

From the 'portraitEMB' project...

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF COMMUNITY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS



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AUTHOR NOTE

The creation of this toolkit has been a process of deep reflection and learning. It has involved the exploration of community-school partnerships as a nuanced and complex framework, capable of tapping into community memory for the purposes of teaching Empire, migration, and belonging (EMB) topics. We found that community memory is an important tool for student engagement with sensitive topics, providing them the opportunity to see themselves reflected in their histories.

However, I must emphasise that this toolkit is just a start. For many of our participants, the foundations for this work to be possible are not in place. In many educational settings, there is still work to be done to fully recognise communities as equal stakeholders.

To a certain extent, this was a re-imagining activity – imagining what could be possible. Of course, I do believe that meaningful community-school partnerships are possible, and this toolkit has attempted to demonstrate that with rigorous and substantive research.

This work takes place within a wider historic and systemic struggle. The objective of this toolkit is not to diminish that reality, but to encourage educators and communities to explore new possibilities together.

Lastly, a note on the toolkit design. The hand-drawn titles, graphics, and tables are my own handiwork, and I've implemented them in an attempt to visually demonstrate the imperfect, personal, and human process necessary for this kind of work. It can be messy, with bumps and mistakes, however, the point is to learn and grow.

- Holly

INTRODUCTION

This toolkit is a guide, for both teachers and community organisers who are interested in establishing a community-school partnership for the teaching of Empire, migration, and belonging (EMB) related topics. The purposes of this toolkit are threefold:

- ① To highlight the **importance of partnerships** for the teaching of curriculum sensitive topics, such as EMB
- ② To advise both community organisers and teachers on '**good practice**' for the establishment of partnerships
- ③ To demonstrate how the **presence of communities** and their histories in the teaching and learning of EMB topics can have **positive effects** on students' sense of self and identity, and reduce the chances of any **unintended harm** (from either the curriculum content or from the delivery of said content)

Local communities have been largely undermined and underestimated as curators and collaborators in knowledge production and distribution. Traditionally, partnerships between community groups with educational institutions, such as schools, universities, and the heritage sector, have been fraught, often reproducing unjust hierarchies present in wider society. It is possible to undertake this type of collaborative work in a **meaningful and mutually beneficial way**.

Using original qualitative data and established theoretical frameworks, this toolkit will demonstrate the possible ways to do this; by no means is this a 'one size fits all' approach, not every community and student body is the same.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP?

A community-school partnership is a **collaborative endeavour** established by a community grounded organiser/organisation and a local teacher/school. These partnerships can take many forms, with a shared objective of providing **a more representative and proactive** learning experience for students.

This is normally done through a **storytelling activity**, which will engage with local narratives, provide a platform for local voices, and facilitate open and candid discussions. These activities can involve bringing the community into the classroom or bringing the class into the community, delivering learning that teachers may not be equipped to handle alone. Examples of partnership activities include community-led diversity/culture day sessions, specialist assemblies, performance-based workshops, and much more.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY HISTORY?

At its essence, community history is the learning & teaching of histories that **engage with marginalised experiences**, experiences which exist outside of our dominant historical understandings. It centres '**ordinary people**', as both the subjects and practitioners of history.

Community groups and organisers have been the practitioners of local histories long before the establishment of the National Curriculum, through supplementary education programmes, grassroots organisations, cultural festivals and celebrations.

Developed as part of the 'portraitEMB' project (www.portraitemb.co.uk), the findings of the toolkit are based on several research activities. The following pages provide an overview of the research undertaken to achieve the findings of the toolkit.

SCHOLARY APPROACHES

The foundation of this research is rooted in a range of different scholarly work, which look at coproduction, community engagement, local histories, and research collaborations. This work will be cited throughout and included in the reference list (see end of toolkit).

U.K. WIDE INITIATIVES

Before undertaking our own fieldwork, it was important for us to understand the kinds of initiatives that have already taken place across the United Kingdom.

Wales and **Scotland** have already implemented successful policies that call upon communities for their contributions to knowledge production and wider engagement in schools.



In 2022, Wales introduced the '**Community Focused Schools**' initiative, which has acknowledged the importance of the community in providing students with a more inclusive and representative learning environment, as well as providing teachers with the support and agency to do so.

In 2011, the **Christie Commission** was launched in Scotland, which found that community engagement in educational spaces makes "a real difference and can provide positive models for the future". This Commission has informed 2017 **Delivery Plan for Excellence and Equity**, which has sought to close the attainment gap in Scottish education, ensuring they deliver a "curriculum that delivers, and empowers, teachers, schools, and communities". There is an absence of this research and policy implementation taking place in England, which must change.



COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

In March 2024, the project hosted a community-based workshop in **Coventry** facilitated by community organiser, Sherril Donaldson from the local community group, **the ArawaK Community Trust (ACT)**. The purpose of the workshop was to connect with community organisers and figures, who operate in a **multi-cultural & multi-racial** English city, to explore whether the involvement of the local community in schools, through meaningful and sustainable partnerships, would result in a more effective teaching of EMB topics.

The community consultants shared **mixed views** around the viability of such partnerships, questioning whether the **rigid educational structures** & foundations would even allow for meaningful and sustainable partnerships. They shared **concerns** around the inaccessibility of assessment types, a lack of cultural awareness in schools, a lack of resources, such as time and money, as well as concerns around the long history of distrust, unrecognition, and underappreciation felt by communities at the hands of traditional educational institutions. Our main takeaway from this workshop was to **better understand** how partnerships are already forming and taking place in schools across England, to uncover how they engage with these logistical barriers and build trusting relationships.

NATIONAL SURVEY

From July to November 2024, we surveyed a sample of teachers and community organisers who have experience in establishing and sustaining community-school partnerships. **Ten partnerships** were covered from which we were able to establish threads of commonality, which address the benefits of partnerships and the barriers to accessing these collaborations. These partnerships all engaged with a wide range of activities, from the exploration of Black history and culture to creative projects about climate justice, to the integration of Culture/Diversity days into the school calendar. The recommendations made throughout this toolkit have been greatly informed by this survey data.

CASE STUDY

Shamim Azad, professional storyteller and poet, and **Ruth Marx**, CPSHE lead at a London secondary school, have kindly consented for the story of their partnership to be adapted as a **case study**.

The purpose of this is to provide advice and greater insight for both community organisers and teachers, to better understand the realities of establishing a community-school partnership, detailing some of the challenges (and their solutions), the level of student impact, and the motivations behind undertaking this type of work.

We hope you find this toolkit useful, and if you have been successful in establishing a partnership, please get in touch with us and share your story!

portaitEMB@ucl.ac.uk

BENEFITS OF ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIPS

All survey respondents mentioned **benefits of community-school partnerships** for the teaching of EMB, and this section is dedicated to the discussion of partnership benefits, focusing on 4 key areas.

CHALLENGING DOMINANT NARRATIVES



The curriculum embraces **balance sheet culture**, the idea that there are equally weighted positives and negatives to Empire, making it **somewhat justifiable**. Furthermore, when these topics are covered in the curriculum, it tends to be very **surface level**.

Ingrid, an ex-headteacher, argued that partnerships provide an opportunity to go beyond surface-level balance sheet teaching, providing “greater curriculum depth and breadth to these topic areas”. This is because, as **Ruth** believes, they engage with “authentic voices that relate to our students”. These voices can challenge the dominant narratives in the classroom, as covered by the curriculum. Through his partnership, **Gideon**, a Head of History, shared that as a white British teacher he was learning as much as the students, prompting him “to question how history is made and the teacher-student dynamic more generally”.

FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE

Communities are host to **rich cultural, historical, and social knowledge**, which have the potential to enhance classroom learning. In researching this potential, Luis C. Moll developed the concept of **‘funds of knowledge’**, referring to the unique knowledges developed by the lived experiences of different communities.

Moll found that teacher engagement with communities allowed them to gain a more sophisticated understanding of their students, destigmatising histories and bridging gaps of difference.

Every teacher consulted shared that their partnership enhanced their understanding of their students and their community. **Ingrid** stated that the community partnerships at her school provided **unique pedagogic enhancement** for subject staff, “teasing through the methods of content, delivery, engagement, and activity proved advantageous” for staff growth. With this, **Michelle**, a CPSHE teacher, found by bringing together this “knowledge, skills, and lived experiences”, teachers can “**reduce unintended harm**”, mitigating the trauma involved with the teaching of these stories.

DISTINCTIVE LEARNING

As well as benefiting teachers, partnerships also have distinct benefits for students, as the distinctive learning can improve their **sense of self and belonging**. This distinctive learning approached subjects not commonly found in the curriculum.

Lavinia, from the Black Curriculum, shared that through their partnerships, students were able to develop a deeper understanding of how racial language is both historical and coded to the current day.



Rawz, from the Urban Music Foundation, found that his partnership activities have increased levels of **empathy** in students, with discussions about asylum, collective morality, and the myth of “civilised nations”. **Monica**, a community engagement officer, shared similar views, stating her partnership activities have promoted greater empathy and **less ignorance** amongst students.

Our community workshop consultants argued that this distinctive learning cannot be reproduced in traditional classroom settings and curriculums, as there is “no ‘one size fits all’ approach”.

STUDENT BELONGING

So much of what students learn in the classroom addresses their global, and not their local context. This is even worse for students who live outside of metropolitan spaces and can have a negative effect on their identity and sense of belonging. A way to resolve this is the **integration of place-based learning** into the classroom, connecting students' local to a deeper understanding of geographical, historical, and cultural contexts.

David Sobel, in his 2017 review 'Place-based Education: Connecting Classrooms & Communities', demonstrated that by connecting learning to local places, **community bonds are strengthened** as students become more deeply invested in their local.

All teachers consulted stated that these partnerships had some level of positive impact on student belonging. **Sitara**, a Middle Years Programme Lead, stated that partnerships "show students experiences **beyond the classroom**", allowing a variety of voices to be heard. Community organisers we have consulted have also expressed an eagerness to collaborate for this very purpose, and community-school partnerships can be **a vehicle** to make this a reality.

FINDING YOUR PARTNER

Throughout this process, we have encountered several community groups and educators who have expressed a desire to establish a partnership, however, they do not know **how to find a potential partner**. This is a natural barrier to partnerships, and in an attempt to address this, we wanted to offer some practical advice, based off our own experiences and those we have consulted with.

ONLINE PRESENCE

In this digital age, the internet is an incredible partner-finding tool, but in its abundance, it can be difficult finding what you're looking for.

Teachers, we suggest that you start by using your preferred search engine or on social media sites, such as Instagram, X, and Facebook. Your search term should include the following: your local town or nearest city, "community", and the type of group you're looking for (e.g. "Caribbean", "South Asian", "LGBT", etc). This may feel reductionist (because it is), but it will help **provide a snapshot** of some of the activities and groups in your local area. Once you've identified some groups and individuals, drop them a message.

Communities we recommend that you have a **social media presence**, and, if possible, a website. Of course, this can be difficult to set up and maintain, especially for groups with small volunteer teams and little-to-no funding. However, it is important to have a presence, not just for potential partnerships, but also for platforming and promoting the work you do. Social media sites can also be **a free archiving tool**, something you can turn to when writing funding bids and monitoring your engagement.

WORD OF MOUTH

The internet is a brilliant tool, but word of mouth should not be underestimated.

Teachers, we suggest you **speak to parents and carers** about different groups and activities they are aware of in the community. Also, several partnerships we have encountered have actually involved bringing students' parents, carers, grandparents, and other family members into the classroom to speak to classes about their experiences. These conversations can happen face-to-face, or you could use the school newsletter (if your school has one) to ask these questions and **make these connections**.

Communities, we recommend you speak to your members, especially those who are parents, carers, or teachers themselves, about partnership opportunities. They may be able to **signpost you** to specific teachers or school staff who either have experience in facilitating partnerships or are looking to establish their first one. You can also reach out to schools via email. Most schools will have a central email address you can contact and explain what you're looking for.

THIRD PARTIES

There are a wide range of external institutions and groups who you can reach out to who can help you find your partner.

Teachers, we suggest you reach out to your **local authority/council**, specifically their education, schools, or outreach team (if they have one). They should have information of local, active community organisers they can signpost you to. Furthermore, most regions in England have organisations and networks dedicated to arts, culture, and education, such as Community Arts North West and CVAN East Midlands, who have directories of **local practitioners**, some of whom have school-based activities relevant to the topics of EMB.

Communities, we recommend you **make yourself known** to your local authority/council (if you aren't already) as available and interested in establishing partnerships with local schools. Furthermore, you can reach out to **regional third party organisations** who could potentially platform your work on their websites as a local practitioner. This is especially useful if you do not have a website of your own.



ADOPTING GOOD PRACTICE

Our survey data revealed some **‘good practice’** necessary for the establishment of meaningful and sustainable community-school partnerships. It may be difficult to adopt all these practices at the beginning, but they are important to **keep in mind**.

AGREED & CLEAR OBJECTIVES

Over half of all respondents explicitly spoke about the importance of **clarity and transparency** in the early stages of establishing a partnership. **Gideon** reported that without a clear objective about what each partner wants to achieve, “discussions can just become interesting conversations and **lack practical application**”. **Michelle** shared that time must be taken to ensure “everyone is on the same page”, as well as continuing to be “clear about the purpose of the outcome” throughout the partnership.

Partners should also consider how partnership activities align with safeguarding procedures and wider school policies, to ensure a safe and supportive environment for all participants.

BALANCED LABOUR

Ensuring that the labour between partners is **balanced** is of utmost importance. As previously mentioned, historically, communities have been both **underused and misused** by traditional educational institutions, and part of this misuse has come in the form of imbalanced labour, with most of the work being placed on the community.

Our survey found that not only are they expected to do the **emotional labour** of engaging with and sharing potentially traumatising and personal (hi)stories, but they also reported that they had to handle most of the **technical challenges** of funding and communication.

This finding was also expressed during the community workshop, with consultants emphasising a long history of **extraction and exploitation** of communities, which they believe make this kind of work a “nonstarter”. So, it is important that partners are aware of the importance of a balanced workload for these partnerships.

OPEN & TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATION

The majority of survey respondents mentioned that **communication is a challenge**, especially maintaining open communication after the initial activity has taken place; this has been a named concern in both the survey and workshop. Often times, once the initial activity has been completed and the community organiser leaves the classroom, all the hard work to establish the partnership disappears. One reason for this could be **due to a lack of established and clear objectives** at the start of the partnership, leaving partners unsure on how to continue. Our evidence suggests this is a struggle for both communities and teachers, and so communication must be **a priority on both sides**.

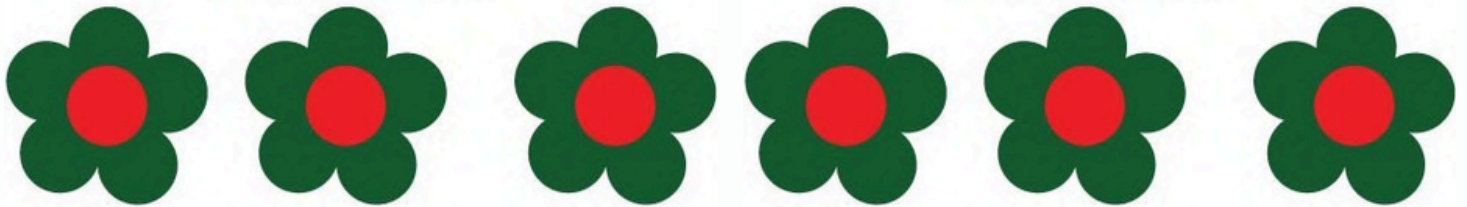
RENUMERATION

Community respondents mentioned that they understand that schools are not necessarily equipped to undertake this kind of work, but because they believe in the **importance of their work**, they will often offer their services **free of charge**. This means that to make these collaborations possible, they either have to volunteer their time or look to external funding, both of which puts **additional stress** on the organiser. It is clear that **payment is essential** for community-school partnerships, however, teachers and schools do not always have the monetary funds to support this work.

One teacher, **Michelle**, mentioned a **payment-in-kind** framework, where they exchange time or other available resources to sustain the partnership. For her partnership, she helped develop the group's work package to be used in other schools. Other payment-in-kind methods could include offering school space out-of-hours for community events, volunteering in the community, supporting their social media accounts/websites. Your partner may have something else in mind, so the best thing to do would be to **ask them!**

CASE STUDY

This case study will illustrate the establishment of a **successful community-school partnership** based in East London, formed for building opportunities to further understand the **cultural heritage of the Bangladeshi students and community**. This partnership features two key figures: **Ruth Marx**, CPSHE Co-ordinator at Morpeth School, a secondary school in Tower Hamlets, and **Shamim Azad**, a storyteller, poet, and ex-teacher from Bangladesh origin. The contents of this study were provided by a joint interview undertaken on the 4th of December 2024. This written case study was authored by Holly Cooper and approved by both partners.



Bijoyphool karmashuchi. Credit: bijoyphool.co.uk

BACKGROUND

Morpeth School has a large cohort of students with Bengali cultural heritage, as such they teach Bengali at GCSE. The teacher of this GCSE mentioned to Ruth that it would be useful to host a whole school event around the **Bijoyphool**, which is an iconic symbol for the victory of the **liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971**. Ruth reached out to the Arts Development Officer at the Council, enquiring whether they know of anybody doing this work who could potentially work with the school on this topic. The Officer shared Shamim's details with Ruth, suggesting she contact her directly about the project.

Shamim is widely known as a professionally qualified teacher and storyteller, and she has brought her Bijoyphool karmashuchi (Bijoyphool activity) to schools across London. Inspired by the UK Poppy Appeal, the activity involves a "living legend" telling their stories, which have been collated by Shamim and her fellow Bijoyphool Ambassadors, while the students are given the necessary materials to make the Bijoyphool (victory flower). The Bijoyphool is made up of six circles of equal size (five green and one red) which make up a flower.

The five green circles are the flower's petals, representing the green land of Bangladesh, the country's five ethnic and religious groups, its five mighty rivers, and the five fundamental rights the people of Bangladesh were deprived of. The red circle at the centre of the flower, represents the both the red sun and the martyr's blood.

The Bijoyphool karmashuchi is a **tactile activity**, simple enough for any age group to participate in. Shamim shared with us the reason why she combined the creation of the victory flower with the storytelling: “teaching in schools here, I’ve learnt if you do something tactile, it actually goes in your head very clearly. And if you can do two tasks together, **you are not going to be bored**”.

This process and activity appealed to Ruth. As Ruth and Shamim's partnership began during the 2021 Covid-19 lockdown, Morpeth weren't having in-person assemblies. So, both partners came together to **record a video** which was shown to each individual form group. While the video was playing, the students would create their own Bijoyphool.

As a result of this activity, all students in the school were invited to write a response to the question **‘what peace and independence mean to me’** on red and green papers which were made into a collaborative display on this display board.



Shamim Azad and Dr. Selim Jahan, pictured with Morpeth's Bijoyphool display board. Credit: Ruth Marx.

BEYOND THE INITIAL PARTNERSHIP

The original partnership activity took place in December 2021; however, it was not long until Shamim was invited back. Their next collaboration took place the following February, when Morpeth held their **Cultural Week**. Shamim, and her fellow Bijoyphool Ambassador, Dr. Selim Jahan, were invited to come back to Morpeth to see the display Ruth's class had made and speak directly to the students. During their visit, Shamim was also invited to speak with the staff **anti-racist educators' group**, which provided teachers with an opportunity to ask further questions and contribute to greater discussions. It was clear that it had a greater impact on Morpeth beyond their initial collaboration.

From this, Shamim was once again invited back to the school in the summer to the storytelling tent at the Summer Fayre.



Shamim was provided with her own space, with audio equipment and places for students and families to sit down, and to listen and share their stories in a drop-in style session. From her first appearance in 2021, Shamim learnt that she would have to shorten her stories, as “there is lots of fun and activity around the whole field” - children’s patience can be short when ‘splash the teacher’ is happening ten meters away! She adapted her stories for future years and “it worked better”.

Storytelling at Morpeth Summer Fayre. Credit: Ruth Marx.

CHALLENGES & PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Shamim identified several initial challenges as she entered with the school environment. Firstly, she identified **gaining trust from the students was challenging**: “They are Gen Z ... and they are not very comfortable talking in person”. With the sensitivity of the topic, it took students a while to open up and make connections. Secondly, Shamim found her accent and unfamiliar pronunciation (as a non-native English speaker) clearly manifested that she is “**not from here**”, and so, they may have been little judgemental.

Keeping that point in mind she spoke slowly, picked up topics from their displays as a conversation starter and at the first opportunity she talked of her wide range of teaching and storytelling experience in the UK. When visiting different schools, Shamim mentioned that she never knew what to expect: “we don’t know how the teacher would be helping you ... [nor] what sort of support and what sort of respect they would render to you”. Shamim did not offer a specific solution to this challenge, however, she alluded to the fact that **the longer you do this work, the more confident you become** to enter these spaces. And using the Poppy, as a remembrance flower, worked well as a reference point.

Another challenge Shamim identified for community organisers is the **inability to reach out** and making these initial connections with schools/teachers: “reaching out is a challenge for us [as] we **don’t have any funding** to make better websites or employ someone as the admin”. With this in mind, Shamim and Ruth agreed that it is important for teachers to not expect a partner to “come and land in your lap”. Ruth advised teachers to “**actually reach out into the real world** with some of the things you’re teaching and find people ... **be curious, reach out, and find ways of connecting with people**”. This could be done via social media sites, such as X (formerly known as Twitter), contacting third parties, or asking the students’ parents.

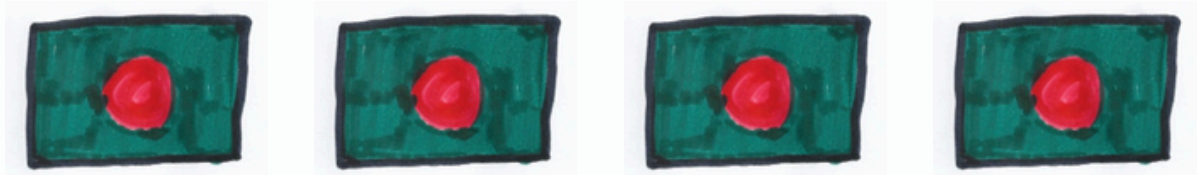
Ruth acknowledged the **privileges of working at Morpeth**, with an incredibly supportive Headteacher and a budget for partnerships and events. She believes that without these it would be difficult to undertake this type of work. Alongside the potential barriers of funding and a supportive management team, Ruth identified **time as a challenge**. For her, facilitating partnerships such as this one, was very much a “passion” of hers: “It’s just something I really, really, really wanted to do”.

This work is unlikely to be a part of your directed time, and enlisting the support of fellow teachers with equally overstretched directed time is tough. Regarding a budget, this may not be readily available for most teachers, so it's important to get creative and think about solutions in the way of **'payment in kind'**, e.g. supporting the community organiser in other ways. There are **no easy solutions** for these barriers, so it is important teachers who are interested in establishing a partnership are aware of them beforehand.

One challenge Ruth has found with trying to establish partnerships with others is **establishing trust**. Her role in CPSHE means she can have a lot of different people come in, and there are a lot of people wanting to come in. However, she has been stung in the past with inviting different people in who deliver activities that just aren't appropriate for the students, especially when the school has paid for their services. Sometimes, invited individuals, organisations, or groups have policies on not sharing their activities or presentation with schools beforehand, as they are concerned it could be taken by the teachers and taught without them. This is **a valid fear**; however, this does mean that sometimes what they have prepared just does not work. This **issue of trust is complicated**, but Ruth advised that partnerships should come from "a connection where you each know what you from it and what you need". When community organisers have concerns that their work could be stolen, perhaps offering an extract of their work would help in establishing that initial trust.

STUDENT IMPACT

Before the partnership, Ruth had tried to have conversations with students about the war of independence of Bangladesh and found that her students were "aware it's a part of their heritage ... but that it's **a raw and painful part of their history**". Students shared that they had tried to ask their grandparents or other family members about the war, but they struggled to put it into words. And this is why Ruth loved the Bijoyphool activity Shamim and her group were offering: "sometimes **a symbol can express something that words can't**, you know."



Ruth recalls Shamim's immediate "warmth with the students ... all of them wanting to know more". In the sixteen years Ruth has worked at Morpeth, she has noticed a continued enthusiasm amongst the student body for conversations about Bangladesh:

"Anytime you showed anything – it could just be a flag or a mention, you'd hear "Bangladesh, Bangladesh!" It's such an important part of their heritage". It is clearly important for these students to see their heritage reflected in the classroom, and Ruth was constantly finding ways to introduce it: "I tried using examples of people from Bangladesh ... or examples of people of British Bangladeshi heritage. Trying to bring it in as much as possible for them".

From this, she knew that bringing Shamim into the classroom would be "so important to them and they would absolutely love to know about you".

The last two years of the Summer Fayre, Ruth has appointed a student to "chaperone" Shamim, bringing her water and making sure she was okay. This is something she tries to do with all visitors; however, it had become **a real "privilege"** to chaperone Shamim and with students gaining a sense of pride from their role. Shamim found that not all the students have time to come to her tent and listen to her stories, however, she believes that her presence is felt nonetheless: **"I think the fact that they know you're there [is important]"**.

CONCLUSION

Establishing a successful school-community partnership comes with a range of challenges and barriers, however, the end-product has a clear positive impact on student confidence and sense of self, as demonstrated through their openness to learn and engage with difficult histories. To conclude, here is some **key advice** from Shamim & Ruth:

- Trust is a key component for any partnerships, it is important to get to know your potential partner before establishing a partnership.
- Be clear with what your goals and objectives are for the partnership. If you're unsure, communicate that to your partner.
- Be curious and willing to see where your partnership may go!

FOR TEACHERS

- Establishing a successful partnership relies heavily on three factors: 1) the support of your headteacher and/or management team, 2) your own passion in delivering this learning, 3) having a budget (monetary or payment in kind).
- It's okay to contact trusted third parties to locate potential partners. This could be your local Council, library, or community centre.
- Facilitate discussions with your students to find out what they are interested in learning about. This should help you in finding an appropriate partner.
- When your partner arrives at your school, make sure they are looked after and welcomed. Doing this may ease any nerves they have and communicate to the students that this is an important person.

FOR COMMUNITIES

- Activities that combine storytelling with a tactile exercise are well received by students.
- It is important to offer a 'taste' of your activity to your partner, to make sure what you have prepared is appropriate.
- Prepare to adapt your activity to a variety of different environments, from video calls, to classrooms, to the school field!
- If monetary remuneration is crucial for your ongoing work, make sure your partner is aware of that from the outset. Do not settle for payment in kind if it hinders your wider work.
- Intergenerational attendance and engagement are key for a successful partnership

ARE YOU READY TO ESTABLISH A PARTNERSHIP?

This **self-reflection exercise** can help both teachers and community organisers understand their positionality, capacity, and motivation to undertake this work. While this exercise focuses on individual readiness, schools may also wish to reflect more holistically on how learning and change can ripple across the wider school community — including leadership, staff teams, and families.

TEACHERS

I am prepared to open my classroom to debates and questions which may cause me discomfort	
I consciously reflect and think upon my feelings of Britain's imperial past before teaching this history	
I understand the importance of open and consistent communication, and can commit to this with my partner	
I can secure payment for my community partner (be it monetary or payment in kind)	
I can commit to a balanced labour framework, ensuring partnership workload is shared	
I am able to share my partnership objectives clearly, and open to discussions about our shared goals	

I am willing and able to engage with the sensitive topics of EMB through my lived experiences in the local community

I am aware of the contentions around the teaching of EMB topics in schools, and am prepared to engage with discussions that may cause me discomfort

I understand the importance of open and consistent communication, and can commit to this with my partner

I have a partnership activity in mind; however, I am prepared to adapt and accommodate my activity to a variety of different environments and classes

I can commit to a balanced labour framework, ensuring partnership workload is shared

I am able to share my partnership objectives clearly, and open to discussions about our shared goals



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THANK YOU!

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