Global Schoolroom Evaluation.

Participant Irish Teacher Feedback Session 2010.

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This one day session was held with teachers who participated in the summer 2010 programme to India and Uganda. The purpose of this session was to give the participants a space to feedback on the preparation, support, content and delivery of the Global Schoolroom (GS) professional development course for teachers in India (3rd year of the programme) and in the 1st year of the African programme in Uganda. The organisers of the programme were not present (by request from PT) for most of the day but participated in the last session with specific information and feedback requested by the group.

The GS programme has been working in India for 3 years and 2010 saw the complettition of the 3 year professional development course offered to teachers in India. This evaluation hopes to inform GS organisers of how the course might now develop and be enhanced by this 3 year experience. Because the African experience was in its initial year it would not offer the same breadth of feedback, but would prove worthwhile for comparison with the Indian experience and also guidance for extension of the scheme to other cultural and educational systems.

GS have in place, a very comprehensive and transparent programme of evaluation right through the annual process and this would be an excellent example to many more 'mature' programmes on how to carry out on-going organisational learning.
This process consists of :
- written evaluation of all preparation workshop days by participants;
- a team structure while 'in the field' which monitors and supports team members;
- team leader and team member evaluation feedback sheets;
- a 'hot debrief' at the end of the field stay;
- follow up exit interviews with each participant on return home;
- evaluation of the course by the local 'recipient' teachers;
- full day evaluation by the group (the focus of this report).

Because of the comprehensive nature of this process, the participants had already evaluated and participated in the few logistics issues which arose eg. Flight details, accommodation, travel, etc. Most felt these were well dealt with and GS had already implemented changes to improve these where necessary.

The transparency and quality of this process was reflected in the high level of 'ownership' of the programme by the participant teachers. There was a high level of frank and open discussion from the group on all issues raised during the day.

A more global reflection on this 'ownership' was the need expressed by many participants on their role and effectiveness in the wider objective of 'eradication of global poverty'.

There was a clear need for participants to be part of a programme for real change and they expressed their confidence in the GS programme to affect change for the better. Notwithstanding this confidence, many excellent suggestions for development of the programme are expressed below by the group.

The evaluation process included some open discusiion sessions, personal reflection, group ranking and discussion, individual anonymous contributions on a 'post-it' board and a final session with GS staff.

First step:
To allow for the participants needs to be met we began with a brainstorming session on issues that individuals felt needed to be discussed. This was initiated with a summary of the key issues raised by the participants in the earlier evaluation sessions with GS staff. These included:
1. Course content.
2. Grading of partner teachers' course work.
3. Induction process.
4. Adapting the course modules.
5. Place of S.E.N materials.

Issues raised during the initial brainstorming from the group:

An opportunity to unpack the experience
Concerns about the continuity of the programme after the departure of the group.
Participant involvement after the visit – role as advisors?
Course material and module updates *(this issue is dealt with at the end of the evaluation in a section with practical module development suggestions from the participants).*
Langauge levels
Primary v Secondary participants (team make-up)
Team building to start earlier.
Expanding the induction process
Cultural induction information – eg. religion
Role of partner management approach and support for the process.
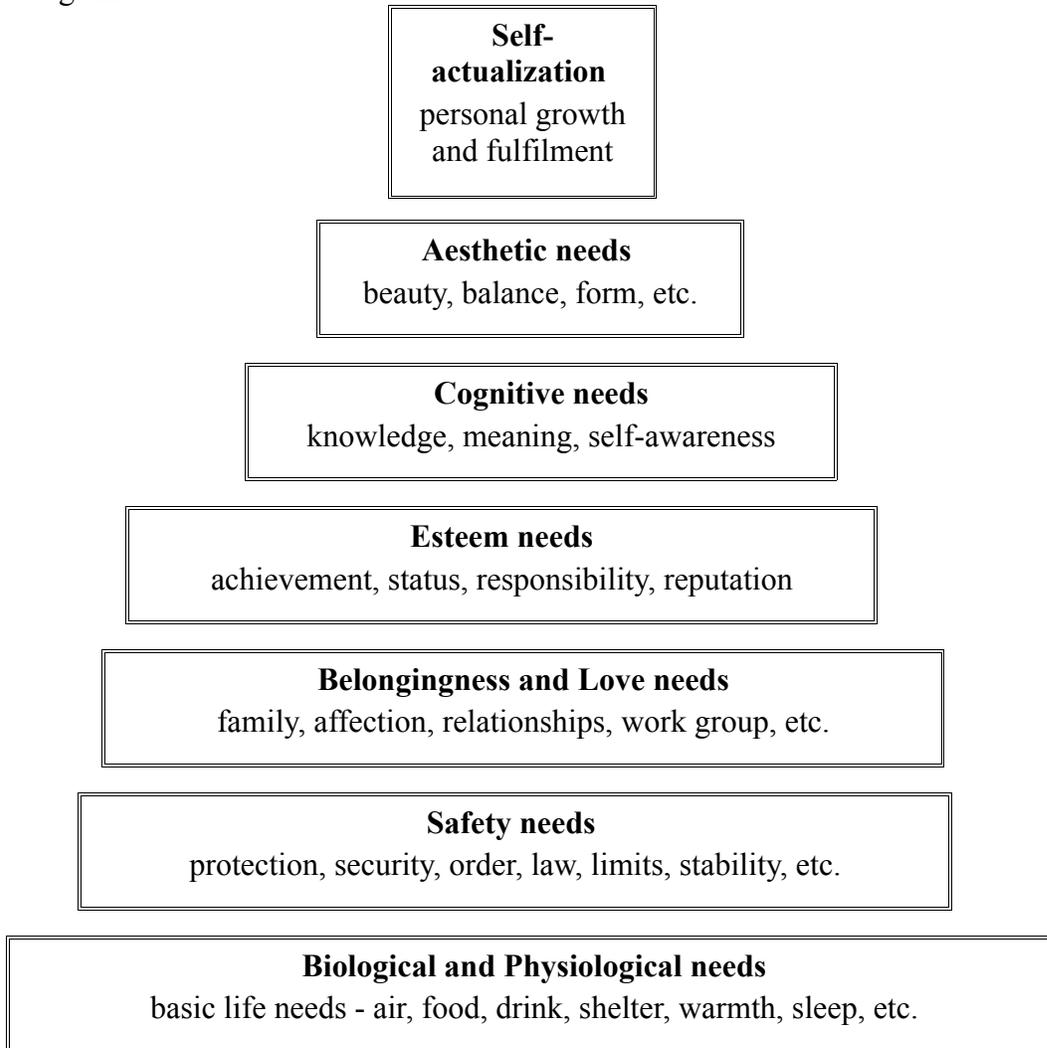Knowledge of school resources and suitability of methodolgies shared.
Geographical locations for Irish training/induction.
Partner teachers expectations.
Participant fund-raising – explained and supported early in the process.
Recruitment of new participant teachers in Ireland – role for experienced participants?

To group these issues I used Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory and the following diagram:

Self-actualization
personal growth
and fulfilment

Aesthetic needs
beauty, balance, form, etc.

Cognitive needs
knowledge, meaning, self-awareness

Esteem needs
achievement, status, responsibility, reputation

Belongingness and Love needs
family, affection, relationships, work group, etc.

Safety needs
protection, security, order, law, limits, stability, etc.

Biological and Physiological needs
basic life needs - air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sleep, etc.

1. <u>Biological and Physical Needs.</u>

It was a tribute to both the GS organisers and to the participants that issues at this level were well prepared and minor adjustments were easily resolved. Only in one Indian location was the need for a private rest space (other than a bedroom) suggested.

Recommendation A: That past participants and GS staff prepare a short booklet on each location or possibly an online forum for new participants.

Recommendation B: Emphasise the need for essential items to be carried as hand luggae

in case of main luggage loss or late arrival.

2. Safety Needs.

The group were unanimous in their praise for GS staff in providing a safe and secure environment and travel plan during the project duration. They felt that both preparations, on-site visits and quick resolution of any issue, major or minor, was friendly and professional. One comment typified the group feeling on this – 'the system is good in any emergency'. This reflects the excellence of the GS planning – not just preparing for the 'known' but also putting in place a strategy for the 'unknown' or 'unexpected'.

On the issue of limits, some of the participants expressed a lack of knowledge about local 'cultural' limits and attitudes. Corporal punishment of students was common in many cases and proved difficult for many to accept. Following a discussion on this the group agreed that this could not be challenged on such a short exposure visit. Rather a system of modelling alternatives and also 'witness and recording' such incidents should be adopted. This should be dealt with as an issue during induction sessions.

The 'yes' culture in the Indian context proved difficult for first time participants and was a source of frustration in getting work completed and also in interacting during rest time. This is a common perception among western visitors to India and might be easily dealt with during the induction process.
Again some directions from experienced participants were suggested and might be included in the 'local' guide as suggested at 1.A above.

Recommendation A: Provide access to a local mobile phone for easy contact with local groups and other staff.

Recommendation B: Emphasise to drivers and passengers the need for safety belt use at all times.

Recommendation C: During induction sessions, provide basic local language phrases for use in emergency situations. There was a clear distinction made between India (with low level of English language communication skills) and Uganda, where English language communication was excellent.

Recommendation D: The induction process should prepare and advise participants on the issue of corporal punishment in schools and their role vis-à-vis this issue. The session on Child Protection should be re-visited in its relevance for these school cultures.

3. Belongingness and working group needs.

This level provided contributions from most of the group on various issues related to

group relationships and team-building. The overall agreement was that team-building should be central from the beginning of the induction processs and if possible teams should be identified early on in the process. Many participants felt that this process only really began during the visit with the need to build a strong team to adapt or solve local issues. The team in Uganda were particularly experienced in this, as local preparation of school and teacher involvement was not in place on arrival. This forced the team to spend much time and effort in putting the necessary steps in progress to launch the programme. The consequence of this was a very cohesive team building process and 'ownership' of the project. This 'problem-solving ' methodology might be incorporated in the team building process.

For all teams the issue of adapting methodologies and course material became a daily need. A consequence of this was regular evening team meetings and sharing of experiences. Although not a scheduled programme event, this activity became a key team event of the programme timetable and built team cohesiveness very successfully. Participants identified: the sharing of knowledge between primary/secondary teachers; individual strengths of team members; pacing; inputs from all; etc as key elements of these evening planning sessions.

Although some participants were at first concerned about the differences between primary and secondary teaching experience, most agreed that teams should be mixed in this aspect. The evening sessions provided the teaching skills 'sharing space' and methodologies from both sectors were exchanged and appreciated. This was also voiced from the S.E.N. perspective both in methodologies and in respect to the course materials.

Local teacher participation and the role of both the diocese and school management was a feature of the working relationships and impacted significantly on the programme. More experienced participants could point to evidence of local empowerment for change and a clear 'bottom-up' culture developing, which was supported by all. Most people expressed some disappoinment in the quality of school management and a wish to influence it for the better. Local power systems were seen to be preventing progress and dis-empowering local teachers. The was a culture of 'fear of the diocese' in the Indian placements and experiences of 'corruption' among local decision makers. The Ugandan experience was blatant in its exposure of one local coordinator and his attempts to extract money from the group members. The need for clear financial guidelines, particulary voluntary donations, was expressed by a number of participants. This was in contrast to the GS financial transparency on the financing of the programme and any issues arising from that were answered on the evaluation day by the financial controller of the programme, who was also a participant.

Teacher selection in India and Uganda also influenced the work programme and professional relationships between facilitator and participant teachers. Participants expressed a view that the ability and interest of participating local teachers was varied. The Ugandan experience seemed to point to a much higher level of entry point within the local teachers and module material had to be adapted 'upwards' by the team members. This pointed to a need for a more stringent selection process for participation on the

course and also for grading of participants course work and participation during the course and also in follow-on assignments. The group had a number of recommendations for implementing this process – from the facilitator induction procees through to course delivery and after.

Recommendation A.
In an effort to establish a high level of participation by local teachers and to reflect the efforts those who work exceptionally hard to attain the necessary 'grade' the following suggestions are made. These developments would need to be reflected in a quality control system during the induction process with 'exemplar' assigmnents, micro-teaching sessions (video), differential assessment between India/Uganda?, etc

i. Attendance records should be part of assessment.
ii. Teaching practice records should be encouraged among local teachers (see iv below).
iii. Both practical and academic assignments should be graded.
iv. Course assessment should be continued after the delivery and the nomination of a 'local coordinator' to supervise further teacher work and assigments would recognise local expertise and also promote long term training needs. This would develop an extension of the programme to a 'train the trainer' level.
v. A scholarship for participants might be established to recognise excellence.
vi. Experienced facilitators willing to act as mentors in the above process.

Recommendation B.
Team building and establishment of 'teams' should occur early and throughout the induction process.

Recommendation C.
Local management 'contract' should be established to encourage their support for the programme – at principal, management and higher levels.

Recommendation D.
Clear guidelines on voluntary and fund-raising activities by the facilitators and the process of transferring this financial aid.

4. Esteem Needs – responsibilty, status, achievement.

There was a universal ownership of the programme and an expressed wish to promote participation by other teachers to become facilitators. This ownership was also reflected in the personal responsibility felt by participants to continue working with their Indian and Ugandan colleagues and improve the overall effectiveness of the project. Most felt they were participating in an important and real 'development' project with high end aims in education for all and ultimately contributing to the eradication of poverty.

A clear view expressed was the need to have clear goals within the project that were not hindered by local social or cultural differences, different perspectives on life, different power structures or the living environment experienced during the process. Many expressed the view that issues which arose outside the competency or aims of the programme often distracted from the essential work – eg. The issue of how to approach the use of corporal punishment. The induction process might address the clear goals of the programme and offer more preparation for exposure to issues that cannot be directly addressed by the facilitators but could be 'modelled' and incorporated into the local teaching practice.

There was a clear wish to acknowledge the work of local teacher participants in the programme and reward excellence in a number of ways (see A iii, iv and v above).
Most participants viewed the programme as a 2 way process with learning happening in both directions. The mutually beneficial nature of the programme were held in high regard by the Irish participants and the process was acknowledged as respectful, enlightening, enriching and a widening cultural experience. One stated wish was for the process to help continuing support for the Indian and Ugandan teachers and a hope that participants would 'not forget' the continuing struggle of their colleagues to deliver education under difficult circumstances.

Responsibilty was clearly seen as a team issue and the value of team effort was a key to successful delivery. This is reflected above in the wish for strengthening the team building process during induction process.

Responsibility for the programme was also reflected in the willingness for most participants to continue working with colleagues after the course delivery visit. Mentoring, promoting, course improvement, sustainability, etc were all issues that participants wished to continue supporting through the programme.

On a wider concern most participants expressed the view that the improvements encouraged and supported by the programme would not self-sustain if the GS programme were to cease activity. Their answer to this was to invest in building a strong local framework that would sustain the professional development of teachers and promote change in a 'bottom-up' strategy.

Recommendation A.
Invest in sustainable local expertise from among the local participants.

Recommendation B.
Reinforce clear goals for the delivery session but acknowledge wider issues that are beyond immediate solutions.

Recommendation C.
Involve experienced facilitators in ongoing support for their Indian and Ugandan

colleagues.

Recommendation D.
Strengthen the team-building process from an early stage in the induction process. This will necessitate nominating team members and having contingency for 'drop-outs' during the induction. On a practical note the group were supportive of weekend induction sessions rather than one-day events. This was both from a practical view that meant fewer weekends given to induction but also was recognised by the group as a chance for more personal relationship building with a team framework.

5. **Cognitive Needs –** knowledge, meaning and self-awareness.

For this area the participants were provided with 2 activities:
   a. An evaluation tree – this was for particpants own use and would reflect their position before the evaluation process and also at the end of the day.
   b. Completition of a survey used in the 2008 evaluation process. This was found to be a very useful guide and might also offer some opportunity for comparison.

The results from b. are summarised below.
12 participants completed this appraisal of 15 questions.
Scores are the number of participants out of 12 selecting that grade/rating.
1 = very little   5 = a lot/significant

Results:

1 . Shared experience or a one way process from Irish to Indian/African.
This question was confusing so is omitted from results!

2. One way from Indian/African to Irish.

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Scores	6	1	2	2	0

3. 2 way process.

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Scores	0	2	0	4	6

4. Enlightened me.

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Scores	0	0	0	5	7

5. Enlightened my partners in India/Africa.

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Scores	0	0	4	5	3

6. Expanded my professional opportunities.

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Scores	1	3	3	3	2

7. Expanded my partners opportunities.

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Scores	0	0	9	0	3

8. Links were respectful.

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Scores	0	2	0	5	5

9. Links were mutually beneficial.

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Scores	0	1	2	5	4

10. Enriched my educational experience.

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Scores	1	0	1	2	8

11. Enriched my partners experience.

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Scores	1	0	1	6	4

12. Widened my cultural experience.

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Scores	0	0	0	4	8

13. Widened my partners cultural experience.

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Scores	0	1	4	3	4

14. Built a strong local framework.

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Scores	1	2	5	4	0

15. Sustainable without GS

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Scores	4	4	2	1	1

This ranking exercise offers much in the analysis of the importance and perception of the programme and would inform a number of areas of research. I have highlighted just a few significant scores:

Questions 2 and 3 indicate a high satisfaction with the 2 way process that is evident in the process and should be highlighted in recruiting further participants and support for the programme. This is reinforced with high reponses in questions 9 and 10.

Question 4 indicates a high level of self development and awareness from participation in the programme.

Question 8 and 9 show that the process was mutually respectful and beneficial – again reinforcing responses to questions 2,3,9,10.

Question 12 points to a high level of personal development in the area of social and cultural understanding.

Question 15 reinforces the doubts of the participants in the sustainable nature of the learning process – unless a strategy of local empowerment and training/mentoring is developed.

Overall, the responses would indicate a significant degree of personal learning and development has taken place during the programme. Learning has been mutually beneficial but there is room for improvement in the process from the local teachers perspective on a level beyond professional development.

Evaluation Tree
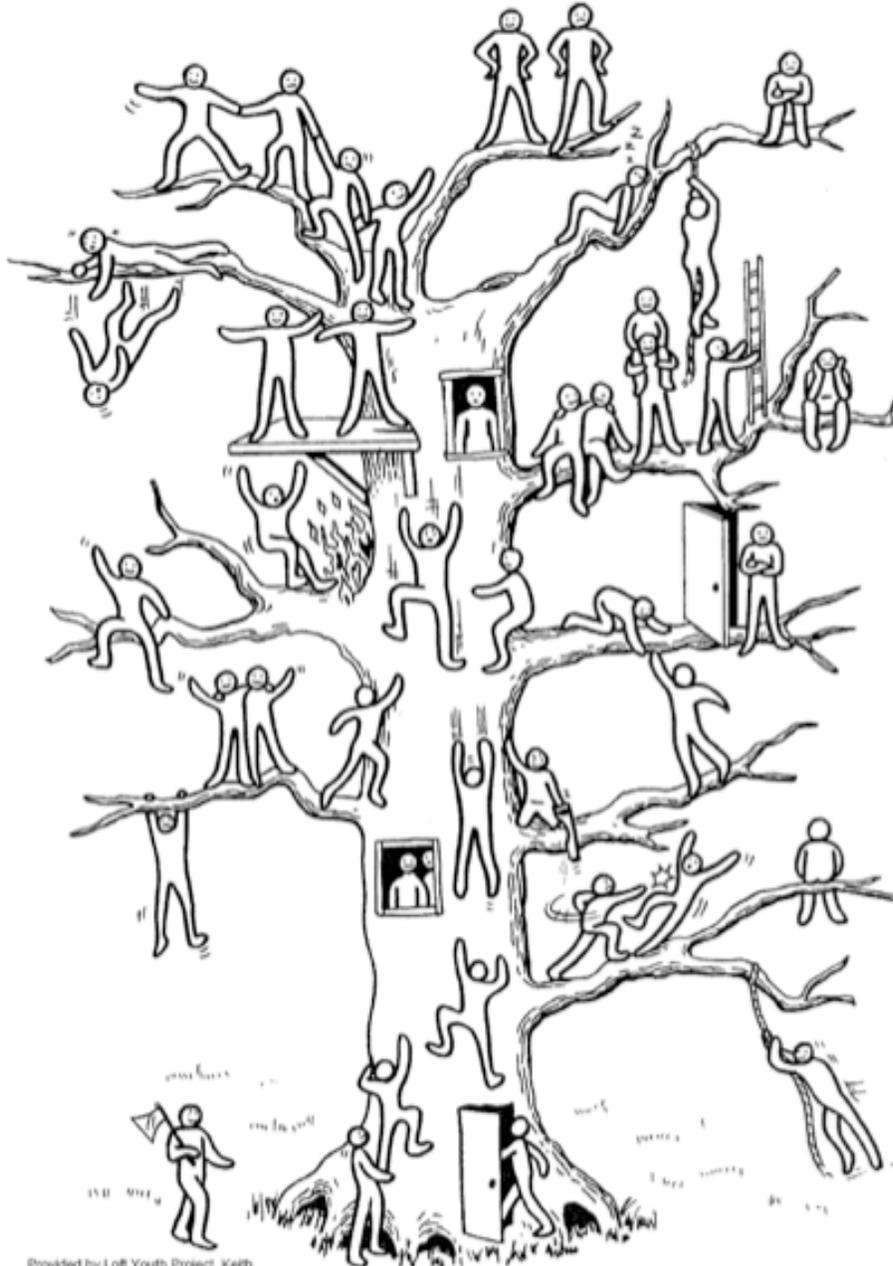
Provided by Loft Youth Project, Keith

6. Aesthetic Needs.

Although not a stated goal of most programmes within the development arena, there is evidence of the personal satisfaction that most participants experienced. This was evidence in the close personal bonds that developed within the teams, the large degree of respect for the Indian and Ugandan teachers in their professionalism under very limiting circumstances and the appreciation and learning that occurred within the cultural exchange during the programme visit.

Recommendation A.
The programme is of great benefit to the participants in an often neglected area of higher level satisfaction and fulfilment. This should be seen as a clear measure for the success programme and incorporated in further evaluations.

7. Self-actualization (personal growth and fulfillment).

As already stated in various areas above, there was a high level of personal development on a number of levels among the participants.
In addition to this views were expressed on:
-   Being part of a process of global change.
-   Enhanced sense empathy for others and a changed view about 'charity'.
-   A better appreciation for the benefits of my lifestyle and education system.
-   More open minded.
-   Re-kindled enthusiasm for the process and importance of education.
-   Realisation of the diversity of our world.
-   Better appreciation for the simple benefits of my life-style.
-   An opportunity to re-evaluate my own life.
-   Appreciation for the value of what I have, even within a recession context.
-   A new view on Poverty and material wealth – an appreciation for values of simplicity, family values, etc

This is a powerful declaration for the benefit to participants in engaging with the process and programme offered by GS. There is often a reluctance to focus on the personal learning by participants in such a programme and the affect that it can have on an inter-cultural and world understanding. It is clear from the above participant statement samples that the personal learning value of this programme is of a high calibre. To embed such high level learning about our diverse world and its communities is a significant benefit to a programme that focuses on the transfer of teaching skills. Clearly this experience can be used in the promotion of the programme to future candidates and points to the value of using the experience of these participants within the GS programme in future.

Recommendation A.
Develop a strategy for involving experienced participants in future promotion of the programme.

Course Material, Delivery and Module updates.

Some key issues came form the open discussion on the content, layout, academic suitability and delivery of the course material. These were then supplemented by an opportunity for individuals to add 'post-it' suggestions on the course material as they arose during the day. Following is a summary of the result of these two processes that would hope to inform any course development. There was a high degree of willingness to participate in this process by the group.

1. Following the completition of the 3 year process in India, GS is now in a position to review the course material in its entirety. Linked to this is the experience of the delivery of Year One of the course in a different country, Uganda.

Grading:
Most participants agreed that a more stringent grading system was needed to reward excellence in the course assignments and teaching practice. Those who do not particpate fully should have that reflected in lower grades – this included attendance, quality of academic work and progress in practice.
Teaching practice and academic course work should have similar grade structure.
A suggested (and supported by voluntary time) strategy is that of continual support by distance learning or local mentor support for the teachers doing the course. This is reflected in the building the local framework for a sustainable programme by training local mentors, supporting and induction/training for local principals and school management, scholarships for exceptional local participants, resource material provision for on-going study and annual support visits by GS staff or volunteer teachers between course delivery visits.
Grading should have a more central place in the induction process and relate to team consistancy and team personnel (continue to use experienced team leaders system).

Transfer of course and language levels:
- The material was not challenging enough for the Ugandan teachers – reflecting a better local teacher training process and also a better command of the English language among the participant local teachers.
- Revisit language levels for Indian teachers; provision of basic language courses during course visits – offered as a drop-in after school hours;
- Revise module content and language with standarised terminology and a 'plain English' version.

Local management training.
Principals and managers play a central role in the motivation and support of their teachers. A leadership/support course should be provided in parallel with the teachers course. This should focus on supporting staff, monitoring teaching practice after the course, record keeping for ongoing assessment and/or a role within continual assessment or grading of teaching practice. This might be encouraged with resource support for the school.

<u>Consistancy of teaching practice.</u>
Teams should spend more time on preparation of the course material during the induction process.
Micro-teaching session during the induction process to establish good practice and grading of teaching practice.
Involve former local teachers who have proved excellent in their professionalism from previous courses (only practical in India).
Involve experienced GS facilitators as part of induction to clarify and advise on issues faced in previous years.
Teaching practice should be graded from the beginning of Year One – this allows for improvement in teaching practice and achievement of higher grades.

<u>Module layout and content.</u>
Mainstream lesson plans in all 3 years.
Review of previous year's work at beginning of each year.
More concrete examples and more examples of good practice.
Review logical sequence of the modules.
Revisit placement of S.E.N. material.

<u>Extension work</u>
Offer tutorial system during the visit.
Provide video examplars for further study by local teachers.
Support local mentoring and resources for further study – reinforcement work.
Provide distance learning support for local mentors.

<u>Induction process</u>
Revisit Child Protection session in light of different culture experienced in both India and Africa.
Revisit session on Linguistics in favour of local language/culture session or teaching English as a foreign language (India).

Conclusion and Recommendations.

The Global Schoolroom programme has been in existance for only 3 years but has developed an excellence in practice and policies that deliver a significant contibution to the eradication of poverty through education for all. The strategic focus on teacher professional development in India and Uganda is well placed in the overall Irish contribution to poverty alleviation and in the arena of short term volunteering. Global Schoolroom should continue its excellent work in this strategic area and look to influence others in both sectors.

Recommendation 1.

Global Schoolroom should share its experience and practice with others in the sector through participation in conferences, seminars and publications. Membership of IDEA, links with the DICE programme, SUAS and Comhlamh would make good beginnings.

Recommendation 2.

A review process of the course material is now timely and GS has the active support of participating Irish teachers to draw on (see suggested areas for course improvement above). One key area should be the grading process and reward for excellence among local participants.

Recommendation 3.

A review of the preparation workshop days should be initiated with emphasis on:
a. Timetabling for weekend events and geographical location.
b. Early team identification and team building activities.
c. Use of experienced participant teachers and more practical best practice advice.

Recommendation 4.

The programme might look to extend into a more sustainable framework by:
a. Supporting local experienced teacher participants as key players.
b. Supporting Irish teacher participants in a support role through distance learning or a similar process.

Recommendation 5.

The programme has created an excellent core of experienced educators who would be of value in the development education sector in Ireland. The programme should investigate opportunities for participants to act as facilitators in their own school communities, teacher subject groups, etc and in the wider volunteering and education sectors. This could help to answer participants' needs to develop themselves as part of a global movement beyond the immediate GS programme process.

End