



WWF SCHOOLS' CASE STUDIES SERIES

Working towards Education for Sustainable Development

### Local and global dimensions

This case study looks at how adding a global dimension can help pupils to develop informed attitudes. It demonstrates how teachers can encourage and support pupils in this process – in this case through related active research, reflection and action based on finding the similarities and differences of water use between Shetland and Burkino Faso. By reading on, you will discover ways of implementing a project that is cross-curricular and meaningful for teachers, and children – both in terms of learning and other benefits. The outcomes highlighted on page 8 make the link with those listed in the introductory booklet to these case studies –

**“Working towards Education for Sustainable Development”.**

# Ways forward in developing informed attitudes



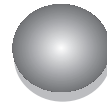
**Involving us all in an exciting afternoon of dancing and drumming**

Saaba, a dance group from West Central Africa, visited Lunnasting Primary School in Shetland and involved us all in an exciting afternoon of dancing and drumming. The children’s response was one of great enthusiasm and interest.

*“What do you think of Shetland?” Pupil*

*“...it is very much like Burkina Faso, only our country is a dry desert and yours is a wet desert.” Saaba member, from Burkino Faso*

*“...at times it takes someone with a more detached, fresh and unprejudiced view to open our eyes. I had such an eye-opener this summer when Saaba came...” Shetland resident*



With such a stimulus, we decided to set up a project that would allow the children to explore the similarities and differences between their community – Vidlin, on Shetland, and villages in Saaba's home country – Burkino Faso. Because the school was already interested in the Bright Sparks Award Scheme (see 'Background' on page 11), and its theme 'People and Water', we decided to take two core themes – water and Africa – to provide a focus for this comparison. The highly creative beginning was a strong stimulus to the enthusiasm and hard work that followed.

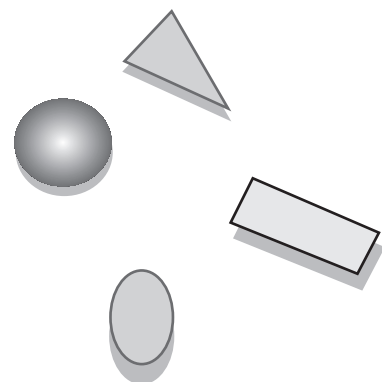
"When Saaba came along it was decided that this was an experience not to be ignored."

*Teacher*

### **Who are Saaba?**

**In Africa, dance as well as music accompanies all community celebrations and ceremonies. They are not considered as performing activities for only a few to take part in, but present forms of communication used by all in their community. Saaba, who speak French as well as their native 'le Moore', are extremely experienced in running short workshops for primary and secondary schools as well as community groups; introducing participants to both African percussion and dance.**

The class group mainly involved in the project was a composite P4-7 (8-12 year olds). As head teacher and class teacher, I was keen that the project plan developed with a clear set of outcomes in mind, making it easier to remain focused and to evaluate progress. Although particularly relating to attainment outcomes in the 5-14 Environmental Studies curriculum guidelines (see 'Background' on page 11), I also wanted to achieve a balance of cross-curricular outcomes. Saaba's dancing and music – the initial stimulus – with their formal place in Expressive Arts, demonstrate perfectly how learning has to be connected, particularly when involved in developing informed attitudes and learning to live in more sustainable ways.



### What's going on here?

Through a variety of activities the children see how the world is changing, and that these changes, particularly in respect to water, are often the result of human decisions. They witness first hand what it is like to be without water. This gives the children a direct insight into the way others have to live their lives. The children are moved by their experiences and are sufficiently motivated to want to try to help. In particular, involvement in the project encourages the children to see the connections, similarities and differences between the issue of water locally and globally in the wider world of Africa.

The experiences encountered during the project contributed to the children's personal and social development. They were encouraged throughout to gather information from many different sources, to critically reflect on it all, and to react personally, by providing solutions: for example, suggestions for ways of making improvements to the water supply, both at home and in Africa. The children also worked in different groups and partnerships to encourage discussion. There were children with different learning difficulties in the class: they had few writing skills but they contributed many excellent ideas and practical solutions.


Most useful of all were the opportunities taken, and connections made, with others outside the school – both near and far. There were new learning experiences from which both children and teachers could benefit, and others were influenced by the enthusiasm in the school and what was being achieved – helping some to see how they could make a difference too.

These and other activities the children undertook, helped to influence their attitudes, as they became more experienced and better informed.

"One boy with dyslexic problems wrote an excellent booklet in which he took great pride."

*Head teacher*

"This has been a project where I could easily observe the development of children's attitudes" *Head teacher*



Here are some of the outcomes we were looking to achieve, and ways in which we met them:

**An inclusive process, dependent on active participation**

- encouraging the children to take an active part in all aspects of the project – decision-making, activities, visits, making new contacts
- taking part in further dance/music and drama following Saaba, with the music teacher and a Dancer in Residence
- creating animal masks, African tie-dye and patterned materials
- designing and carrying out water experiments
- visiting a water treatment plant.

**Involvement of the pupils in decision-making process**

- encouraging the children in taking decisions and implementing their ideas
- a role play exercise, solving the problem of how to deal with a cut in water supply
- investigating the illness caused by guinea worm and researching solutions to this problem disease
- carrying out science experiments that are organised in a way which allows the children to decide their own design strategies.

"We discussed what we would do about problems and what decisions we would make. Sometimes it was difficult to decide." *Lunnasting pupil*

"We all wrote a small book about how we would handle things if we had to get a supply of water from the police station." *Extract from Lunnasting pupil's letter to Princess Anne (President, Save the Children Fund)*



**Understanding the science and using design to make water filters – problem solving**



### Building on local connections at home

- collecting data on water use in our own homes, enabling graphs to be drawn using 'real' figures
- comparing a day in the life of our mums in Shetland with that of mums in Burkino Faso
- visiting local sites and inviting local people and parents to visit and talk.

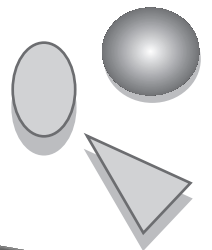
### Building on global connections with Africa (and Europe)

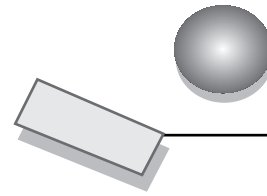
- setting up a website for the school for promoting and exchanging information
- reading newspapers for information on Africa and problems caused by too much/little water
- constructing a new World Map in the playground, seeing how big Africa is and where it is in relation to other places
- making contacts with international organisations concerned with people and water, and Africa – UNICEF, Oxfam, WWF, Water Aid, Plan International UK
- joining the EU Comenius Project through the Internet, making contact with French, Italian and German schools. (This was an opportunity occurred after the project started when the school was contacted by a French school asking them to join their project on a water theme. This led to the Lunnasting project moving in different but connected directions, and widening the teachers' experience.)

"We did our dance about Africa at the Garrison Theatre. Lots of people were watching. We learned a lot about Africa and Burkino Faso. We had a water day with games and stalls and soaking the teachers. We raised £85 for Water Aid."

*Lunnasting pupil*

**Children from Abbeyhill Primary School in Edinburgh exploring our website on launch day. They sent us back comments and questions.**





### **Increasing involvement with the broader community**

- developing an expressive arts performance for the local community on our Bright Sparks project
- organising and taking part in a Water Aid Day to raise funds for improving water supplies in developing countries
- involving the Shetland Field Studies Trust in our outdoor learning activities
- writing letters to spread the word of what is being achieved
- learning how to use resources provided by outside organisations.

"The children's comments, in the form of giant water droplets, give an indication of the varied learning outcomes and a wide understanding of the subject." *Head teacher*

### **Everything coming together – promoting the principles of Education for Sustainable Development**

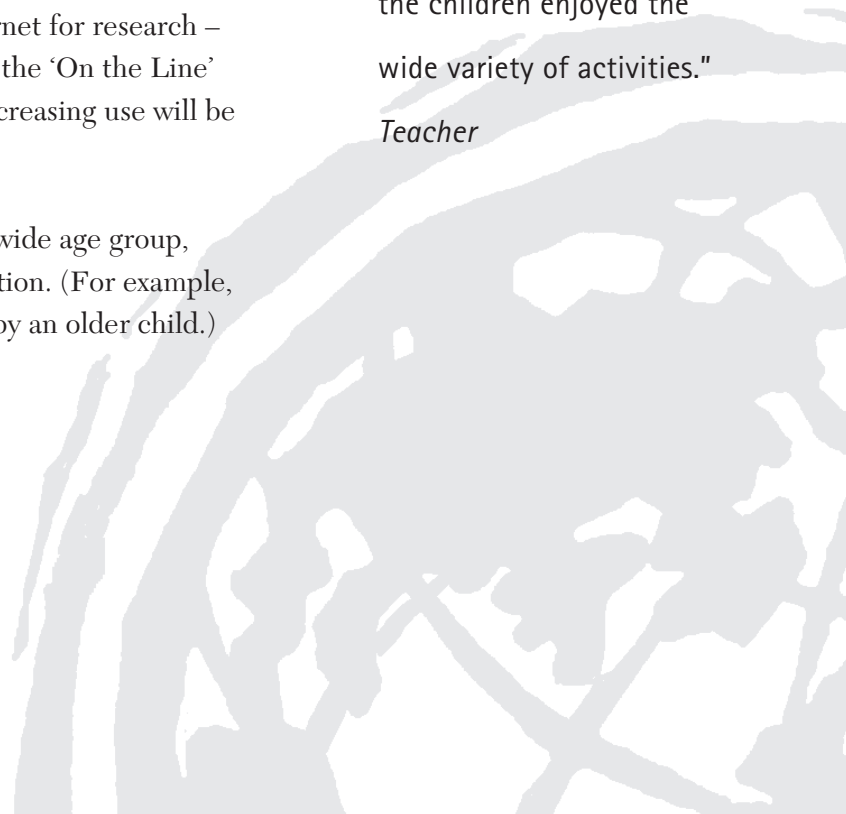
The combination of a well structured, cross-curricular project, and the high level of enthusiasm of everyone involved, resulted in a significant level of active learning through participation and many positive outcomes.

Some outcomes that have not been illustrated already follow below:

- the whole school approach which raised our staff's awareness of sustainability issues; for example, when the whole school was involved in finding out how much water we use in our homes
- the school learning how to make use of the Internet for research – Burkino Faso is one of the countries featured in the 'On the Line' project (see 'Valuable resources' on page 12). Increasing use will be made of the Internet in the future
- the children learning well together, even with a wide age group, as there were many opportunities for differentiation. (For example, a mixed age brainstorming group would be led by an older child.)

"The practical work seemed to give the best results - active learning - the children enjoyed the wide variety of activities."

*Teacher*

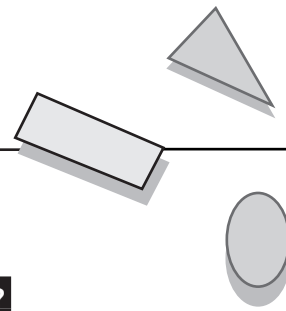
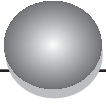




The Water Aid Day was the climax of the project

- the children learning about taking responsibility through organising and following through the Water Aid Day, and developing the local community's Bright Sparks evening and presentation (and thereby feeling they have achieved some positive action to help)
- the children learning that answers to problems are not always high tech ones. Even in this country, there are water shortages and people should be more aware of not wasting water
- the teachers and children benefiting from links to European schools through the Comenius connection, including exchange of ideas, reassurance that schools in different countries have much in common and direct use of foreign languages
- members of the wider local community becoming more aware of what the school was doing, through press reports and attending the school events – learning a lot about the project and sustainability issues.

"Doing a project with partners or schools in another country made us realise that this theme is of interest and concern to children everywhere." *Head teacher*



## **What's this got to do with Education for Sustainable Development?**

Some important learning outcomes achieved and built on throughout the project:

### **Knowledge and understanding**

- how natural processes work and the important role water plays in supporting plant and animal (including human) life
- how important cultural traditions as well as modern science and technology are in everyday life and people's survival
- how the processes of decision-making work and how to take part in them
- how there are interconnections and dependencies – how our own lives and actions connect with those of others – locally, nationally and globally; past, present and future
- how in meeting our different needs and desires, there is a balance to be made between social, economic and environmental impacts.

### **Skills**

- information gathering and critical thinking; an ability to argue effectively
- working co-operatively and negotiating
- problem solving and informed decision-making
- practical, survival skills
- creative, expressive skills
- creative skills in thinking and believing in alternative solutions.

### **Values and attitudes**

- a desire to participate
- a sense of identity and self-esteem
- a belief that in working with others, people can make a difference
- a belief in a positive future
- a commitment to the well-being of all living things
- a commitment to social justice and equity
- empathy and awareness of the points of view of others.

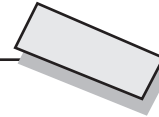
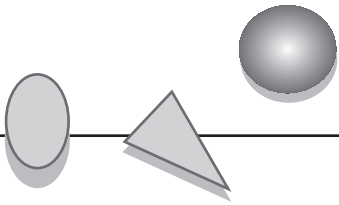
## Moving on

The teachers at Lunnasting have now written this highly successful, cross-curricular project into the four year cycle school project plan.

The initial stimulus provided by Saaba was invaluable. However, we feel that the topic could be easily attempted without it. It could also be easily transferred to a different topic, like forests, fuel, food or energy.

Although this was a completely new project for the school, it was thoroughly enjoyed by all. It covered so many aspects of the 5-14 curriculum that it fulfilled (as would be the case for the National Curriculum) a wide range and large number of the attainment outcomes. We feel that very little of the project will need to be changed in the future, except it might be easier to focus on another area of Africa, on which information would be more readily available.

"We feel that a great deal of the curriculum was covered, particularly Science which is not always easy to build into a project. Also, having very clear outcomes in mind led to a good response from children. We assessed the children's learning and our outcome objectives for the project throughout its development, and evaluated it overall as being very successful." *Head teacher*



## Tips for success

- Actively encourage the children to be involved in the project planning, make decisions and implement their ideas.
- Involve the children in all aspects of the project.
- Make the most of outside help including training and resources provided by other organisations.
- Undertake ongoing and end of project assessment to see if the learning outcomes within the project plan have been achieved; have very clear outcomes in mind. This leads to a good response from the children.
- Inform the parents about the project early on. Let them know how their involvement will assist their children and the project.



## The School and its project

Lunnasting Primary School is situated in north east Shetland. A two teacher rural primary school, it has 24 pupils. Their Bright Sparks 'People and Water' project was awarded Highly Commended status. Although mostly involving the school's P4-7 composite class, the whole school became involved in some aspect or another of the project. The School Board (equivalent of school governors) and parents, were kept informed at all stages, as well as being prepared to help fund-raise. In addition to this award, Lunnasting was the first school in Scotland to be awarded the Eco-Schools Flag award (see 'Valuable resources' on page 12), and has received its third Eco flag acknowledging six years of involvement and meeting the standards required.

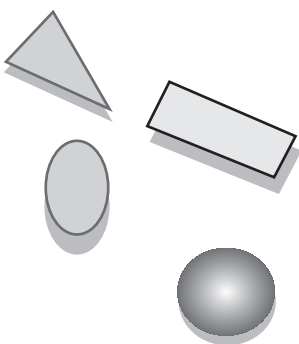
This case study aims to share some insights into how a small remote and rural primary school has taken up the challenge of Education for Sustainable Development – providing real world experience and relevance through a cross-curricular and whole school approach. It hopes to stimulate others to take these or other ideas forward.

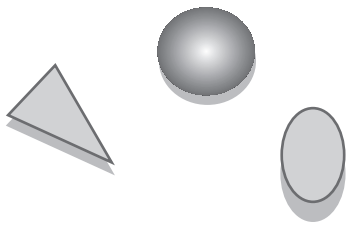
*For further information about this project, contact Norma Smith, Head Teacher, Lunnasting Primary School at [www.lunnasting.shetland.sch.uk](http://www.lunnasting.shetland.sch.uk)*

## Background

This case study is one of a series published by WWF-UK. Each one describes aspects of work undertaken by schools across the UK, whilst involved in WWF professional and curriculum development programmes.

In Scotland, support was provided through the Bright Sparks Award Scheme – managed by WWF Scotland and sponsored by Scottish Hydro-Electric – between 1996 and 2000. The scheme focused on the 5-14 Environmental Studies national guidelines (for those outwith Scotland, this is the curriculum context for teaching Science, Social Subjects and Technology) which provide an opportunity for integrating the principles of Education for Sustainable Development. In particular, the scheme aimed to stimulate good policy and practice demonstrating ways to integrate the 'Developing Informed Attitudes' strand within the guidelines. This is one way in which WWF helps develop ideas for new teaching and learning approaches – equipping students for thinking about and acting in ways supporting the goals of sustainable development.





### Further information

For copies of this and other Bright Sparks case studies, or for information on current initiatives for Scottish schools, please contact: WWF Scotland, 8 The Square, Aberfeldy, Perthshire PH15 2DD.

For information on the full range of titles within the WWF Schools Case Studies series, please contact: WWF-UK, Panda House, Weyside Park, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1XR.

### Valuable resources

**Material from Water Aid UK's** specialist development charity working to help people in developing countries with improved water supply and sanitation. For more information please go to [www.oneworld.org/wateraid](http://www.oneworld.org/wateraid).

**North of Scotland Water Authority** *Water Box*. Contact Customer Services by telephoning 0345 437437

**EU Comenius Project European teachers support programme.** Encourages projects developed between schools in different European countries. For more information please go to [www.britishcouncil.org.uk/cbeve/socratese](http://www.britishcouncil.org.uk/cbeve/socratese). Contact address for Scotland: Comenius Action 1, The Central Bureau, 3 Bruntsfield Crescent, Edinburgh EH10 4HD tel 0131 447 8024

**European Eco-school Project.** This programme covers schools across Europe, providing environmental education and management. An Award scheme in the UK provides the Green Flag eco-label to successful schools: a whole school approach involving full student participation. An ideal way to implement Local Agenda 21 in the school environment. For more information please go to: [www.eco-schools.org](http://www.eco-schools.org)

**Scottish Development Education Centre (SDEC).** For the purchase or loan of teaching and teacher training materials with a global perspective. Contact address: 34-36 Rose Street North Lane, Edinburgh EH2 2NP tel 0131 225 7617

**On the Line** – A millennium education project founded by Oxfam, WWF and Channel Four, looking at the people, cultures and environments of eight countries along the Greenwich meridian (which passes through Burkino Faso). For more information please go to: [www.ontheline.org.uk](http://www.ontheline.org.uk). Complementary resources are also available direct from WWF-UK.

### Acknowledgements

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