

Global Schoolroom 2013 Participant Evaluation.

Global Schoolroom (GS) 'seeks to promote the sharing of educational experience between communities worldwide to help eradicate poverty, promote economic development and build sustainable communities.'

The main activity of the organization is the sharing of teacher educational experience and training between Ireland and India ¹. Trained volunteer teachers from Ireland deliver a four week, face-to-face element of the Global Schoolroom Diploma in Teacher Education. For the Irish teachers University College Dublin (UCD) offer an MA qualification built around their mentoring experience. For the Indian participants the course builds over 3 years to a Diploma qualification. A key element of the experience is the exposure and insight gathered by the Irish and Indian teachers of issues which affect both education and the wider global issues which are the focus of Development Education programmes in schools today. (2011 GS evaluation).

As part of its programme monitoring and evaluation process, Global Schoolroom (GS) holds a participant evaluation day in September, following the summer programme delivery visit to India. This focuses on the experiences of the participant Irish teachers in the summer placement programme in a number of centres in NE India. The 2013 evaluation was both an evaluation of the 2013 year experiences but also this was the final year of a 3 year delivery of the diploma course.

*** (Beneficial to have statistics of the number of centres, Irish participants and Indian participants here)PT*

This evaluation followed a similar process to the 2 previous years carried out by Patsy Toland in 2011 and 2012. During the main body of the session only the participants were present. GS staff were available and only engaged as part of the last session.

There were 7 elements to the process:

1. A self-evaluation tree exercise carried out by the participants and retained by them.
2. A needs analysis of the key issues for the participants.
3. An open forum feedback session based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Pyramid.
4. An individual survey of the value of the programme to each individual.
5. A group Diamond Ranking exercise on the value of the programme.
6. A summary S.W.O.T analysis.
7. The last session included an information session by GS staff.

Copies of these elements are included in the appendix.

The evaluation was delayed for about 1 hour as filmed interviews with selected participants were held. This allowed for an extended and very valuable 're-union' and catch-up by the participants over an extended coffee break.

These filmed interviews will be used as part of the wider communication and promotion strategy for GS and the delay was justified by all as worthwhile. It was considered best to film on the evaluation day and not inconvenience participants with further travel or GS with additional expense.

1. Tree evaluation. As this process focuses on the participant it helps each individual articulate their own satisfaction with their experience.

2. Needs analysis.

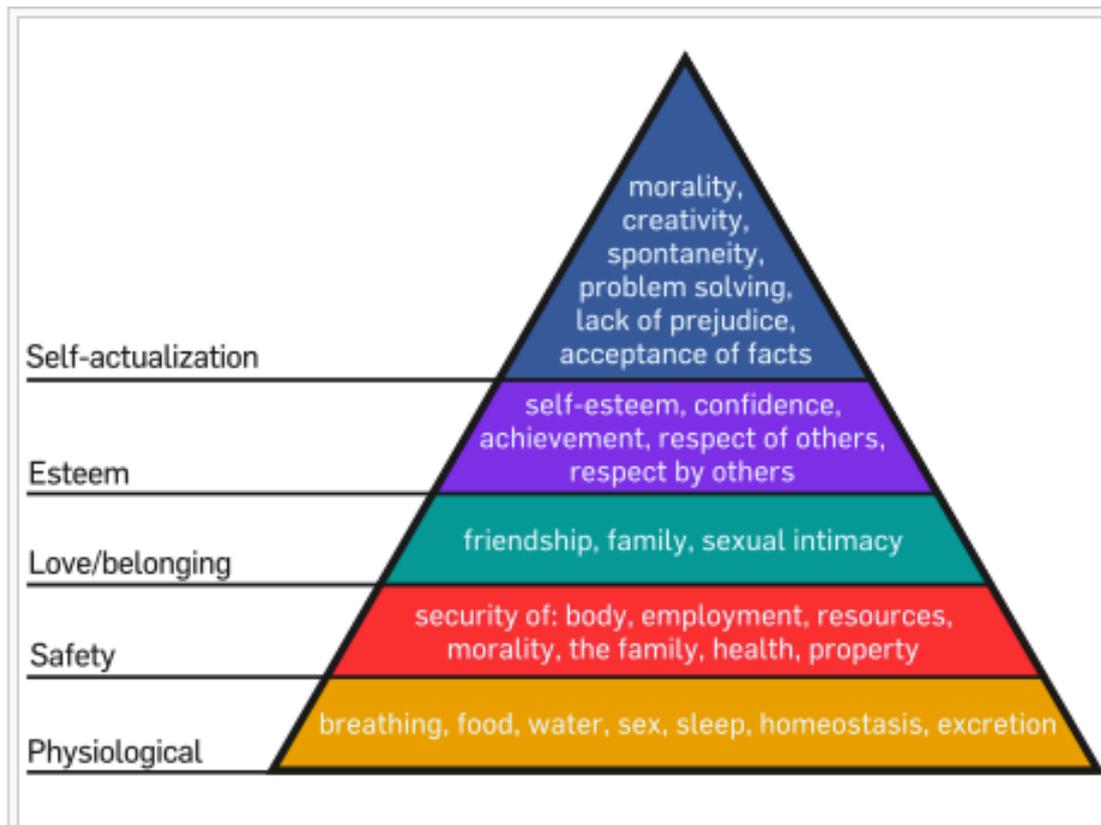
Participants expressed great support for the GS process and welcomed the opportunity to feedback on some negative issues but overall to help improve the course for others.

No one expressed the need to have issues solved on the day or raised issues of any urgency.

There was a general agreement that the preparation training, contact during the time spent in India and follow up phone interviews were essential and dealt with most issues arising. This GS staff process should be continued in future.

3. Maslow Hierarchy Pyramid open forum feedback session.

To help structure the feedback session the participants are focused on increasingly higher levels of need and satisfaction through this hierarchy process.



1. Physiological.

- The need for 4 flights to get to destination caused some annoyance. But balancing that with the need to keep air-flights low was accepted. Some participants did not arrive until late Sunday and had to commence work early Monday – still somewhat dis-orientated from travel.
- An alternative to the very early Dublin departure was also noted.
- As some participants departed early in the course, further planning needs to address this group's travel needs and arrangements.
- It was agreed that the training and preparation did prepare the participants for the limited and basic accommodation available. But one center deserved further attention. The accommodation had no 'common room' for participants, security meant it was locked after 9pm and the work location was quite a distance from the accommodation.
- All noted the need to be prepared for power cuts and especially its impact on work preparation.
- There was a sense of isolation expressed by some and future centres should be located within clusters that might allow for social gatherings between different teams.

2. Safety, Employment, Resources.

Safety.

- There was unanimous agreement that the GS support and planning for safety and security was excellent and appreciated. Constant improvements were highlighted by 2012/2011 participants eg. Issues around driver safety were now well addressed.
- Although no incidents were reported, participants noted the need to emphasise the warning not to travel alone – even in a local context.

Employment

- Training was excellent but needs reviewed if new areas of need arise within the same time frame.
- More weekend sessions were favoured over individual day sessions. Locations to suit regional spread should be investigated and participants thought costs could be kept down by using their schools for training workshops.
- 2nd time participants requested a structure that acknowledged their previous training. Weekends structured around first time and returning teachers.
- Research the possibility of an India – Ireland trip and learning experience for past graduates or local support staff.

Course content

- The course workbook needs review of both content and language.
- A more practical focus eg classroom management, working with large numbers and limited resources, etc. It was felt that the course had too much teaching theory.
- 2 areas of need were highlighted – S.E.N and infant teaching (experiential learning). The latter might even benefit from a new diploma course.
- Provide a balance to the team teaching delivery of the course with some individual instruction on areas of expertise eg. SEN.

Workbook (WB)

- Too academic and theoretical.
- Plain English language needed.
- Language level needs to suit the Indian teacher competency in English.
- Provide a clear glossary?
- Suggest involving graduate Indian teachers in the review process.
- More detailed and standardised assignments needed.
- Needs to acknowledge the very different class environments between Ireland and India – student numbers, lack of resources, management support, etc.
- Standardise the use of the WB across the centres.
- Sequence and logic of some modules needs review.
- Questions need review both in content and language.
- More content needed on S.E.N. and infant learning.

- Workbook and documentation weight proved an issue on internal flights – luggage weight issues. Could this be shipped earlier and in place on arrival?

Teaching Practice

- More training needed in grading and marking – video sample for teaching practice grading?
- 2 TP visits needed but not always possible due to ad hoc closures of schools, transport issues in some centres, etc
- Local dialects can be an issue for some Indian teachers on TP.
- Suggest using local graduate teachers to translate and also promote the relevance of the course to local school management.
- Late entrants to year 3 proved difficult to assimilate.
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3. Friendship and team relations.

- Great sense of working together as a team.
- More weekend training to facilitate better team awareness.
- More leadership training needed as part of course.
- Admin staff need further role or extended responsibility. They reported a low work-load but willingness to do more.
- Need to involve both Irish and Indian past participants more in the training – content and/or delivery.
- Need for clarity in policy of local ‘gifting’. Some participants are uneasy about giving, or the expectancy of giving, money to local management. First there is a need for clarity. Second there is a need to make hosts aware of the policy. Third is the need for a gift suggestion list – exchange of cultural emblems? Lastly there is a need to explain the policy clearly within a ‘them/us’ charity context and for participants to adhere to this.
- Fund-raising in Ireland.
 1. Reduce the amount needed from repeat Irish participants to acknowledge their past contribution and experience.
 2. Some costs are not incurred by repeats eg vaccinations or training workshops directed at beginners.
 3. There is great support for a national fund-raising activity that would help reduce the individual costs for participants.

4. Value, achievement, self-esteem, confidence.

- Unanimous agreement that this is a valuable and worthwhile programme.
- The programme is both welcomed and respected by the Indian participants.
- There is a tangible value to local schools in India.

- There is a need to promote the value and worth of the course more widely – both in India and in Ireland.
- Irish teachers gain by:
 1. *Enriched subject knowledge eg Religion, Geography, cultural awareness.*
 2. *Better awareness of the value of lesson planning in their work.*
 3. *CPD value as experience of team-teaching, self-reflection and co-operative learning – all of which raised personal standards in their own work.*
 4. *Experience of course delivery – focus on methodology, not just content.*
 5. *Opens them to change and new approaches.*
- De-brief and evaluation day activities are both valued and welcome. There is confidence that these processes are valued by GS and are integrated into the development of the programme.

5. Self-actualization, personal growth.

- Participants stated that it was a privilege to be part of the programme.
- The whole process was hard work.
- The experience was very fulfilling.
- All experienced a high degree of personal satisfaction.
- Quotes from participants –

'Best thing I have ever done'

'Fantastic. A privilege to be involved'.

'Sustainable with some input from GS'

'Most beneficial organization I have worked with. Teams were well assembled and I will return.'

4. Individual survey results.

An individual survey of 15 statements about the value and perception of the programme was given to all participants. They had 15mins to complete on an individual basis and the resulting ranking importance is given below, with some joint ranks where scores were equal..

Results

Statement	Rank
Widened my cultural experience.	1
Enriched my partners *experience.	2
Enriched my educational experience.	2
Enlightened me	3
Links were respectful	4
Links were mutually beneficial	4
Two way process	5
Expanded my partners *opportunities	6

Enlightened my partners in India	7
Widened my partners *cultural experience	8
Built a strong local framework	9
Expanded my professional opportunities	10
Sustainable without Global schoolroom	11
One way from Irish to Indian	12
One way from Indian to Irish	13

From these results it is clear that the GS programme offers a significant learning experience for each participant. Offering an opportunity to experience at first hand a different cultural environment, it is also clearly of equal value to Irish and Indian participants as a learning environment. The efforts by GS to instill a sense of mutual learning and equality have succeeded as the process is ranked high in terms of its mutuality and respectful links.

On the other side the traditional 'development' approach of creating a dependency on foreign aid or help has been avoided as the programme is seen as neither one way from the Irish or Indian perspective.

5. Group Diamond ranking activity.

Random groups of 4 /5 were chosen.

11 statements about the value of the experience were given to each group.

Groups were given 15 minutes to 'diamond rank' the top 9 statements to reflect their views.

Groups were told they should discard 2 of the statements as irrelevant.

Agreement was reached within 5 minutes by 2 groups, while the other 3 groups debated right up to the 15 minutes deadline.

Statements:

Diamond Ranking Exercise.

1. An opportunity to see the real India.
2. An opportunity to share my teaching skills.
3. Helping to combat poverty and injustice.
4. Helps to improve my own teaching skills.
6. A chance to bring a developing-world perspective to my own school.

7. A way to experience a different educational system.

8. An opportunity to travel.

9. A way to promote education for all in the world.

10. An opportunity to expand my cultural horizons.

11. An opportunity to be part of a long term project to improve education provision.

Comment,

Results for this depended quite a lot on the interpretation of the statement text eg. Some read 'An opportunity to see the real India' as either 2nd highest or last in the ranking. Discussion on this revealed that some saw this as a travel wish while others saw it as an important opportunity for real cultural exchange and learning.

Some key findings:

A. *An opportunity to be part of a long term project to improve education provision.*

This was the highest ranking choice and was chosen by all 5 groups as the top reason for participating.

B. *'An opportunity to share my teaching skills'* was ranked 2nd by 4 of the 5 groups.

C. 4 out of 5 groups ranked some of the high level aspirations of the programme in 2nd place.

'A way to promote education for all in the World'
'Helping to combat poverty and injustice'

one or both of these was placed in 2nd rank by 4 out of 5 groups.

D. The discarded statements.

'An opportunity to travel' was the most commonly discarded statement. And participants agreed that this could be done in many ways without the commitment or assistance of GS.

On the other side of the scale one group discarded *'A way to promote education for all in the World'*, as they considered this a goal too far from the reality of their work with GS.

6. S.W.O.T analysis.

Strengths/Weaknesses – are seen as elements within the programme.

Opportunities/ Threats – are seen as elements in the wider educational, development and national environment.

This summary exercise looked at the main issues raised during the day as the participants were asked to feed back in an open session, based on the discussions of the whole day.

<i>Strengths</i> GS support Planning and Training Sustainable Programme Team building and cooperation CPD value Self-Fulfilling	<i>Opportunities</i> Alumni National Profile potential National Fund-raising event(s)
<i>Weaknesses</i> Workbook Fund-raising Language Barriers Travel Grading of Teaching Practice Variation in centres	<i>Threats</i> Teacher Union action on voluntary work Economic downturn and Fund-raising

Conclusion.

This report is based on the process of engaging with the teachers and admin staff who were the compliment of participants in the 2013 Summer programme with GS. Further information has been gathered from exit interviews and reports from the participants on the various centres.

The ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation of the GS programme is excellent. Both the internal and external elements are supported by the participants. They see the process as worthwhile both from a personal 'de-briefing' process and also as a way to take ownership of the programme and input for improvement and change.

There is a valuable sense of openness and trust within the process and it is seen as a 'safe space' for comment by all participants. Although GS staff have absented themselves from the body of the evaluation day, participants have always felt confident in having them present if requested.

Recommendations:

1. GS should be proud of the excellent Training & Preparation programme for participants. The process should be shared with other organisations, who facilitate volunteer programmes with a development perspective.

This should continue with reviews of the following:

- Locations to support regional participant travel.
- More weekend events rather than single training days.
- More practical elements on Grading Teaching Practice; Infant teaching skills; S.E.N.; Classroom management.
- Better alignment of Irish and Indian classroom environments.
- Use of video samples for teaching practice advice/grading.

2. GS should review the Workbook as follows:

- Involve Indian partners.
- Review the language level of the book.
- Review the content both in substance and in standardizing tasks, questions and assignments for Indian participants.
- More training with the Workbook for Irish participants.
- Include more lesson planning samples.

3. GS should engage with the participants on the fund-raising issues:

- 2nd time participants.
- National fund-raising events.
- Alumni.
- Local fund-donations policy.

4. GS should investigate the value of the programme with a view to formalizing its value as Continued Professional Development for Irish teachers.

5. GS should investigate the potential for further courses as follows:

- Refresher courses for past graduates.
- Diploma in S.E.N.
- Diploma in Infant (experiential learning) teaching.
- Role of past Indian Graduates as tutors or facilitators on the course, with a possible Irish visit for training workshops.

END.