employment Skills and the voluntary sector.

Contact Rachel Williams Tel 01273 290000
E-mail rachel.williams@brighton-hove.gov.uk

To improve the career prospects of some of its young people, *Southwark Council* made work experience the focal point of its twinning link with Langenhagen, Germany, over the last ten years, involving students from its secondary schools and further education college. Students spent a week living and working with their counterparts, to experience the working environment of another country, improve their communication skills and increase their self confidence. This experience has helped when they have later applied for jobs or university places.

Contact Brigitte Pfender Tel 020 7525 5000
E-mail brigitte.pfender@southwark.gov.uk

York set up a small private company, the York Inward Investment Board, five years ago to raise the town's profile nationally and internationally. The city enjoys a reputation as a tourist destination but was keen to promote itself as a high tech business location. The board has built a network of over 500 overseas contacts who are able to help attract fresh investment. York also benefits from a special business relationship with Denver, Colorado, in the United States, with high tech companies in both cities regularly receiving information about business opportunities in the partner location. In five years, the Board has brought over 2,000 new jobs to York. The city has been particularly successful in attracting investment from North America, with



A visit to a training school for chefs was part of one of Southwark's exchange visits to Langenhagen in Germany

over 30 US owned companies in York, employing one in ten of the local workforce.

Contact Paul Murphy
E-mail paul.murphy@york.gov.uk

Improving the employment prospects for local people is best achieved when the local economy is in a healthy state and businesses are in a position to sustain and expand their workforces. The *London Borough of Croydon* and seven of its overseas partners have received European funding for a joint website focusing on economic development. The partners originally came together because of the particular social and economic challenges they face due to their location on the edges of capital cities. The website allows local businesses to promote themselves to a wider international audience and gain experience in doing business with the rest of Europe. The services are all free and include support from companies with international experience, advice on the use of technology and video conferencing, and round table events to explore specific topics of interest. The Edge Cities Network, with its pool of potential partners, also provides a solid foundation on which to develop a diverse range of other projects.

Contact Paul Hildreth Tel 020 8686 4433
E-mail paul_hildreth@croydon.gov.uk

Helping older people to live independent lives



Local government should aim to provide support which helps older people to carry on living in their own homes

Kent County Council was involved in an international exchange programme for older people and their care workers in residential homes. Working with Northern France and the Netherlands, both the residents and staff were involved in planning and organising the visits.

For many of the older people, the programme offered an exciting opportunity to travel abroad for the first time, to sample French culture and contemporary life styles and to visit the battlefields of two world wars. It also helped to promote a more positive image of elderly people and to address some of the negative perceptions associated with residential care, demonstrating how older people could lead active lives and play a full part in their communities. For the care workers, the programme provided many opportunities for professional development. As well as being able to see different models of service and new ideas, the care staff were also able to provide examples of innovation and good practice from Kent. At the same time, the project gave the Council a chance to demonstrate its commitment to valuing its staff.

Contact Maureen Napier Tel 01227 823038

E-mail m.napier@ukc.ac.uk

Internet <http://www.ukc.ac.uk/eiss>

Internet <http://www.kent.gov.uk>

Working with a range of established partners, *Essex County Council* has created a network called

PRAXIS, which groups together local and regional authorities across Europe. Representatives from Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Sweden and the UK meet in five topic based working groups. One of these groups looks at education, health and social affairs. Regular contact allows staff to share ideas and best practice, and set priorities. Among topics discussed are how services are delivered and the practical social work skills needed to deliver them and the development of affordable welfare systems. The group also looks at the practical concerns of staff training and IT systems. In addition, PRAXIS looks at ways of influencing national and European policy and has laid the foundations for projects between participants at many different levels.

Contact Tom Corrie Tel 00 32 2 505 3442

E-mail tomcorrie@brutele.be

Worcestershire County Council's experience of sharing expertise began when they became involved with the International Sonnenberg Association in Germany. Annual week long seminars took place, bringing together social services professionals, to discuss community care systems for older people.

This led Worcestershire to develop a longer term project with its Hungarian partners, Bekescaba, in which they were able to export ideas which could be used in a Hungarian context. Funded by the UK government, the project involved the exchange of social services officers to study existing provision for older people. The project enabled the local authority in Bekescaba to develop home care as a direct alternative to institutions for elderly people. More importantly, it allowed older people to be included in the regional plan, attracting funding to develop long term strategies and modernise existing facilities. For the officers of Worcestershire, the process of sharing knowledge was both rewarding and invigorating.

Tel 01905 763763

Delivering high quality, more reliable bus services

Nottinghamshire County Council has developed a dynamic friendship with Poznan City Council and the surrounding province of Wielkopolska in Poland. The strands of the partnership are many and varied and include a number of transport schemes. Working with British Aerospace, Nottinghamshire County Council completed a project to review Poznan's municipal transport. Involving contributions from local management, unions and the travelling public, the technical exchange project paid particular attention to issues such as environmental pollution and sustainable transport planning, including quality bus systems, light rapid transit and park and ride.

Another project saw Nottinghamshire planning and economic development experts looking at ways of diverting tourist and passenger traffic into Poznan through the local airport. For Poznan City Council, the findings provided strong and measured arguments in discussions with LOT Polish Airlines supporting an increase in direct flights so as to attract foreign developers to the city. Contact Robert Godfrey Tel 0115 982 3823 E-mail robert.godfrey@nottsc.gov.uk

Hampshire County Council was involved in one of the first government funded technical links projects in Moldova. Working with its partners in Chisinau, the capital city, officers came together to consider the options for improving the public transport system. One of their key findings was that any strategy for the city centre needed to be assessed as part of a broader development for Chisinau. Through a series of exchange visits and joint working, the project identified a number of practical recommendations. These included introducing bus lanes and increasing the number of laybys for minibuses to improve the flow of traffic. The need for more car parking facilities and better parking regulation was identified, as well as low cost measures, such as introducing double yellow lines, as a short term solution. Park and ride services and pedestrianising certain parts of the city were also considered as ways of improving

transport services overall. At the same time, the project highlighted the need for effective public consultation. However, for Chisinau, the project was instrumental in developing a framework for an improved public transport system. For Hampshire, the project provided staff development opportunities, including practical experience where staff could look at issues in a different way. It also strengthened the Council's link with Moldova and increased the potential for further activities in the area of economic cooperation.

Contact Tony Brown Tel 01962 846389
E-mail tony.brown@hants.gov.uk

Two adapted minibuses were donated to a group of disabled adults in Kostroma, a region in Russia a third of the size of England, by *Durham County Council*. Members of a social services day care centre raised funds to finance the refurbishment and transportation of the minibuses from County Durham to Russia and pay for extra materials for a club for the disabled. Prior to the Council's involvement, the members of this club for the disabled had no transportation available to them and it was almost impossible for them to meet. This was particularly difficult for those living in rural areas.

Contact Joy Grenyer Tel 0191 383 4098



Durham County Council agreed to refurbish and donate two 22 seater buses to its Russian twin, Kostroma. The buses are used to help disabled people attend a day care centre, ending their sense of isolation

Transforming the local environment wherever people live

"When we started the project we thought it would be us teaching them, but it was completely a two way process of knowledge transfer resulting in a real benefit to the people of Sheffield"

Gary McGrogan, Head of Environment and Regulatory Services, Sheffield City Council

Sheffield City Council completed an environmental health project with Izhevsk in Russia, to tackle the problem of air pollution. While both cities were similar in terms of population size, their dominant steel industries and a varying degree of health inequalities, Sheffield was far more experienced in environmental protection. Although Izhevsk was able to monitor levels of air pollution, it was unable to implement any remedial measures because of the lack of capital investment in its steel industry. Through a series of exchange visits, Sheffield helped Izhevsk to produce an environmental health action plan for the city, which clearly demonstrated the link between poor health and poor environment. This not only helped ensure funding was available to combat air pollution, but also enabled Izhevsk to become a World Health Organisation 'healthy city'. For Sheffield, the main outcome was an increase in technical expertise which could be used in future work in the city. Contact Gary McGrogan
E-mail g.mcgrogan@sheffield.gov.uk

The partnership between Iganga Town Council in Uganda and *Daventry District Council* has centred on working together to find technical solutions to shared problems. An initial assessment paved the way for a storm water drainage project and an environmental health project in Iganga, improving



Daventry has worked with Iganga in Uganda to improve its drainage systems, as the area suffers from flash floods

the town environment through the provision and protection of water systems and the development of refuse collection. Involvement in this project has enabled the staff of Daventry to increase their own knowledge and expertise to use in the course of their own work.

Contact David Walsh Tel 01327 302532
E-mail dwalsh@daventrydc.gov.uk

Coventry City Council has helped to regenerate a disadvantaged area of the city by drawing on the expertise of its partners in France, Germany, Ireland, Portugal and Sweden. With all six cities facing similar problems, including crime and the fear of crime, they formed a network to exchange experience and technical know how on improving the local environment. Coventry has succeeded in developing its infrastructure and changing the physical appearance of the area through landscaping. The project was part of a larger initiative to revive the local economy and people's access to jobs and training; to improve social conditions; and to improve cultural life and change the image of the area.

Contact Liz-Anne Broderick Tel 02476 833333
E-mail elizabethanne.broderick@coventry.gov.uk

Chester City Council received European funding under the Asia Urbs programme to work with two partners in Nepal and one in Italy. All four faced the challenge of achieving sustainable social and economic development, whilst at the same time conserving their cities' rich cultural heritage. By sharing information, they were able to develop a number of urban management plans involving their communities. The project has also promoted wider international understanding of how maintaining heritage can itself improve economic conditions and quality of life. In June 2002, Chester hosted an international conference to discuss issues around conservation, including tourism, legislation and working practices.

Contact Howard Dickenson Tel 01244 324324
E-mail h.dickenson@chestercc.gov.uk

Contacts for further information

Local Government International Bureau

promotes, publicises and supports international activity between UK local government and the rest of the world through advice, publications, events and a website.

International Partnerships and Projects
Local Government International Bureau
Local Government House
Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ
Tel 020 7664 3100
Fax 020 7664 3128
E-mail enquiries@lgib.gov.uk
Internet <http://www.lgib.gov.uk>

British Council

provides information about funding programmes, headteacher and teacher training and exchanges, youth projects and exchanges and school links.
10 Spring Gardens, London SW1A 2BN
Tel 0161 957 7755
58 Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 6BB
Tel 0161 957 7755
7 Fountain Street, Belfast BT1 5EG
Tel 028 9024 8220
28 Park Place, Cardiff CF10 3QE
Tel 029 2039 7353
3 Bruntsfield Crescent, Edinburgh EH10 4HD
Tel 0131 447 8024
Internet <http://www.britishcouncil.org/>

Commonwealth Local Government Forum

promotes effective democratic local government throughout the Commonwealth.
59½ Southwark Street, London SE1 OAL
Tel 020 7934 9690
Internet <http://www.clgf.demon.co.uk>

Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council

cofunds youth exchange projects throughout the Commonwealth.
7 Lion Yard, Tremadoc Road
London SW4 7NQ.
Tel 020 7498 6151
E-mail mail@cyec.demon.co.uk

Europeaid

is the new European Commission department dealing with external cooperation programmes.
Internet http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/index_en.htm

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

is the government department responsible for relations with other governments and international bodies and promoting British interests abroad.
Tel 020 7270 1500
Internet <http://www.fco.gov.uk>

Local Government Association

represents all local authorities in England and Wales, aiming to put them at the heart of the drive to improve public services.
Local Government House
Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ
Tel 020 7664 3000
E-mail info@lga.gov.uk
Internet <http://www.lga.gov.uk>

Sister Cities International

is a citizen based organisation promoting partnerships between the US and international communities.
Internet <http://www.sister-cities.org>

UK Local Government Alliance for International Development

brings together key organisations in the UK to assist in international development by establishing relationships with other international development agencies, including the World Bank, the European Union, the UN Development Programme and the Department for International Development.
Tel 020 7664 3119

UK One World Linking Association

The UK One World Linking Association is a voluntary, membership organisation promoting community based North-South cooperation.
E-mail mary.stead@chesterfieldbc.gov.uk
Internet <http://www.ukowla.org.uk>

Promoting democratic local government and its interests

Acting as the European and international affairs unit for the local government Associations of England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the Local Government International Bureau exists to promote high quality democratic local government and its interests within Europe and internationally. We aim to:

- promote the interests of UK and European local government, through information and influence, within the European Union;
- assist elected Members representing UK local government on international bodies;
- promote learning within the UK from the European and international practice of democratic local government;
- promote international links between local authorities, and their associations, with their counterparts internationally for mutual benefit and learning; and
- communicate effectively with local authorities and their associations, and with governmental and other bodies, within the UK and internationally.

For more information about the Local Government International Bureau, visit our website at www.lgib.gov.uk

Contact the Local Government International Bureau at
Local Government House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ
Tel 020 7664 3100 Fax 020 7664 3128

Local
Government
International
Bureau

