



Equal Voices

Challenges and Opportunities
in linking



‘Trans-global communication is perfectly possible, feasible, realistic and leads to an identity of global citizenship’

Sister Mary Margaret Pignone,
PhD thesis 1988

The Paradise of the Women

The Laws of the City



1. Tourists don't come to live in the city, only visit.
2. No man can enter the city
3. Boys when they reach 16 yrs. old have to leave the city
4. The only form of reproduction is artificially
5. If someone has to get married they have to leave the city.



Saharawi children with their City of Dreams



In groups students prepare

- 10 questions for their partners
- 10 points of information about themselves
- 10 rights which they feel that every child should have

Difficulties and dangers faced by street children



- Being hungry and not having enough to eat
- Being abused and robbed of their money by adults
- Not having clean water to drink
- Adults insulting them or physically hurting them
- Being tortured by police
- Feeling lonely; not having any friends
- Not enjoying the work they do on the streets
- Not being able to get medicines when ill
- Not being able to get a job
- Girls not being able to marry or finding it difficult to marry



‘We don’t involve our partner school in evaluation because they wouldn’t understand’.

Linking co-ordinator,
Linking Award winning school, UK

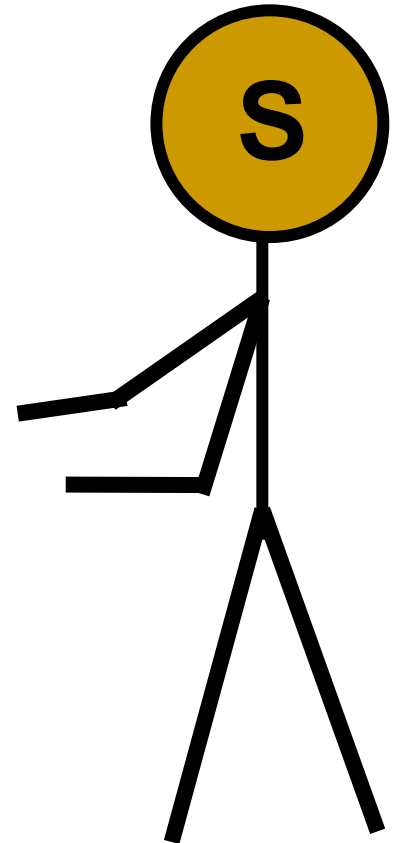
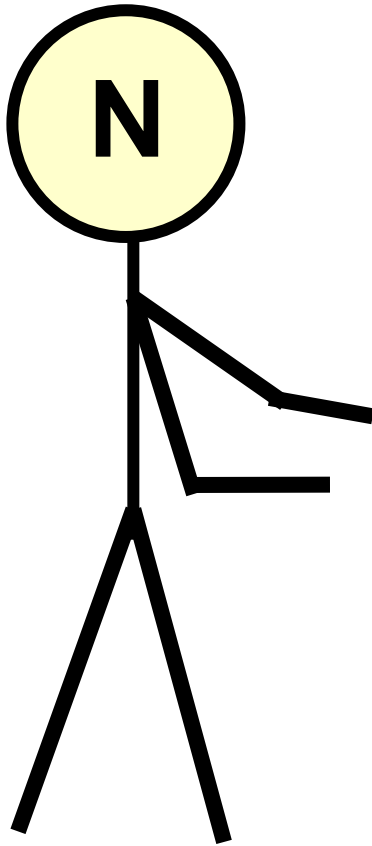


First you came to us as missionaries, then you came to us as colonisers, now you come to us as linkers.

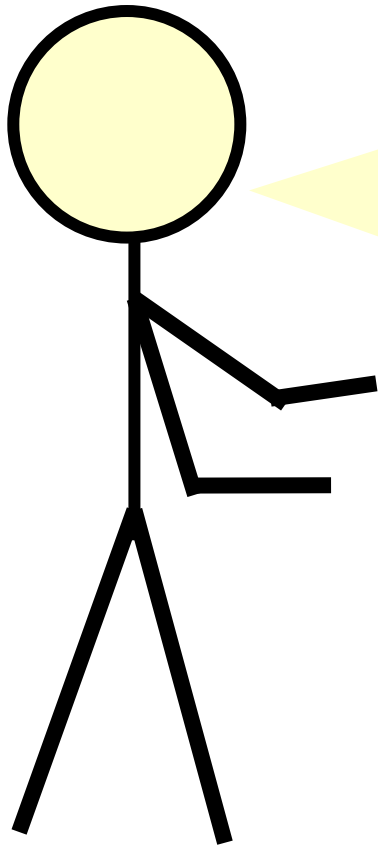
Participant Conference on linking, 2002

North-South Dialogue:

four alternative scenarios reflecting different practice in linking



Scenario 1

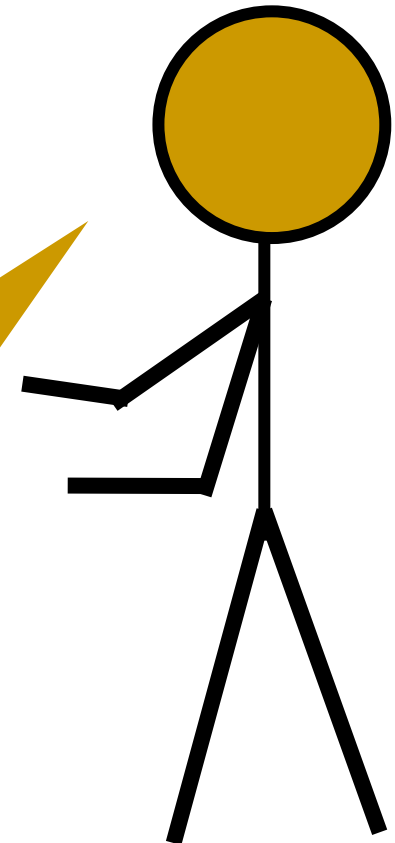


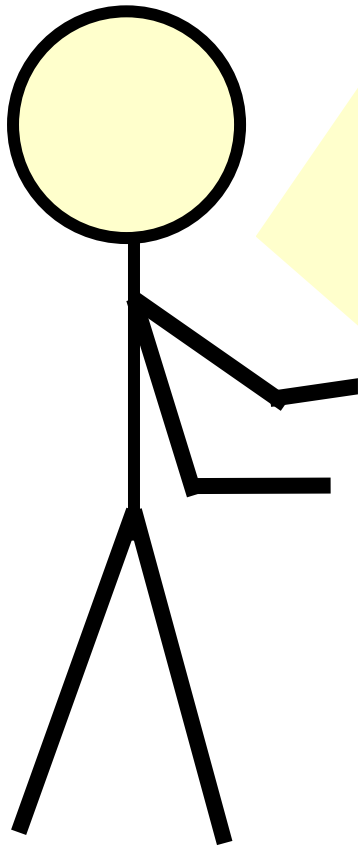
I want to link with you because I think it is important that my students:

- learn about other countries
- learn how fortunate they are
- learn that they can make a difference to your community

I want to link with you because I think it is important that my students:

- learn from you
- learn how good life can be if they work hard like you
- learn to accept that we need your help to get to where you are



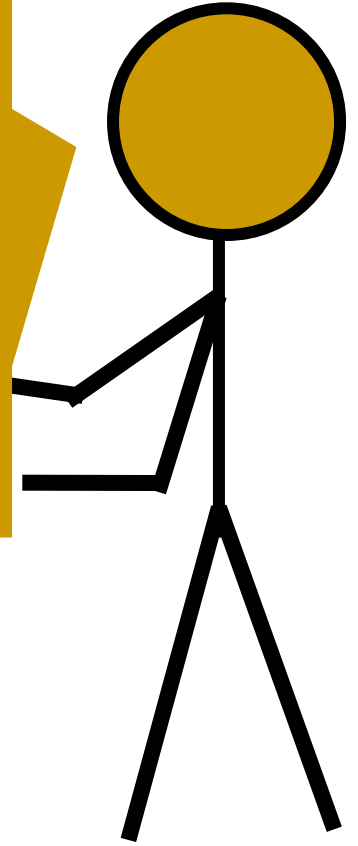


I don't want to link with you because:

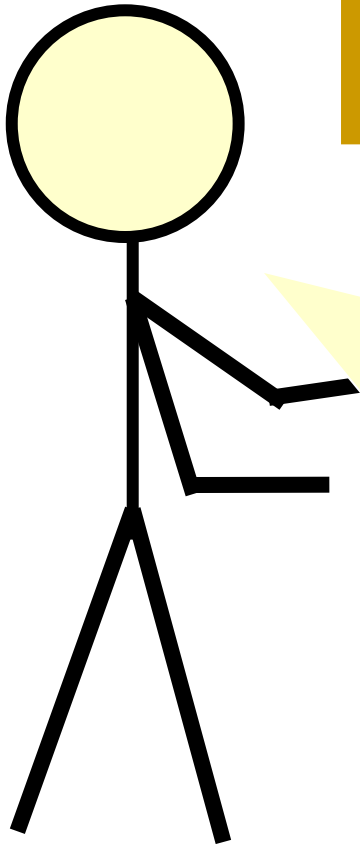
- you just want us to give you resources - you are not interested in changing
- you are unreliable and ungrateful
- I can't learn anything useful from you

I don't want to link with you because:

- you assume you have the answers for us and that we need your help
- you impose your values and decide what needs to be done and how it should be done
- you think your way is the best way and you think you are better than us



Scenario 2

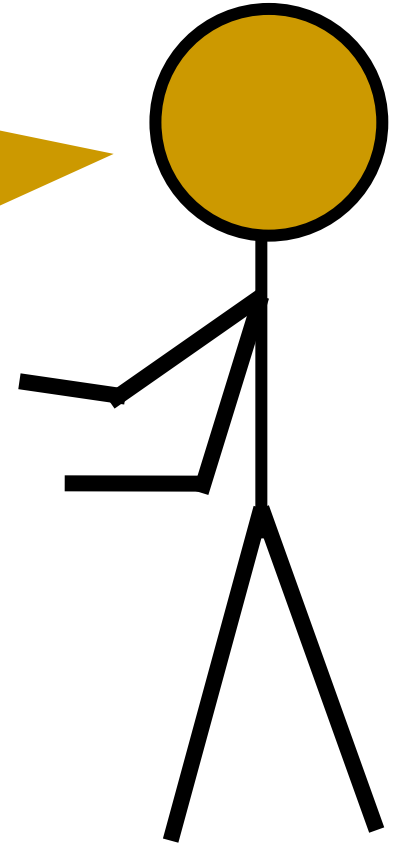


I want to link with you but you have to understand that:

- we are not going to just accept the 'crumbs from the table'
- you are privileged and you just can't understand where we are coming from
- you have colonised us in the past and you owe us a lot

I want to link with you because I want to make up for the mistakes of the past:

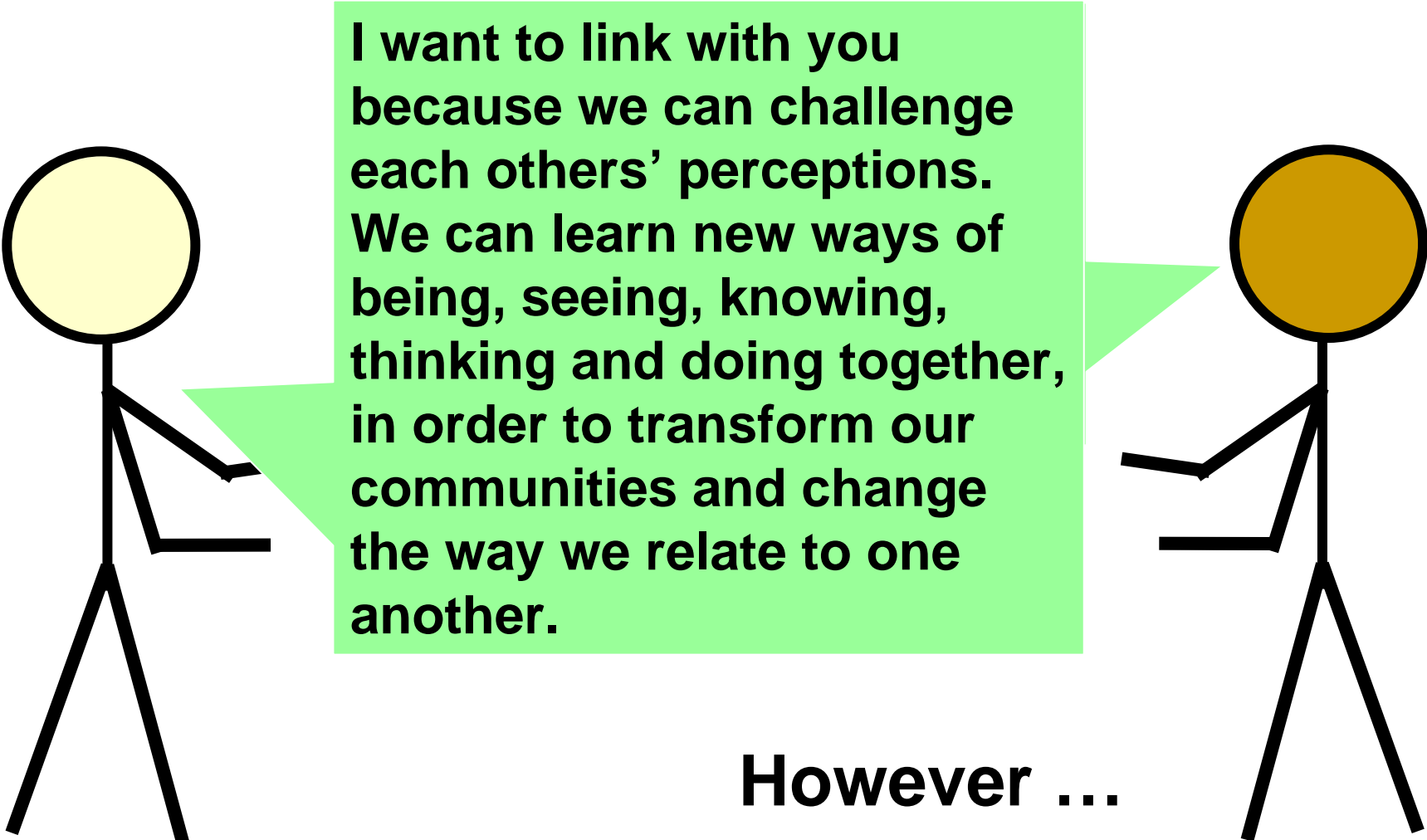
- I want you to tell me what I can do
- I believe your people have the answers for a better world
- I feel guilty that I benefit from the fruits of colonisation



Scenario 3

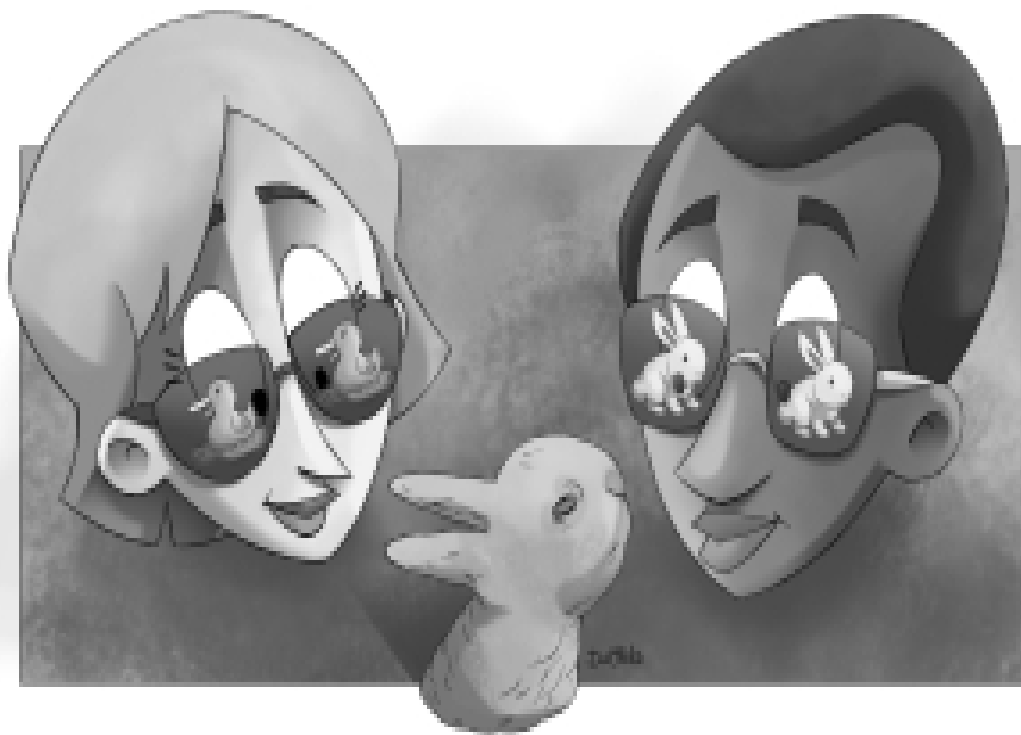
AN IDEAL SCENARIO...

Scenario 4



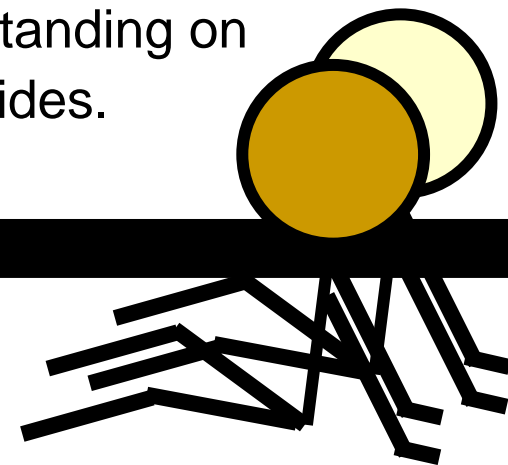
I want to link with you because we can challenge each others' perceptions. We can learn new ways of being, seeing, knowing, thinking and doing together, in order to transform our communities and change the way we relate to one another.

However ...



We need to remember that, because we are coming from different contexts, we will see and understand things differently.

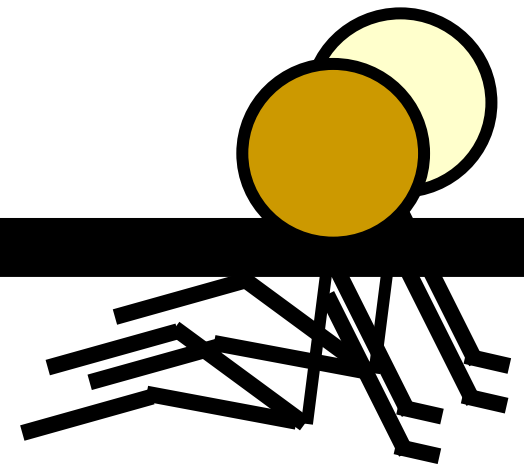
This difference is the greatest source of learning in the link as it can open up different possibilities of understanding on both sides.





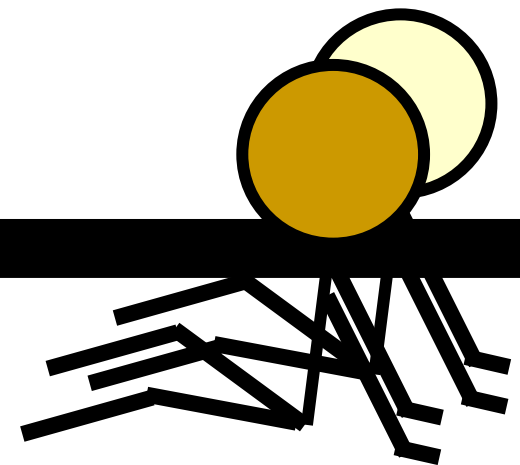
A link is an opportunity to explore and 'unpack' our cultural baggage and to transform our understandings of the world in order to create new ways of being, seeing, knowing, thinking and doing together.

But this is not easy. Unpacking means challenging ourselves and transforming our own baggage.





A good link is a link where perceptions and assumptions are challenged on both sides – without mutual challenge there is no mutual learning.



Those of us who attempt to act and do things for others or for the world without deepening our own self-understanding, freedom, integrity and capacity to love, will not have anything to give others.

Thomas Merton