CONNECTING CLASSROOMS

Developing effective learning in Nepal: Insights into school leadership, teaching methods and curriculum
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CONTENTS

Foreword ........................................................................................................................................................................... vi
Foreword ........................................................................................................................................................................... vii
Introduction .................................................................................................................................................................. 1

Sponsored research studies

Core skills integration in the Nepalese secondary school curriculum ........................................................... 5
Core skills for employability ..................................................................................................................................... 17
International perspectives on global learning .................................................................................................. 26
The changing role of school leaders: What the best school leaders do and how they do it .................................. 43
Attributes of successful school leaders ........................................................................................................ 50

Sponsored case studies

Leading on effective quality assurance in schools .......................................................................................... 64
The role of school leaders in supporting the professional development of teachers ........................................ 68
School-community relations in developing life skills for students ............................................................... 73
Benefits of international school partnerships for teaching and learning ....................................................... 77
Teaching critical thinking and problem solving in the classroom .................................................................... 81
Effective assessment of project-based learning ............................................................................................. 86
Embedding digital literacy in the classroom .................................................................................................... 90
Global citizenship and global learning in schools ....................................................................................... 94
Developing student leadership through student clubs ................................................................................ 100
FOREWORD

I am delighted to be writing this foreword for the British Council publication Developing effective learning in Nepal: Insights into school leadership, teaching methods and curriculum. This publication comes at a very pertinent time for Nepal, as the areas covered under the publication have been identified as key areas of development under the national School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) 2016–2023.

The Ministry of Education in Nepal is working on policies that will enable better management and governance of our schools. While the School Management Committees (SMCs) will have stronger roles in the planning and internal management of schools, the head teachers will focus more on pedagogical leadership and teacher professional development leading effective teaching and learning in schools.

This publication outlines what has worked in school leadership in other countries, which will be a good reference for school leaders in our country. It also offers insight into both international and local perspectives on policies and practice in school leadership, teacher professional development, curriculum implementation and integration of core skills. The publication will be very useful for anyone in the education field wishing to be up to date about current trends in the area.

Through the Connecting Classrooms programme, the British Council has been promoting international collaboration, core skills embedded into communicative classroom teaching and capacity development for teachers and school leaders. As part of the programme, many school leaders from Nepal have received the opportunity to travel to the UK and learn from their partner schools. The school leaders from the UK have also travelled to Nepal to learn about our culture and ways of working. These activities are aligned to Nepal’s commitment to help achieve the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on quality education. The SSDP also strongly advocates for international co-operation and collaboration to share and replicate international best practice for educational development in the country.

In the coming years the government will be exploring how international learning and collaboration can be embedded into the curriculum and also exploring different ways in which we could streamline the capacity development of our school leaders. We hope to work closely with organisations like the British Council to prepare and build the concepts of instructional leadership in order to promote quality education in our schools.

I hope all the readers can make the best use of this publication. All the best!

Dr Tulashi Prasad Thapaliya
Director General, CEHRD
FOREWORD

Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning is a flagship programme co-funded by the British Council and the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Involving over 30 countries around the world – including four in South Asia – Connecting Classrooms seeks to provide opportunities for school leaders, teachers and students to develop core skills such as critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and imagination, and a global outlook through international partnerships and school-based projects. The programme also supports the development of school leaders’ skills, helping these individuals to develop their practice in instructional leadership, focusing on the quality of education provision within their institutions.

As a part of this programme in Nepal, we are delighted to be able to publish this volume, which brings together a variety of insights into the realities of schools across the country. The initial chapters provide useful background theory to these key areas of core skills, school leadership and global learning, before these ideas are then illustrated through a series of case studies.

Some education theories might be universal and can easily be adapted into different contexts. However, in today’s times of rapid change, one size hardly fits all. Moreover, in culturally diverse countries like Nepal, where one local context can be completely different from the other, a research- and evidence-based approach is needed to find out what works best for our schools. This volume does exactly that. It highlights the need for careful analysis of the context and underlines the importance of high-quality research conducted within a range of contexts to inform the development of all aspects of education systems.

There is undoubtedly a strong commitment to the development of quality education in Nepal. The government – national and local – along with development organisations, administrators, school leaders, teacher educators and associations, teachers, parents, community leaders and the students themselves all play a part in achieving these goals. The role of organisations such as the British Council is to provide platforms and forums for convening these various groups to discuss the issues and challenges they face, as well as to share evidence and learning from the experience of the education system in the UK along with projects we undertake across the world. Publications such as this one contribute to both of these roles.

Here, we bring together insights from Nepal, the UK and a number of other countries – each of which is looking to find ways to continue developing its education system. While countries, cultures and people may all be unique, we all have one thing in common: we all want the best for our young people, for them to lead happy and fulfilled lives within a supportive local, national and global community. There is no doubt that a strong education system is fundamental to this goal.

For the past 60 years and counting, we at the British Council are privileged to have been able to work in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, to achieve Nepal’s objectives for quality education. We have been doing this through various English and Education projects, policy dialogue events, exchange visits and research publications. I am hopeful that the evidence in this publication, like the ones in the past, will help strengthen the design and delivery of education programmes in the future.
I would like to sincerely thank the Connecting Classrooms Steering Committee members at the MoEST for their continuous support, the editors and authors for all their work on this important publication, along with the project team members – past and present – who have contributed to its production: Ashim Kharel, Sharda Joshi, Gaurab Sharma and Roshani Thapa. Most importantly, I would like to convey my thanks to all of the educators who commit themselves to improving teaching and learning in Nepal for all of our children.

Vaishali Pradhan
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British Council Nepal
GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AND GLOBAL LEARNING IN SCHOOLS
Donnie Adams, Kenny S.L. Cheah, Noni Nadiana Md Yusoff and Vicneswary Muthiah

INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to be a ‘global citizen’? A global citizen can be defined by one’s ability to understand the broader world and relate to its purpose and function as a unique individual (Edwards & Gaventa, 2014). Global citizens have also been said to play a proactive role within their own communities and collaborate with others to improve life and living to be more equal, fair and sustainable (Mayo, 2005). As such, they are people with a purpose that is rooted in both local and international contexts (Gaventa & Tandon, 2010). Conceiving of global citizenship allows individuals to be aware of their knowledge of world events, and empower them as learners so that they can assume active roles in facing and resolving global challenges (Merryfield, 2008). Another definition is that they are positive contributors to a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure world (Tiessen, 2011).

Global learning, on the other hand, has been defined as facilitating educational experiences that allow students to appreciate diverse perspectives, understand the connections they have to the wider world, effectively communicate and collaborate across cultures and countries, and use their disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge to investigate and take action on issues that matter to them and the wider world (Tichnor-Wagner, 2017). The notion of ‘global learning’ has in recent years become a focus of curriculum development in Nepal.

This chapter has three broad sections. The first section presents an overview of global citizenship in education and global learning in schools. The second section discusses a case study of a school in Malaysia that has developed international links and conducted global learning programmes across borders. The final section will focus on what Nepali education policymakers can do to implement global citizenship as a lens for teaching within the curriculum.

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Global citizenship education is ‘not just a mere theoretical concept, it is now a practical program implemented in schools’ (Wintersteiner et al., 2015). Wintersteiner et al. say global citizenship education is the delivery of knowledge, competences, values and attitudes that enable learners to work towards a more equitable world for all – in that regard it has a specifically ethical dimension. For instance, global citizenship is a key concept for students to consider when discussing peace and non-violence.

Taking this a step further, Dower (2000) explains global citizenship is prompted by an awareness of the need to exercise global responsibility due to the issues of poverty, environmental degradation, human rights abuses and violence. Subsequently, Schattle (2008) argues that global citizenship emerges in various contexts of political activism or even through study abroad programmes and individuals gaining expanding cultural
horizons. Global citizenship is inextricably linked, then, to globalisation – it is not necessarily a voluntary state, but an inevitable state as different worlds become increasingly linked up.

In 2012, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon emphasised that a purpose of education is to foster global citizenship in order to shape a sustainable future generation. This places a huge onus on schools about the future peace and stability of the planet.

My new education first initiative aims to give a ‘big push’ to the global movement for education [...] fostering global citizenship. Education is much more than an entry to the job market. It has the power to shape a sustainable future and a better world. Education policies should promote peace, mutual respect and environmental care.

Source: Statement by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 26 September 2012, Global Education First Initiative (GEFI)

With this in mind, UNESCO designated ‘global citizenship education’ as its pedagogical guideline in 2013.

GLOBAL LEARNING IN SCHOOLS

The rapid expansion of global learning as an educational goal presents some challenges for teachers. Braskamp (2009) raised the issue of appropriate and effective intervention. As learners need to have a global perspective without going abroad, teachers have to think creatively about how to deliver a lesson in which students can feel, think and act outside of only their local context.

Case study: An international school in Malaysia

This case study looks at a private international secondary school established in the 1980s in Kuala Lumpur. The school takes pride in its curriculum, which emphasises critical and creative thinking, appreciation of the sciences, arts and culture, and the promotion of character formation and responsible citizenship. The aim is to provide an all-round education with a strong emphasis on character development.

The school has 1,152 students, with 80 per cent of its student population being Malaysians of all ethnicities, while the rest are students from neighbouring regions such as Korea, Indonesia, Australia, Thailand and China. The majority of their 112 teachers are Malaysian, but there are also international teachers from France, China and Germany. The school runs the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) Cambridge certified curriculum for Year 7 to 11 students.

The school has a dedicated ‘Global Perspectives’ subject, which is compulsory for students as part of the IGCSE curriculum. Global citizenship education is seen as being embedded within this subject, and as such is a firm concept familiar throughout the school. Introduced in 2014, the subject was designed by Cambridge International to develop students’ skills in research, analysis, evaluation, reflection, collaboration and communication. It also aims to strengthen cross-curricular links with core subjects such as English, mathematics, science, and information and communications technology (ICT).

Global Perspectives is taught three times a week, with 40 minutes allocated for each lesson. The subject emphasises the development and application of skills rather than the acquisition of knowledge. Students are assessed via three compulsory components: a written exam, an individual report and a team project, contributing 35 per cent, 30 per cent and 35 per cent of marks respectively (Cambridge International Examinations, 2015; Laycock, 2017).
The written examination requires students to answer four compulsory questions based on a range of sources. The sources present a global issue from a range of perspectives, either personal, national and/or global, which the student must then use in their answer. Meanwhile, the individual report requires students to research a topic of personal, national or global significance, which they choose themselves. For the team project, students need to devise and develop a collaborative research project on a topic, which must allow for the exploration of different cultural perspectives. Students are also required to submit a personal reflective report on their research, contribution and personal learning.

There is no specific Global Perspectives teacher hired to teach the subject. Instead, teachers are required to teach Global Perspectives as a timetabled subject and are provided online training by Cambridge International for a total of 35 hours over six weeks to guide them. Case studies are provided to demonstrate how the curriculum and timetable can be redesigned and cross-subject links strengthened. Teachers can access the Cambridge International website for online training. The book *Complete Global Perspectives for Cambridge IGCSE® and O Level* (Lally, 2016) is used as a reference material for the latest syllabus and in helping teachers prepare for classes.

Teachers play an active role in introducing topics, such as the latest news. Students are required to undertake their own research to prepare for forums and debates with students across classes, and are encouraged to learn to become accepting of different perspectives and to support knowledge sharing.

Students are also encouraged to participate in international educational competitions that create new learning experiences and opportunities for them to understand the diversity of cultures. However, the selection depends on the capabilities and competencies of students. For example, students have represented the school in the Global Learning Across Borders competition, Oxbridge Genius Mathematics competition, Australian Mathematics competition, and Royal Commonwealth essay competition.

Through the Global Perspectives subject, students have also participated in more than 20 student exchange programmes, as well as the Global Learning Across Borders educational travel programmes and community service programmes across Australia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Korea, the UK, the US, China, Singapore and Japan from 2010 to 2019.

Embedding ‘global citizenship’ or ‘global perspectives’ as a clear concept across subjects, with training and resources available for teachers, is a good starting point for school leaders interested in introducing students to international viewpoints and global ethical questions.

**METHODOLOGY**

Purposive sampling was used to select the participants in the study: the vice principal for co-curriculum, two headteachers and five subject teachers in English, ICT and maths were chosen.

Several factors were considered when choosing the participants for this study. First only participants who had a clear understanding of global citizenship education were selected. Second only participants who consented to participate were selected. An open-ended survey with 13 questions was administered. Each of the responses was read thoroughly and provisional themes were assigned. Three major themes emerged from the data.

**FINDINGS**

The findings of the study are discussed under three main themes: rationale for global
citizenship education; teaching style and approach; and instructional challenges and improvement.

1. Rationale for global citizenship education
The teachers revealed a consistent and shared rationale for global citizenship education. They said that:

- students need to be exposed to ‘every aspect of culture from different countries’
- students need to gain a ‘wide knowledge of different cultures and environment’
- students can ‘facilitate collaboration and cooperation’ between nations by learning about their cultures
- understanding different cultures helps students to respect those cultures.

All the teachers believed it was necessary to instill certain values, attitudes and behaviours in learners for a culturally rich, peaceful and sustainable society. Their consistency of understanding about global citizenship – and their dedication to its ethical purpose – gave them a clear idea of what they wished to achieve when delivering global citizenship education and what resources and materials they would need.

2. Teaching style and approach
A second common theme from the surveys was the teachers’ joint belief that the Global Perspectives subject should be taught in a way that develops ‘21st-century skills’. The following examples were provided:

- Using a learning management system (LMS) which not only delivers global citizenship content but which requires students to access it online, thereby developing their digital and information technology skills – themselves key skills in a global world
- Emphasis given to student-centred learning when discussing global citizenship, in which the teacher is the facilitator, in order to develop independence of thought, critical thinking and self-reflection
- Forums and debates with students across classes to develop communication and listening skills
- Students’ participation in international educational competitions in order to develop resilience, cross-cultural communication and engagement skills.

Embedding a subject focused on global citizenship into the school curriculum had given space for a skills-based pedagogy, which could flexibly move away from textbook-centred approaches, to emerge.

3. Instructional challenges and improvement
The teaching of global citizenship education threw up its own set of challenges. Participants raised numerous issues:

- Challenges in cross-cultural communication when students meet those from different backgrounds
- Lack of moral values and ethics among learners, such that some displayed intolerant or dismissive attitudes which teachers struggled to change
- Preparing lessons which involve global issues, and embedding these into the curriculum through all subjects, could be time-consuming and difficult to deliver in a coherent way. Some participants suggested global citizenship could be delivered through other subjects rather than in a single subject in the school’s curriculum, to cut down on workload and also help to make other subjects less exam-oriented.

Teachers should be supported by senior leadership teams to manage these challenges, which are particularly present in global citizenship lessons, effectively and confidently.

CONCLUSION
The account of global citizenship education presented in this chapter is a descriptive one. It puts into context what has been described by teachers and illuminates their challenges.
Two implications can be drawn for Nepali education policymakers looking to situate the learning of curricular subjects within the context of global citizenship.

First while global citizenship education is already in place in the form of civic education, peace and human rights in Nepalese social studies curricula and textbooks (Smith, 2015; UNICEF Nepal, 2010), careful attention should be given to incorporating global issues and the development of international viewpoints and cross-cultural understanding in the curriculum. A distinct, dedicated subject can help achieve this goal.

Second capacity-building for teachers teaching global citizenship is essential to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the programme. Teachers need to be exposed to ‘21st-century approaches’, as compared to current traditional methods of relying merely on textbooks or other materials for in-class discussion and student reflections (Smith, 2015). For that, they require further training and more diverse teaching resources. Teachers must not have this requirement to teach global citizenship added on to their workload without clarity about what it means or how they should deliver it, and without sufficient space in their weekly timetable.

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REFERENCES


ABOUT THE PROJECT

CONNECTING CLASSROOMS THROUGH GLOBAL LEARNING

Connecting Classrooms works with schools around the world to help young people develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to make a positive contribution now and in the future. The British Council delivers this programme in partnership with the UK government Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

Connecting Classrooms offers a range of free downloadable classroom resources available to all teachers across the world. These resources, based on the United Nations Global Goals for Sustainable Development, have been designed to adapt to any curriculum. They offer creative and engaging ideas to bring knowledge and core skills to life in the classroom and inspire students to take action on global issues. Find out about our global learning resources designed to address topics which are high on the agenda for governments around the world here:

connectingclassrooms.britishcouncil.org/resources/global-learning-resources

Connecting Classrooms offers free online professional development around core skills and international collaboration, helping teachers and school leaders to prepare young people for life and work in a globalised economy. The programme also supports partnerships between schools around the world with schools in the UK to share knowledge, skills and experience with other teachers. More details on how to find a school partner can be found here:

connectingclassrooms.britishcouncil.org/partner-with-schools/find-partner
This British Council publication on developing successful schools in Nepal provides on-the-ground insights into curriculum, pedagogy and school leadership. Through case studies from researchers, teachers and practitioners within the country, alongside reviews of the research literature from international academics, the reader comes away with a deeper understanding of the opportunities, challenges and best practice unfolding in the Nepalese school system. The publication opens with a chapter on core skills in the curriculum and moves on to four main chapters covering: employability skills; international perspectives on learning; what works in school leadership and attributes of school leaders. Finally, nine grassroots case studies are presented from classrooms in Nepal and Asia, drawing on the authors’ findings and with recommendations for the future. The publication can be read both as an inspirational handbook for school leaders wishing to drive improvement for staff and students, and as an information booklet for the interested observer.

The insights and recommendations embedded in its pages reflect a committed endeavour by both practitioners and researchers to drive for better outcomes for Nepali students. More than ever, digital literacy, critical thought and confidence in both local and international contexts are being touted as crucial capabilities, a call heightened by the context of the global 2020 pandemic. School leavers are being required to adapt to virtual employment practices and find innovative ways to break into difficult labour markets, for which researchers assert they need a high-quality, challenging education which prepares them to make their mark in a rapidly changing world.