

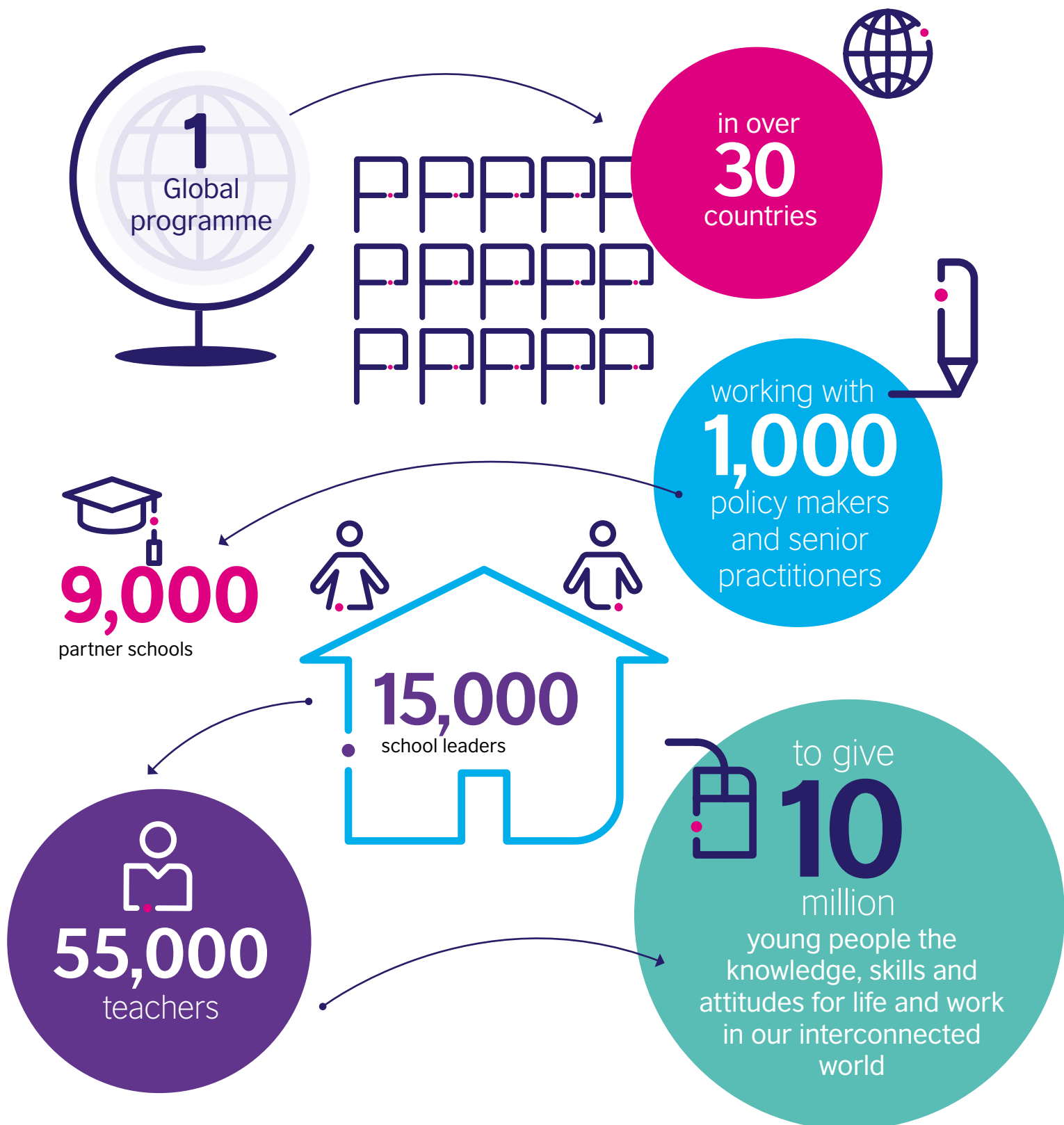
Connecting Classrooms

**Building knowledge
and skills for an
interconnected world**





Connecting classrooms at a glance



“

It was noticed that CCGL trained teachers' performance, views of teaching and communication skills has noticeably developed. Meanwhile non-participants of the programme rely on the traditional teaching method... This was noticed from students exam results.

”

School Leader,
Occupied Palestinian
Territories

“

For me, that's one of the biggest impacts, it's that acceptance and tolerance getting built.

”

School Leader,
UK

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Welcome

What has been the impact of Connecting Classrooms?

The scale of the programme speaks for itself. Between 2018 and 2022, we trained 55,000 teachers and 12,000 school leaders, supported 8,000 school partnerships to collaborate on global issues, engaged 1,000 policy makers in education reform, and reached more than 30 countries worldwide.

Yet the programme's true value is the way it has transformed teaching and learning. By supporting schools to embed new approaches and collaborate globally, it has made education more inclusive and student-centred, equipping learners with skills for life and work, and has contributed to global challenges like gender equality, human rights and climate change. Ultimately, it has changed lives.

We have seen this in the thousands of stories to emerge from diverse learning contexts around the world. Such as the teacher in Ethiopia, who was inspired by her Connecting Classrooms training to transform the learning experience – and lives – of underprivileged female students. By challenging her own assumptions and applying new techniques, she has provided the girls with food, counselling and scholastic support to help them get the most from their education – and has extended this to the rest of the school and learners from neighbouring schools.

We estimate that Connecting Classrooms has benefitted around 10 million young people worldwide. Our latest impact report shows that students who have engaged with Connecting Classrooms are not only more knowledgeable about global issues, but have increased awareness of their role in society, and are able apply this knowledge in their role as global citizens. And this is all made possible by the sustainable partnerships we've made – and continue to make – with Ministries of Education worldwide.

This report is a snapshot of the impact of Connecting Classrooms between 2018 and 2022. We hope it inspires you to bring about change in your own way.



Darren Coyle, Global Programme
Director Connecting Classrooms

“

Through Connecting Classrooms, we feel proud to be part of the global community. Having a partner school extends communication, experience and exchange of ideas.

”

School Leader,
Tanzania

“

CCGL has influenced local policies with its teacher professional development because it sets a clear path on core competences and how to be taught in schools.

”

Policymaker,
Kenya

About us

Connecting Classrooms:

- was a **programme** for schools all over the world, funded by the British Council and the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.
- connected **educators** from the UK and around the world, to improve education for everyone and explore global issues like climate change and gender equality
- joined up schools through school partnerships so **young people** could learn from each other and work together on sustainable development projects
- trained **teachers** on new techniques to enrich and improve education
- trained **school leaders** to gain new leadership skills, develop their staff and lead school improvement
- brought **policy makers** together with experts from high-performing education systems worldwide to share ideas on effective practice

Four thematic areas

Core skills: the six essential skills for life and work in a global economy comprising creativity, critical thinking, digital literacy, communication and collaboration, citizenship and student leadership.

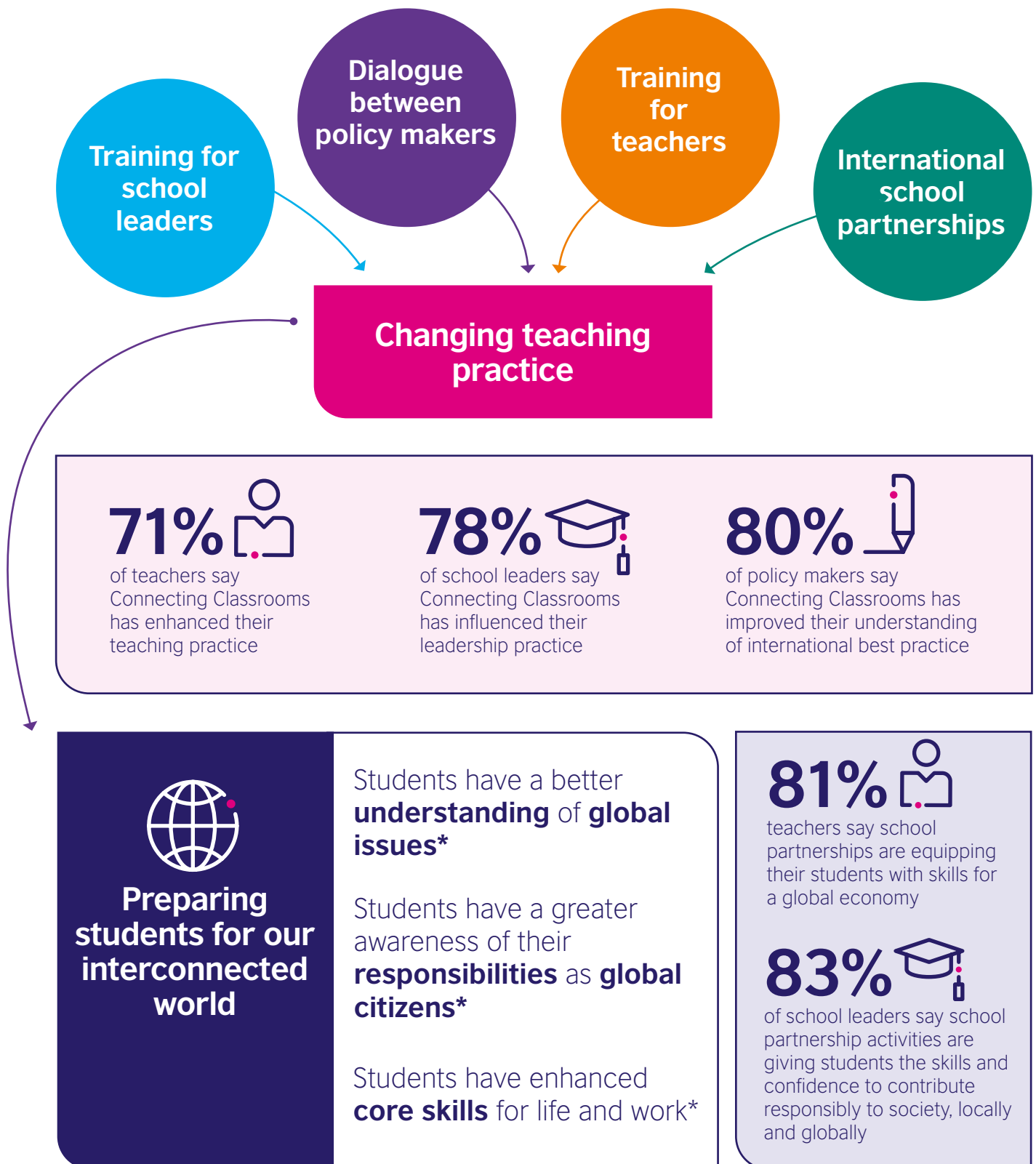
Global learning: exploring the big global issues that affect us all, such as climate change, gender equality and how to live sustainably.

Gender: advocacy for gender equality in education and the development of more inclusive teaching practices.

Inclusion: working with partners to create more inclusive classrooms and make sure all young people are able to participate, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, ability, socioeconomic background, health or medical condition.



How it works



Middle East and North Africa

“

Each day my passion for teaching grows... I believe in building a new generation of leaders, critical thinkers and innovators, who worship teamwork and collaboration.

”

Teacher, Tunisia

We worked with policy makers to address education priorities across the region, including gender, inclusion, well-being, instructional leadership and digital literacy.

We created a region-wide Mental Well-being Framework, to help educators and decision-makers develop strategies to support mental health and well-being in schools. We partnered with three Ministries of Education to review special educational needs provision and then connected policy makers with international experts, to find ways to improve outcomes for all children.



Morocco

To share the impact of the programme to date and plan for the future, we held a major online event for all the Ministry of Education's policy makers, employees, teachers and supervisors.

Highlights by country



Egypt

We supported the national education reform by training teachers and leaders, in some of the country's most deprived areas, on instructional leadership, core skills and digital literacy, and helped schools to deliver effective distance learning during COVID-19.



Occupied Palestinian Territories

Our training on core skills and competency-based learning has influenced education reform. There is now a greater focus on core skills, inclusive practices and global citizenship in schools.



Yemen

We supported Yemen's strategic objective to increase access to skills and qualifications for 52,000 public school students, while promoting the values of inclusion, tolerance and dialogue.



Lebanon

Policy makers got the opportunity to reflect on and learn from effective educational practices from the UK and around the world, to support ongoing curriculum reform.



Iraq

We delivered citizenship training to teachers and supported schools in disadvantaged areas to deliver distance learning during the pandemic, in line with Ministry of Education priorities.



Jordan

We supported the development of Jordan's national inclusion strategy, through connecting policy makers with expert practitioners and hosting field visits to the UK. We were the only programme in Jordan to work across all types of school: UNRWA, government and military institutions.

Tunisia

We secured Ministry of Education accreditation for our training courses and helped to embed core skills into the Technology curriculum. There is interest in expanding this to all subject areas.



3,832
teachers trained



1,287
leaders trained



993
school partnerships

“

We were motivated to work in the spirit of one team, through a shared leadership approach that emphasised communication, to improve teaching and learning.

”

School Leader,
Iraq

“

The biggest benefit has been a significant shift in mindset amongst policymakers when it comes to inclusive education, brought about by exposure to international learning and best practice.

”

Policymaker,
Jordan

Embracing distance learning in Iraq

A head teacher in Iraq used Leading Core Skills training from Connecting Classrooms to bring the school and community together to embrace distance learning, leading to improved engagement and participation.

When schools globally were making the shift to online provision due to COVID-19, head teacher Munther Zuhair Hamid saw this as an opportunity to make learning more inclusive, by boosting participation and engagement through distance learning approaches.

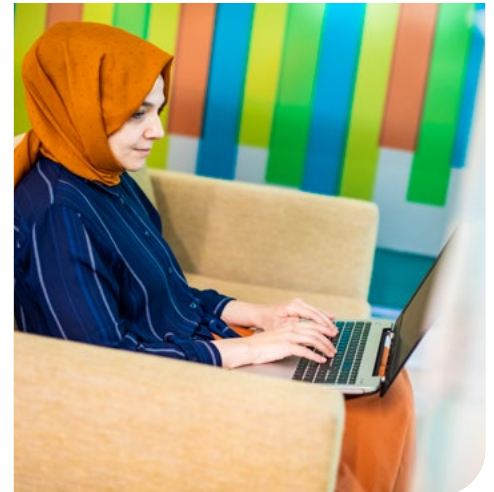
Through Leading Core Skills training, he acquired new approaches to support this transition, whilst gaining the confidence to bring teachers, learners and parents together to embrace new ways of learning.

After cascading his learning to staff, to instil a greater sense of teamwork and collaboration, Munther introduced a new online learning platform, and offered training to help teachers become the future owners of the platform. Teachers began digitising the paper-based curriculum and delivering their first distance learning lessons. They developed 'how-to' videos, so learners and parents could fully engage with the platform.

As teachers became more confident, they made lessons more interactive and incorporated the student voice into planning, through student parliaments and peer discussions. They focused on increasing participation for learners with special educational needs, by sourcing programmes to make content more accessible for learners with hearing and visual difficulties and incorporating puppetry and mini theatres into lessons.

Since transitioning to distance learning, the school has seen improved success rates across all year groups, and by offering an innovative digital curriculum, the school has raised its standing in the community, and is attracting more learners – 186 new enrolments in the past year alone.

Student motivation has increased, as learners can now access learning, no matter the circumstances, and giving students a more active role has boosted their confidence and engagement by breaking the barrier of participation, whether that's overcoming the fear of making mistakes or speaking up in front of peers.

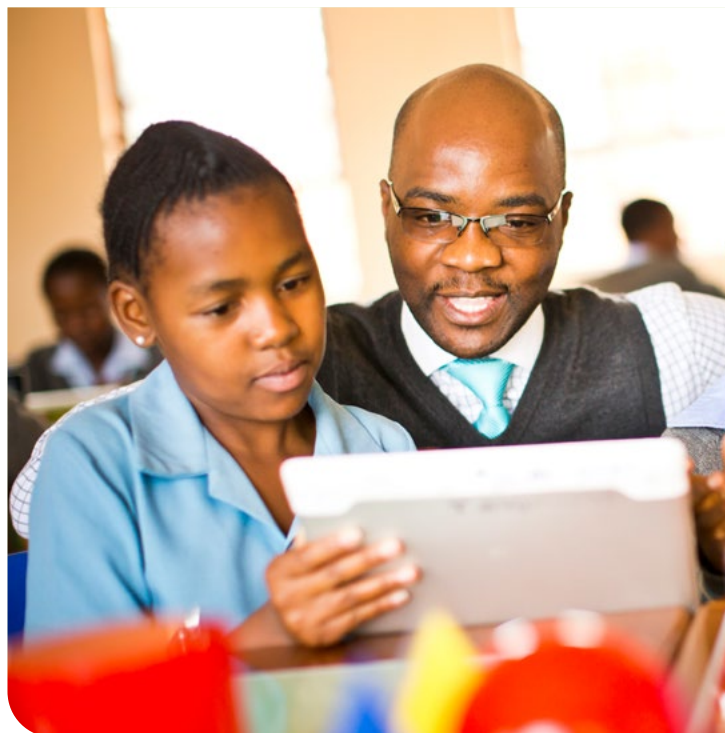


Gender

With UNESCO estimating that 11 million girls may not return to school following the pandemic, supporting girls' education has never been more important.

Connecting Classrooms has prioritised gender equality, by engaging students, teachers, leaders and policy makers to make gender responsive changes in schools and communities.

- Schools used international partnerships to explore gender issues. Primary pupils in Nepal and the UK compared gender roles and explored how gender expectations influence identity and rights.
- Teachers have used the gender training to make tangible changes. At a school in Egypt, boys are now attending domestic science courses usually offered to girls, and all staff are involved in deciding future changes.
- Policy makers have come together to improve outcomes for girls. At a recent event in Ghana, policy makers explored the role of instructional leadership in building gender-responsive pedagogy.
- School leaders have used our training to make holistic gender-responsive changes, such as in Ethiopia, where female heads used new approaches to contribute to gender equality and become role models for girls returning to school.



Gender and inclusion in Tunisia

Through Gender training from Connecting Classrooms, a teacher in Tunisia developed a more transformative approach to gender issues. Back at school, she set about raising awareness of gender equality and encouraging students to be more open when discussing issues. Through a student questionnaire, she found that while both girls and boys were aware of gender equality, boys were less active than girls in class. Reflecting on this, she changed

her class management approach, by mixing boys and girls during group work, so they could work together in teams, and giving more thinking time when asking questions, to encourage boys to participate. Students also participated in debates and gave speeches on gender issues and access to education. Across the school, there is now greater collaboration between girls and boys, and students are more engaged in and aware of gender issues.

South Asia

“

My students are giving better outputs. Because they have developed better understanding and reasoning... They are more confident now. They are frank with their teachers and trust them.

”

Teacher, Pakistan

In South Asia, we've delivered core skills and leadership training to teachers and school leaders, and have supported and strengthened global citizenship within schools through collaborative international partnerships between learners across the region and the UK.



12,848
teachers trained



7,759
leaders trained



2,780
school partnerships



Afghanistan

We supported the Ministry of Education to embed core skills in the curriculum through teacher training and technical support, particularly targeting girls' schools and female teachers.



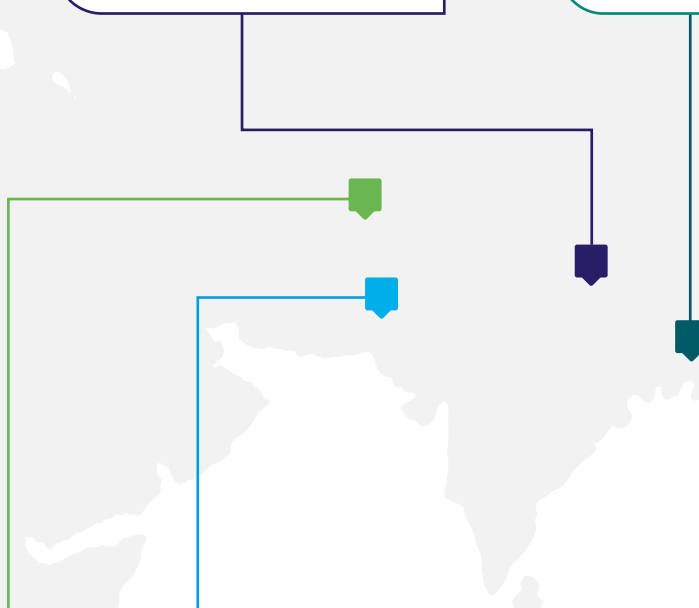
Nepal

We gained government support to support schools in 21 districts across seven provinces, focusing on core skills, school leadership and the development of a new digital literacy curriculum.



Bangladesh

In partnership with the government, we mapped core skills against the curriculum and explored ways private and government-funded schools can collaborate to support internationalisation of the curriculum.



Pakistan

Partnering with federal and provincial governments, we delivered core skills training to almost 8,000 teachers and 5,000 school leaders, and continue to support provincial partners to provide tailored leadership training, such as in Punjab, where we've reached 15,000 head teachers.



“

We thought of ourselves as a rural school, with thousands of barriers. Now we have the confidence to say: yes, we're a rural school, but we can do amazing things.

”

School Leader,
Bangladesh

“

The project has had a great influence on me as a head teacher. Introducing Connecting Classrooms and leading a cluster of 13 Nepali schools has led to wider changes and appreciation from teachers and parents.

”

School Leader,
Nepal

Boosting attendance in Bangladesh

A head teacher and teacher in Bangladesh used Core Skills training from Connecting Classrooms to embed new teaching approaches, improve student confidence and boost attendance.

Most learners at Rashed Khan Menon Model Higher Secondary School come from rural, underprivileged families, and are first-generation educated. With little emphasis placed on education in the home, the school experienced high drop-out rates and low engagement – issues exacerbated by its traditional lecture-based approach.

Inspired to bring about change, head teacher Abu Zafar Sikder and teacher Md Abul Hasan attended Core Skills training, where they strengthened their understanding of deep and surface learning, discovered how to improve learner engagement through activity-based methods, and gained new questioning techniques to increase participation.

After cascading their learning to staff, they engaged the whole-school community through projects to modernise the library, campaign against early marriage and promote a greener environment. Teachers were encouraged to embed core skills in the classroom and introduce methods to boost engagement, like group work, quizzes and presentations. New questioning techniques encouraged discussion and helped learners think critically and creatively.

Bringing core skills techniques to the school has transformed student behaviours. Learners are more vocal and confident, and more motivated to participate in extra-curricular activities. They've taken on extra responsibilities in the community, like volunteering for local health services or raising awareness of plastic pollution.

The changes have had a clear impact on drop-out rates, and the school has seen a boost in attendance. There is also

evidence of improved performance, as students recently won a district-level debate competition and inter-school football tournament.

‘The training helped us add an extra dimension to what we teach and how we teach.’

‘My teaching skills have improved, I am much more confident, and I get better student feedback.’

Climate action

From Hull to Harare, young people all over the world explored climate change and took positive action through Connecting Classrooms projects

Research from both the British Council and UNESCO shows that climate change is the single most pressing issue for people worldwide – young people especially – and that education is the most effective solution. Connecting Classrooms connects learners and educators to the global debate and supports them to take positive climate action.

- More than 50 per cent of Connecting Classrooms school partnerships are collaborating on diverse climate action topics – from bee keeping to sustainable fashion.
- School children in the UK and around the world got their views and voices heard at a global debate on climate change as part of the Global Conversation – a collaboration between the British Council and the Economist Foundation.
- Schools across the globe are being inspired to tackle climate issues such as plastic pollution and zero waste thanks to Connecting Classrooms downloadable resource packs.

- Students in the UK, Nepal and Tunisia developed innovative climate solutions as part of the coding competition do your :bit – a collaboration between the British Council, micro:bit and the World's Largest Lesson.



Water conservation in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe has seen below average rainfall for the last four years, leading to a decline in safe, clean water, and this has been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Inspired by Core Skills training from Connecting Classrooms, two teachers set out to show learners the importance of water conservation through child-led, learner-centred activities using core skills techniques. They inspired students to start their own water conversation

projects, including making compost to improve moisture retention in soil, making signs to remind people to turn off taps and report leaks, and encouraging people to use containers for drinking and hand-washing. Teachers also assigned water monitors, to report water misuse. Water is now no longer wasted at the school and students continues to raise awareness within the community about ways to effectively conserve water.

Sub-Saharan Africa

“

Everyone's expectations have changed. I thought punishment was the way to manage behaviour, and that was the students' expectation too. Now I discuss problems with them to solve issues that are preventing them from learning.

”

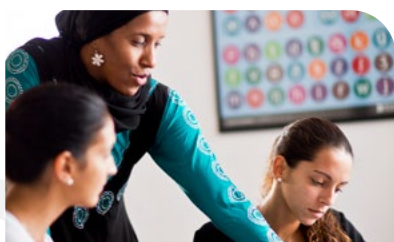
Teacher, Ethiopia

We've supported Ministries of Education across Sub-Saharan Africa to embed core skills in the curriculum, boost inclusion, promote girls' education and strengthen school leadership. We've worked closely with policy makers to design and deliver training to school leaders and teachers, and support new techniques and approaches in schools.



Ghana

We connected the UK Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Girls' Education, the Special Envoy for Gender Equality and the Ghanaian government with 70 educational and community leaders and development partners to discuss new gender-responsive approaches in schools.



Ethiopia

We delivered core skills training to the Department of Curriculum, 800 teachers and 400 school leaders, and developed a TV series with the Ministry of Education on core skills and global issues, watched by an estimated ten million viewers.

Kenya

We supported the Ministry of Education to develop a competency-based curriculum, to quality assure standards in schools and to develop a national framework for the inclusion of gifted and talented learners.



Lesotho

Through the longstanding Wales-Lesotho Link, we provided teacher training and supported collaborative international school partnerships.



Malawi

Our analysis of excluded groups and training on inclusive pedagogies has helped to inform inclusive policy and support the government's National Strategy on Inclusive Education.

Mozambique

We provided teacher training and supported policy makers to drive inclusion and core skills in education.



Nigeria

Our training on blended learning for senior policy makers helped schools respond to the shift to distance learning, in the wake of COVID-19.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Rwanda

We trained 300 'champion teachers', who went on to train 12,000 teachers across the country on how to integrate core skills in primary education.



Sierra Leone

We raised awareness of child trafficking and child labour in schools through a collaboration with the University of Hull, the University of Liverpool and the Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children Affairs.



South Africa

We secured government support and co-funding to deliver core skills training to teachers.



17,916
teachers trained



6,929
leaders trained



1,961
school partnerships



Sudan

After providing core skills and inclusive education training to more than 100 Ministry of Education officials, we agreed the rollout of teacher training across eight states.



Tanzania

We reached 180 teachers, across three regions, with inclusive education training.



Uganda

By training and mentoring national facilitators, we helped to embed core skills across the curriculum.

Zambia

Inspired by the programme, over 75,000 pupils and 4,000 teachers in 90 schools joined our tree-planting initiative, planting more than 2,000 trees in areas most affected by climate change.



Zimbabwe

We helped teachers and school leaders learn new skills during the pandemic, through providing a mix of online and face-to-face training.



“

We are usually told what issues to focus on at school, but the training asked us to identify a problem ourselves, and how to solve it, by reflecting on our role as leaders.

”

School Leader,
Rwanda

“

I have seen improvement with most of my learners. They are able to express themselves and take initiative without being told to. They are able to think outside the box which shows me that they are critical thinkers.

”

Teacher,
South Africa

Inclusive learning in Rwanda

A head teacher in Rwanda used Instructional Leadership training from Connecting Classrooms to engage isolated learners and create a more inclusive, student-centred school environment.

Concerned that her lowest achievers were either arriving late to class or not attending school, head teacher Uwineza Scholastique joined Instructional Leadership training to gain new approaches to address the issue.

By reflecting on her own practice, Uwineza saw how the needs and expectations of low achievers were not being catered for. She pinpointed the problem to the school's appraisal system, which only recognised the best performers, meaning low achievers felt humiliated and isolated simply by finishing last in class.

Inspired by the instructional leadership vision to constantly improve teaching and learning, she set about implementing a new appraisal system that would recognise individual progress, thereby boosting engagement and promoting a more inclusive learning environment.

She encouraged teachers to develop new tests to inspire learners and provide extra support to low achievers, to help raise their expectations. Learners drew up performance contracts setting out future goals, and teachers focused on assessing learner progress. At term end, the best improvers were invited up during assembly to be recognised for their achievements.

Shifting the focus to improvement, over rank, has raised learner expectations and self-confidence. Those who previously felt isolated are now praised for their progress. Instead of being shy and quiet, low achievers are now active participants; they enjoy learning and always arrive on time, which has raised the sense of accomplishment amongst teachers.

Uwineza also now feels more empowered to identify and address issues at school. 'I now understand I have to support everyone under my responsibility to improve and progress,' she says.



Shared learning on global issues

By embarking on a Connected Classrooms Supported Partnership, a teacher in the UK started her school on an inspirational journey, which has engaged multiple year groups and strengthened learners' understanding of global issues.

Wanting to reinforce their learning on the Sustainable Development Goals, Milford-on-Sea Primary School joined a Connecting Classrooms Supported Partnership, which started a fruitful collaboration with Bongoyo Primary School, in Tanzania, that has gone on to engage staff and learners across the school.

Through the Partnership, teacher Lorna Walton received support from Connecting Classrooms advisors and an expert global learning practitioner, which provided the guidance she needed to set up a successful partnership linked to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Both being in coastal locations, the schools decided to focus on plastic pollution. They shared their learning and experiences via videos, photos and emails. When Milford pupils saw a film of their peers in Tanzania collecting rubbish from the beach, they were inspired to carry out their own beach clean, and made marine protection posters to raise awareness among their community.

'Communicating their findings has given the children a real purpose for their learning and ultimately a better understanding of global issues. They understand that both schools, although in very different locations, face very similar issues in terms of climate change and other challenges,' says Lorna.

As well as strengthening their knowledge of the world, continents and oceans – a key curriculum objective for Years 1 and 2 in England – and boosting their literacy learning, pupils have embraced the collaborative nature of the partnership. And as Milford continues to weave the partnership into their work on the Sustainable Development Goals, even more learning areas are being strengthened by the collaboration.

'What began as a project with one year group has expanded to other learners and staff. It's great to see other colleagues joining and taking on different elements as the partnership grows, and we fully intend on maintaining this link for the future,' says Lorna.



The partnership fitted perfectly with our ethos, and has given learners an even wider breadth of knowledge, understanding and empathy surrounding global issues.



Teacher, UK

UK



We can talk to each other about sharing ideas, for example, in India they might have a problem and we might have a problem here, but neither of us can think of a solution. If we can share ideas and give ideas for solutions, with the help of other people we can accomplish great things.



Student, UK

Through training, grant funding, partnership guidance and resources, we've helped schools across the UK embed global learning themes and help students to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world. We've tailored Connecting Classrooms to national priorities, from creating positive pupil-led change in Scotland, to exploring global learning topics and global citizenship in Northern Ireland and Wales, to contributing to a range of curriculum areas, including British values, in England.



England

Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta joined a live classroom link between schools in both countries to raise awareness of the importance of girls' education, during the Global Education Summit in July 2021.



25,759
teachers trained



4,009
school
partnerships

Northern Ireland

Schools across the country have collaborated on global learning topics, including a cluster of ten schools who received a visit from partners from Nepal to collaborate on a project promoting gender equality through digital literacy and coding, culminating in a joint community showcase event.





Wales

We extended our professional learning offer to 150 trainee teachers in Bangor University, who got the chance to participate in global learning courses.



Scotland

Our in-depth training has helped 80 teachers achieve Professional Recognition in Learning for Sustainability from the General Teaching Council for Scotland, whilst a partnership between schools in Peebles and Nepal saw students develop a prototype for a device that reminds you to go outside for fresh air and vitamin D every 90 minutes, as part of the global micro:bit challenge.



Connecting Classrooms
