

## Introduction

WCIA delivers Successful Partnerships professional learning to teachers as part of the [Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning](#) programme funded by British Council and UK Aid. [St James Primary School](#) in Caerphilly have had an active partnership with a school in Lesotho since 2019. A teacher from St James, Serena Bounds, took part in the Successful Partnerships training in 2021.

**"Taking part in the Successful partnerships Level 2 course has re-focused both schools!"**



ST. JAMES TEACHERS SERENA BOUNDS AND BETHAN JONES IN LESOTHO

## Serena Bounds, Key Stage 2 Teacher

I visited Lesotho in March of 2019 supported by [Dolen Cymru](#). This visit achieved everything I hoped it would and so much more. I can now teach with confidence, enthusiasm and answer the questions children ask.

This successful teaching experience was followed up with an even more successful visit from the Principal and a teacher from our partner school a few months later. The children greeted them like celebrities and couldn't wait for them to spend time in their classes.

My school is in one of the most deprived areas in Wales. Many of our children barely leave the estate. They became totally enthused by learning about Lesotho and how similar but different our lives are. Their view became global....

We set up a staff Whatsapp group and kept in touch, sending weekly photographs, updates, news and good wishes. We answered each other questions. We celebrated our brilliant new partnership that was so mutually beneficial!

And then the partnership plateaued. Lockdown didn't help.

Taking part in the Successful partnerships Level 2 course has re-focused both schools! It has helped me see the issues we need to overcome – and crucially, how to overcome them. Evaluating the partnership together shone a light on a few ways in which we need to move forward.

I can see that by raising money for our partner school to have running water, we altered the 'balance' of the partnership. The 'Single Story' TED talk that was part of the course was very helpful here. I have shared it with staff. Our Eco Club is now liaising with their School Council in order for us to learn about being more sustainable and taking care of our environment, something which our partners are far better at than us. Resources I'd never heard of, that steer children away from stereotypes e.g. [Everyday Africa](#) and [Dollar Street](#) have now been disseminated to staff.

Both schools can see that we need to put the onus on the pupils now. We need to share pupils' work and learning resources. Due to ideas discussed in breakout rooms on the course, I have been able to take a list of ideas to improve communications to SLT. Some of them e.g. using SeeSaw would enable the children to share work independently and have staff in Lesotho comment on it – and hopefully vice-versa....

I feel that I will return to the content of the course throughout the year. I will use the resources with staff. I will use the evaluation tools again to consider progress towards our action plan. I will seek advice and support from WCIA and my fellow course participants. Before the course, I had never used Zoom before and never even heard of a Padlet. Literally and figuratively – I've travelled a long way!!

