



Case Study: The Red Maids' School, Bristol - UWS Partnership



Red Maids' has been partnered with Jong village school in Ratanakiri district since February 2011. A highly engaged group of teaching staff ensure the partnership has become embedded in the school's ethos and in teaching & learning. The partnership is sustained through a student lead committee, coordinating fundraising. The school has raised over £8,000, and commits to £2,000 a year to help maintain the school.

The partnership with Red Maids' is bespoke and based on the principles of school engagement, linking with the curriculum and creating developmental opportunities for all.

Engagement:

- *Local Community:* Partnership activities are largely student led, with Year 12s coordinating the UWS committee. For example, over 100 staff and students running for UWS in the Bristol 10km race promoted awareness of both Red Maids' School and UWS in local media.
- *Students:* Participation in the Cambodia committee builds links between year groups, and further the connections with Jong. Students' roles within the partnership develop over time as they take on more responsibility, delivering a clear and lasting impact.
- *Alumni:* Alumni feel proud of their service and work; personally they have built a base of transferrable real world skills. Visiting and working in the school they helped build on their UWS expeditions offers a depth of learning and experience difficult to find on a typical gap year programme. Such investment in students builds life-long links and in turn makes for an engaged alumni with active connections to Red Maids' through UWS.

"The UWS philosophy is fundamentally and intrinsically reciprocal; and therefore not a mere donor relationship."

**Jon Cooper, Red Maids' School
UWS Partnership Coordinator.**



Curriculum Links:

- Curriculum links are one of the most valuable partnership areas for Red Maids', who offer International Baccalaureate (IB). The UWS partnership is fully embedded within the school curriculum, as it fulfils all IB Creativity, Action, Service (CAS) curriculum requirements and lends itself well to the skills taught in Theory of Knowledge (ToK) lessons. Because of this focus, students are choosing to write their Extended Essay on issues relevant to the country.

SAMPLE EXTENDED ESSAY QUESTIONS:

'Was the Vietnam war the main reason for the rise of the Khmer Rouge?'

'What are the key medical and development issues faced by rural communities of the Mekong Delta?'



- Linking the CAS programme to the partnership provides real learning outcomes, giving students a sense of autonomy and ownership over their learning. Students have been keen to plan lessons and engage in thinking skills, seeing a tangible outcome from their work.
- Expeditions to Jong mean that students have a vested interest in the school, which becomes embedded in their learning. Students on the expedition benefit further in terms of UCAS applications, personal statements and improved life skills.



Professional Development:

- The partnership has proved useful for staff members as part of their on-going CPD and developing leadership opportunities. Visiting Jong School, as Jon Cooper explains, “teaches you what learning really is”, and is invaluable in terms of pedagogical thought and informing teaching & learning.
- The reciprocal nature of the partnership means that teachers will have opportunities to represent views to the board on the running of projects as well as to their wider communities.

Red Maids’ and UWS – Future Developments:

- Curriculum links with other UK partner schools, sharing resources
- Student links and exchanges with schools both domestically and internationally
- Curriculum-based UWS project work offered as Extended Project qualification or Service qualification

“We think it is brilliant to be a pilot, and partner school. It is this sort of activity that makes the school stand out. I feel like I am making a difference!”

Laura M, Year 12 pupil

Jon Cooper’s Top Tips:

- Make sure pupils are made aware of the project early on so they can take ownership of ensuing activities. Red Maids’ used whole school assemblies and hosted a Global Engage Day.
- Make one staff member the ‘face’ of the partnership to push it through the first months.
- Avoid fundraising fatigue: schedule an annual big event (a Strictly Come Dancing night, for example) - but also encourage lots of different methods of fundraising (challenge every student to raise £10). Small is also beautiful! Make sure donors get something in return; a spectacle or a service...
- Engagement will snowball: a student who raises £5 in their first year could have planned lessons, been on an expedition, written an extended essay and run numerous extra-curricular activities, having significant personal impact by the time they reach 6th form.