

CONNECTING CLASSROOMS

Discover the power of Learning for Sustainability



CLUSTER CO-ORDINATOR HANDBOOK



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What is the Connecting Classrooms programme?

Discover the power of Learning for Sustainability

Connecting Classrooms in Scotland is part of the international [Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning](#) programme, which supports schools and early years settings in Scotland and internationally to learn about and collaborate on the big issues that shape our world. The programme is co-funded by the British Council and the Department for International Development (DfID). Contributing towards increasing Learning for Sustainability (LFS) in Scotland's schools, the programme is intended to:

- improve teachers' pedagogical skills, especially their ability to incorporate transferable skills into their curriculum teaching
- give young people in both Scotland and overseas countries an opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to live and work in an increasingly globalised world
- raise awareness of global issues amongst young people by supporting collaboration with their international peers.

How it works

There are a host of learning opportunities and support on offer as part of the programme. Whether you are part of a cluster of schools or applying for individual opportunities, you can tailor your LFS journey to match your school's priorities thanks to the programme's range of flexible elements. As part of Connecting Classrooms, you can:

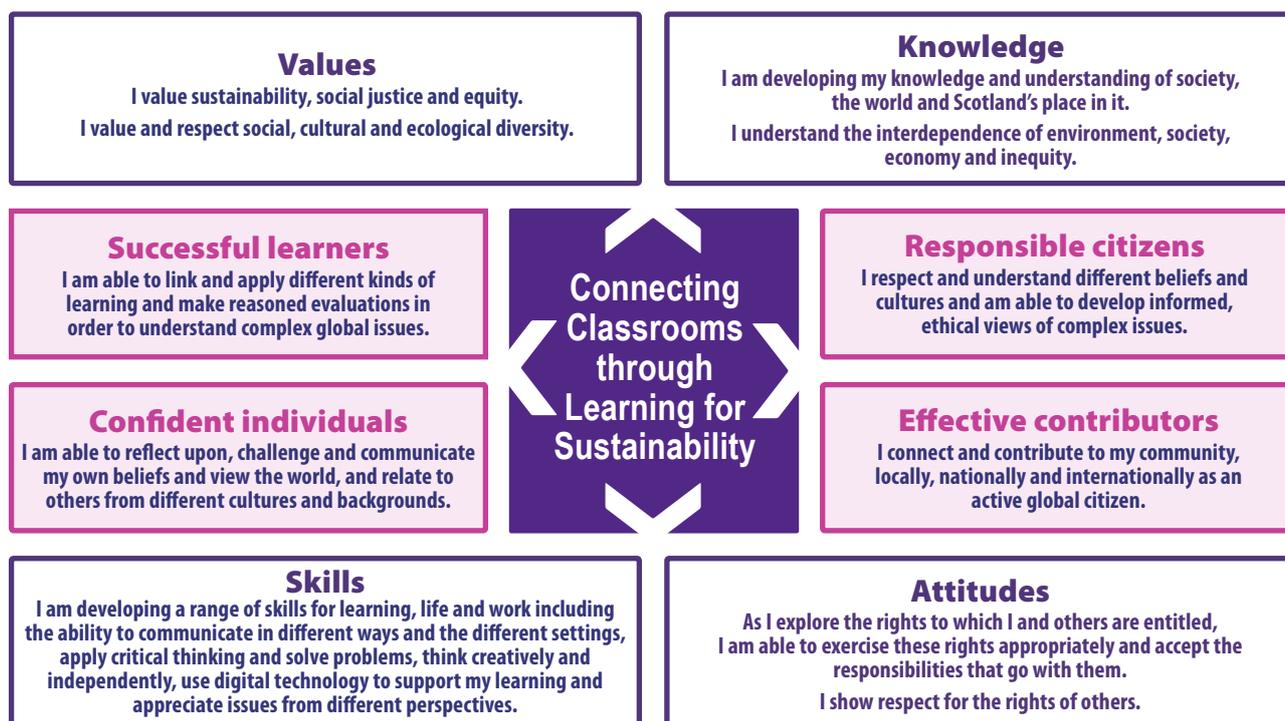
1. **partner with schools** – collaborate with schools in Scotland and other countries on activities focusing on LFS themes. Partnerships offer you the chance to share experiences and learn from one another
2. **develop a whole-school approach** – receive support in implementing an effective whole-school approach to LFS to create coherent, rewarding and transformative learning experiences
3. **explore teaching and learning approaches** – improve your knowledge and expertise at embedding LFS themes in your teaching, by completing professional learning courses; available online and face-to-face
4. **take action for the SDGs** – complete activities with partner schools based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and inspire young people to take meaningful action towards achieving the Goals in their local communities and beyond
5. **apply for funding** – as a cluster of schools or one-to-one school partnership, you can apply for funding to facilitate reciprocal visits, events and training as part of the Connecting Classrooms journey
6. **receive accreditation** – whatever stage of your Connecting Classrooms journey you've managed to reach, you will receive the relevant level of the International School Award to recognise and highlight your achievements.

Why take part?

Benefits for pupils

Connecting directly with Curriculum for Excellence, involvement will enable you to implement teaching and learning approaches which can:

- equip children and young people with values, knowledge, attitudes, capabilities and skills to enable them to contribute effectively in a globalised and interdependent world
- enhance motivation and readiness to learn
- have a positive impact on attainment in literacy and numeracy
- improve young people’s health and wellbeing.



Benefits for teachers

- understand the contribution LfS makes to key national priorities such as raising attainment and achievement, tackling inequity, addressing the SDGs and to Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce
- enhance teaching and learning approaches in collaboration with colleagues in Scotland and overseas
- compile evidence to support Professional Review and Development and Professional Updates for GTCS registration through meeting the GTCS Standards related to LfS.

Benefits for schools

- effectively plan for and implement LfS approaches in your school and wider community in ways that will significantly enhance the educational experience of all learners
- receive support in enabling the school to develop a coherent whole-school approach to LfS with a focus on Curriculum for Excellence and local and global partnerships.

The cluster co-ordinator role

Your role as cluster co-ordinator

As an experienced practitioner in Learning for Sustainability and International School Partnerships, this is an exciting opportunity to develop leadership skills within a dynamic learning partnership. Your role will include giving advice to schools in the cluster on the process of completing the self-evaluations, applying for a grant, implementing the action plan and being the key contact with the British Council and your local advisor.

This is a flexible role which you can adapt to suit the needs of the cluster alongside your own strengths and working capacity. You might choose to delegate some tasks, for example, the financial management, to someone with that particular expertise.

Tasks of the cluster co-ordinator include taking overall responsibility for:

- recruitment and support of schools in the cluster; including your two overseas partner schools
- completing the cluster self-evaluation plan and developing an action plan
- leading cluster training (see pages 9-20)
- direct liaison with your overseas partners and with the British Council
- submission of the grant application
- financial management and expenditure of the grant
- co-ordination of any international visits
- timely submission of reporting.

“ Learning for Sustainability (LfS) is an entitlement for all learners within Curriculum for Excellence. LfS is embedded within the General Teaching Council of Scotland Professional Standards for practitioners and permeates How good is our school? [Fourth edition]. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are central to Scotland’s national vision and are at the heart of the Scottish Government’s National Performance Framework ” Education Scotland 2018

Leading a learning partnership

Benefits and challenges

Working in partnership, locally and globally, can be motivating and enhance the learning process. Sharing work within a cluster brings an added dimension to learning and strengthens working relationships between schools in the same locality.

However, any partnership, whether working locally or globally, will not be without its challenges. Finding time to meet as a group and take ideas forward within schools is always difficult. It is important to establish early on the support and commitment of individual schools' Senior Management Teams for a whole-school and community approach to LfS.

Sharing work within a cluster brings an added dimension to learning and strengthens working relationships between schools in the same locality

The programme works best when there is a number of staff in each school involved, not just one individual teacher. This is important for sharing the workload, but also helps to ensure future sustainability of the initiative. One of the initial tasks of the cluster working group might be to share the programme with other staff and encourage wider engagement. Involving different staff members with specific named tasks can aid this process and generate commitment to the programme and the partnership.

Part 2 of the cluster training materials will support you and your cluster team to identify and consider possible solutions to some of these challenges (see pages 16-17). You will also find some introductory activities on developing an international school partnership (see pages 14-15).

International school partnerships

International school partnerships inspire pupils to fully engage with learning through joint learning activities focusing on global themes. They offer teachers the chance to share experiences and learn new thinking, ideas and practices from colleagues in other countries, in line with the international [engagement strategy of Education Scotland](#).

International school partnerships can take a variety of forms; some might include reciprocal visits while others develop as virtual partnerships. Ensuring equality and reciprocity within all types of partnership is important. Shared curriculum ideas and projects can work in various partnership formats. Connecting Classrooms can match you with an international partner school to help you build international connections, as well as offering guidance and training to get the most from partnerships.

The cluster training materials include ideas to explore some of the benefits and challenges of international partnership (see page 14).

Getting started

1. Using the self-evaluation tools

The cluster self-evaluation should be completed in collaboration with all schools in the cluster in order to identify the needs of the cluster and inform future actions, as well as providing a basis for grant funding applications. Before completing this cluster self-evaluation, all schools in the cluster need to have completed their own whole-school's self-evaluation web. These will be used to identify strengths and areas for development across the cluster.

The cluster self-evaluation will help you develop an action plan for the cluster. It will identify:

- the actions your cluster will take in order to further develop LfS
- the strengths within the cluster and the support which can be provided in-house or through the training materials on pages 9-20
- the activities which will form the cluster grant application such as reciprocal school visits and CLPL
- what external support is required from your local advisor – up to three days' worth of the advisor's time is available to each school. More details about this are available on page 8 of this handbook.

2. Action planning

When you submit your grant application, you will need to provide an action plan and details of the work you will undertake within the cluster and school partnership. This will provide the starting point for your cluster implementation planning. The next steps are to work with your cluster team and your partnership schools where appropriate, to create an implantation plan and timescale for all the cluster activities. This implementation plan will help keep you on track and make sure everyone knows their roles and responsibilities.

Part 2 of the cluster training materials has activities to help you with this process and to reflect on how you will work as a cluster and agree roles (see pages 16-17).

3. Supporting colleagues

As the co-ordinator of a cluster, you will be responsible for agreeing and delivering any introductory training required by the cluster. All the training materials can be found on pages 9-20.

It is recommended that you deliver some or all of the activities in part 2 of the training package which explore the benefits, challenges and methods of working together in a cluster. It is important to establish early on that the work is done in a collaborative and inclusive way in which mutual trust, respect and understanding can be fostered. These same principles can be applied to the international partnership work of the cluster. The Scotland Malawi Partnership's Partnership Principles are another useful tool for ensuring great [partnerships happen both locally and globally](#).

Moving forward, it will be important to maintain regular contact with the group and offer support and advice where required. Remember that you are in charge of the co-ordination of the cluster, not managing the staff involved in it! Communication is key here and it is important to ensure that all team members are involved and delegate work appropriately. Establishing clear ground rules and working practices which have been agreed across the cluster and international partnership will help foster this.

4. Delivering training

This handbook includes activities which can be run with colleagues to help facilitate shared understanding around LfS, the SDGs and International School Partnerships. They are designed to be participative and encourage reflection. These can be run in-house or supported by your local advisor. Collectively, these activities are known as Level 1 professional learning. Additional professional learning at Levels 2, 3 and 4 is available free of charge to all teachers. Please see page 21 for details.

Tips for facilitation

If you have a group of 8 or more, it is useful to work in small groups for discussion-based activities and then hold plenary discussion afterwards. The ideal size for small group discussion is 4-5.

When facilitating a plenary discussion, it is important to ensure that a variety of voices are heard and that no individual dominates. Equally, if individuals or groups don't feel they have more to contribute to a discussion they shouldn't be pressurised into doing so. It is also important not to dominate in discussion and support others to share their perspectives.

You may wish to gather some informal feedback at the end of a session. For example, you might do a round robin and ask participants to say what their take away from the workshop is or what they will do next. You could also ask for comments on post-its which you could collate at the end.

5. Engaging the wider community

The wider school community can contribute to a sustainable school partnership. Celebration events can be a good way of sharing and spreading impact and finding resources to further sustain international partnerships. You may have included a cluster community engagement event in your application or you might want to develop one as the work evolves. In particular, sharing the collaborative partnership projects around the SDGs might be a useful way of engaging the wider community and sharing local and global issues.

Support for your cluster

1. Collaborative partnership projects

The SDGs provide a rich context for learning and many opportunities for working collaboratively within international partnerships.

A key part of LfS is providing the skills and confidence for young people to take action for positive change, be it within their school or community or further afield. Providing the space and opportunity for young people to do this within the context of the collaborative partnership project enhances the overall learning experience and enables them to connect with the issues which they really care about.

Supporting pupils to carry out a campaign or action project within their local community is a great way to share the learning and raise the profile of the international partnership. Moreover, by enabling the young people to have ownership over the programme, they are more likely to be motivated to take part and deliver meaningful action projects.

Useful resources

The British Council has created a series of collaborative project templates themed around the Sustainable Development Goals which are reasonably flexible to allow teachers to integrate them into a range of subject areas or activities e.g. school debates, or opportunities for after-school clubs.

Scotland's Global Learning Centres have recently produced primary and secondary resource packs on the SDGs, which provide introductory activities for each goal as well as ideas and signposting for developing these further.

■ A key part of LfS is providing the skills and confidence for young people to take action for positive change, be it within their school or community or further afield ■

You can find these and more resources on pages 8, 21-22.

2. Local advisor support

Your local advisor is based in your local **Development Education Centre (DECs)**. There are five of these in Scotland (listed below) and they can provide local, on the ground support for you and your cluster. The centres all have resources which can be taken out on loan, covering a range of LfS themes and staff who are all experienced Global Citizenship and LfS practitioners. Your local advisor will be able to provide a range of advice on working in international partnerships. They can also deliver training and recommend resources to help with developing collaborative learning projects with pupils around the SDGs.

The local advisors can provide advice to help you:

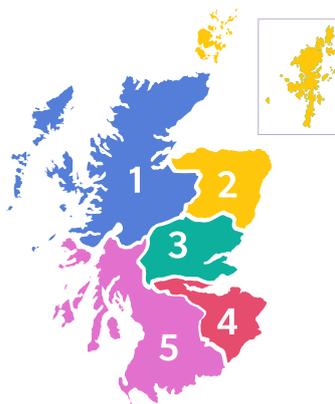
- make activity plans after completion of your cluster self-evaluation
- make cluster grant applications
- plan and deliver introductory training where required
- plan and carry out outgoing and incoming international school partnership visits
- plan and deliver local events and special activities.

The local advisor might have supported you through the initial application stage and once your application is successful, they can provide you with an additional three days of support if required. The nature of this support can be agreed between the cluster and the local advisor and it could include support for curriculum planning, collaborative pupil project planning, delivering CLPL, action planning and more.



Scotland's DECs

1. [Highland One World \(HOW\), Inverness](#)
2. [Aberdeen for a Fairer World \(MDEC\), Aberdeen](#)
3. [One World Centre, Dundee](#)
4. [Scotdec, Edinburgh](#)
5. [West of Scotland DEC \(WOSDEC\), Glasgow](#)



Cluster training materials

Overview

These training materials will enable you to:

- deliver introductory training for teachers on Learning for Sustainability with a focus on the Sustainable Development Goals and international school partnerships
- lead a participative and reflective session on working in partnership across the cluster.

This training package is designed for use in conjunction with the cluster self-evaluation tool and cluster co-ordinator PowerPoint slides. The self-evaluation tool should help you identify the training needs for the cluster, whilst the slides provide additional resources for you to use.

The following activities will enable you to deliver introductory sessions on Learning for Sustainability, the UN Sustainable Development Goals and International School Partnerships. Taking into account the needs of the cluster, there is enough material to create a bespoke 2 hour session. You might focus on one or two of the elements or deliver activities from all three.

Part 2 of the training package is a short session which will enable you to reflect on ways of working within the cluster and the benefits and value in doing so. It is recommend that all clusters take part in this session and reflect on how their cluster and international partnership will work. It is advisable to revisit this conversation at key points during the partnership journey.

Contact us at connectingclassrooms@lfsscotland.org to access the resources in **Section 2** – plus advice and information on all of the free support, professional learning and funding opportunities available through the Connecting Classrooms programme.

 Useful resources**Teaching the SDGs**

The World's Largest Lesson

Practical Action schools

Explore the Global Goals

SDG tracker

Eco-Schools Scotland

Action projects

Connecting Classrooms

Your Campaign for Change

Get Global

Classroom activities

Signposts for Global Citizenship

Stride Magazine

Oxfam Education

Christian Aid schools

Scotdec

Education Scotland

Measuring Impact

RISC – How do we know it's working?

Tools to measure attitudinal change
in young people

**Resources to support
Learning for Sustainability**

Stride online Global Citizenship
magazine

Oxfam Guide for Teachers

Oxfam Guide for Schools

Education Scotland's

'A summary of Learning for
Sustainability Resources'

'Opening up Great Learning'

'Conversations about Learning
for Sustainability'

Professional learning

General Teaching Council
for Scotland

Making Connections through Learning
for Sustainability

Learning for the Sustainable
Development Goals

Professional Recognition in Learning
for Sustainability through the General
Teaching Council for Scotland

 Further information

Contact Project Manager Kirsten Leask: connectingclassrooms@lfsscotland.org
or visit the [British Council Connecting Classrooms website](#)

