Rivers of The World
Welcome to Rivers of the World, the Thames Festival Trust’s flagship art and education project delivered in partnership with the British Council.

The project produces huge artworks that are inspired by river themes. These artworks are created through an extended workshop process which is contextualised by trips to the local river and other environmental studies. Under guidance from professional artist, the students then work collegiately, often using media and techniques that will be new to them. The end result is a single work of art made with contributions from the whole student group.

Rivers of the World links participating secondary schools in the UK with partner schools in developing countries around the world. All pupils go through the same creative process and by doing so, they are encouraged to empathise with their partner students. The 2019 partnerships are:

- Newham + Khartoum (Sudan)
- Peterborough + Rabat (Morocco)
- Warrington & Halton + Addis Ababa & Bahir Dar (Ethiopia)
- Barking & Dagenham + Jericho (Palestine)
- Exeter + Liwonde (Malawi)
- Worcestershire + Nairobi (Kenya)

This year, over two thousand 12 to 14 year olds students were involved with Rivers of the World. The art workshop programme helps them understand the importance of their local waterfront and the environmental challenges it faces. The creative process they go through with visiting artists provides opportunities for them to imagine the potential for art in their lives. Their ideas are given agency through the design, creation and public display of their magnificent artworks. Exhibitions are organised in each of the participating cities.

Adrian Evans
Director, Thames Festival Trust

www.riversoftheworld.org
Every year Rivers of the World partners children and young people in the UK with their counterparts around the world. The project has so far been applied in 34 countries enabling international collaboration and dialogue through environmental messages and culture.
Lead Artist
Shona Watt

London based artist Shona Watt has been the lead artist for Rivers of the World since its inception. Shona is known for creating spectacular flags that have been seen worldwide, from the opening of the Millennium Footbridge in London to the opening of the Melbourne Museum in Australia. After attending Ravensbourne College of Art she received a Northern Arts Award (1996) and a Crafts Council Award (1997). Major art commissions include The Millennium Footbridge, Hungerford Footbridge, The London Eye and Melbourne Museum, Australia.

“The artist led workshops provide a unique experience for students to experiment without curricular constriction. It’s a chance to explore unconventional ideas, using unusual materials and to work collaboratively in a playful, supportive atmosphere.

To paraphrase Samuel Beckett, ‘Try again. Fail. Fail better.’”

Sudan & Newham

1. Pupils from UTC by Shona Watt
2. Pupils from Ivory Private School by Mohamed Osman
3. Pupils from Chobham Academy by Shona Watt
4. Pupils from St Angela’s Ursine School by Shona Watt
5. Pupil from Khartoum New School for Boys by Mohamed Osman
Artist, Sudan
Rawan Elbadwi

Rawan is a professional artist who is focused on digital art and oil paintings. As a fine and applied arts graduate from Sudan University of Science and Technology, she has worked with various materials such as ceramic mosaics, stained glass and clay sculptures creating a wide collection of artwork.

She has also been working as an illustrator, facilitating – through art – the learning of languages for children in both Sudan and Saudi Arabia.

She is currently working on a Sudanese comic book that raises awareness of human rights in Sudan and is hoping to expand this internationally in the coming years.

“I feel like this project has helped me in my creative skills and pushed me to go further.”

Safia, pupil from Chobham Academy

Photo by Mohamed Osman
The workshops in Khartoum were based around the history, traditions and environment of the River Nile. Students worked with henna, plastic bags and pottery to create their work.

"The workshop was very different from what we usually do in art classes and the students were very happy and excited. They started telling all of their colleagues and friends, and all the students are asking if there will be another workshop they can participate in. We will try to use the concept of Rivers of the World in our classes from now on."

Mrs. Ikhlas, teacher from Khartoum New School for Girls
Using wildlife, trade and city life as inspiration, the students made wonderful work by embossing metal, modelling clay and decorating masks.

“I enjoyed it because it was fun finding out how we can use our recycling and turn items into a piece of art. Everyone got to contribute their own piece of work.”

Dija, pupil from The Royal Docks Community School
Ivory Private School

Ancestors considered the River Nile to be a transitioning point where they received the blessings for new beginnings as well as a place to wash the evil spirits and illnesses away. Students enjoyed learning about the stories and each used henna prints and palm leaves to tell a story.

Little Ilford School

Gunpowder, Dark Forest, Golden Monkey and Eyebrow & Rainflower are some of a vast range of names for teas from China. Students explored the vital role of the River Thames in the tea trade. They made collaged illustrations based on the exotic and fantastical names of teas imported into Great Britain during the 19th century.

The Royal Docks Community School

The school is based in the redeveloped docklands of East London. Once the busiest port in the world, the area was marshlands and teeming with wildlife. Working with the theme River of Life, students made creatures and wildflowers that would have once inhabited the area.

El-Barrary Model School for Girls

Students unleashed their imagination by using a paper quilling technique with bright colours in order to create intricate quilled peacocks that can be bound, around the River Nile adding to its beauty and heritage. They also learned about how ladies wear the Blue Nile throw their hair in plaited hair and a diadem.

El-Shabbir Mustafia El-Amin Boys School

Using pottery and traditional plates made from dry palm leaves, the students portrayed real stories that have had an effect on Sudanese communities. Students shared, and made reference to, both ancient and recent stories.

Kingsford Community School

Students were shown old films about The Royal Docks, Albert, Victoria & George V which were the world’s largest and busiest docks in the 1880s bringing in an enormous variety of goods from animals for the Royal Zoo to tea for the nation. The students modelled clay pieces based on the different imports.

London Design & Engineering UTC

Students were assigned the theme Polluted River. They made masks from recycled materials exploring the concept of metamorphosis.

Kibeida International School

Students used plastic bags and paper cups to make this artwork referencing the pollution both in the river and in its banks. They also learned about how ladies wear the Blue Nile throw their hair in plaited hair and a diadem.

Chobham Academy

Students were given the theme River Culture. Using recycled metal sheets they designed and made headdresses loosely based on historical portraits of English royalty. They fashioned symbolic elements into the pieces as seen in period Tudor paintings.

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Khartoum New School for Girls

Each student chose a city that is famous because the River Nile is flowing through it. They portrayed the most famous and distinguished buildings, old universities, tombs and historical monuments. The most prominent businesses were drawn from each city.

St Angela’s Ursuline School

Working from the theme River City, students made head pieces from recycled cardboard exploring the concept of metamorphosis. They researched the famous London skyline and the rapid development of its iconic architecture during the past 20 years.

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Aïcha El Beloui is a Moroccan Casablanca-based illustrator, graphic designer and creative director. Trained as an architect, she started her artistic practice in response to a visceral need to express her obsession about citizenship, public spaces, belonging, freedom and the individual in the Moroccan context, a context she has always actively tried to understand and demystify.

She did this firstly through her architecture studies, which helped her sharpen her reading of the city and then through her direct involvement in architectural heritage and the cultural scene in Casablanca, which brought life and concreteness to her understanding. This quest took her through graphic design, photography and illustration: an intuitive juggle between representation, interpretation, and appropriation of the unseen, the unsaid but the still daily life undergone and endured.

Artist and garden designer Jeni Cairns has always been inspired by the natural landscape that has surrounded her for most of her life. A childhood spent exploring the farmland, lanes and areas reclaimed by nature have left a lasting impression.

She works in a diverse variety of mediums: sculpture, drawing, painting, gardens and natural spaces, focusing on metal and cutting intricate images into it with a hand held plasma cutter. Jeni often uses pre-used industrial materials such as oil drums and agricultural machinery as well as new steel and Corten steel to create her work.

Stuart’s work is rooted in graffiti, animation & skateboarding. Process blends his experience of these forms between subject, surface & medium; bringing carving marks, movement and colour into his work.

Interacting with a wide variety of materials and subject matter, his current work explores the medium of concrete to create visually compelling works that collide these lifelong passions, to create unique forms and imagery.

"Rivers of the world is a fantastic opportunity to raise awareness about one’s own city and about Art as a powerful means of expression, all in a very amusing and constructive way."

"It was really fun and we were able to create what we wanted."

James, pupil from Ken Stimpson Community School
These six artworks form part of a series with each one representing the city of Rabat in the bottom and Salé on the top, the middle sections illustrate the river and its banks according to one or more of the suggested themes.

1. Detail from Amira Aicha School
2. Pupils from Abi Houraira School by Chahrazad Zahi
3. Pupils from Imam Al Boukhai School by Chahrazad Zahi
4. Detail from Al Joulane School
5. Artwork from Abi Houraira School with Aicha El Beloui
6. Detail from Zerktouni Secondary School
7. Detail from Al Joulane School
8. Pupils from Al Joulane School by Chahrazad Zahi
9. Pupils from Amira Aicha School by Chahrazad Zahi

"Can we do this every Wednesday?"
Ali, pupil from Abi Houraira School
The students in Peterborough based their beautiful artwork on the River Nene, focusing on the wildlife, pollution and importance of the river in the history of the city. They used a range of new art techniques including spray-painting, printmaking and sculpture to create their designs.

“Students were introduced to willow which grows on the banks of the River Nene, they bent the willow to make the structure of a boat and then covered the boats in tissue paper to make them transparent. They also got the opportunity to create cyanotype prints.”
Sara Erwin, teacher from Queen Katharine Academy

"We had a lot of fun. Thank you."
Olivia, pupil from Queen Katharine Academy
Artworks

Morocco

Zerkoune Secondary School
The students represented the river’s connection with the Atlantic Ocean. The students focused on the presence of pirates and on the importance of the river port as a source of importing and exporting various goods in the olden days.

Abi Dar Al Ghoutani School
In addition to representing the wildlife at the bottom and scale of the river, the students of this school were asked to imagine what other kinds of creatures could live in the river.

Amra Ashra School
The students represented the activities, both domestic and economic, happening in and around the river. They also emphasized the bridge to highlight the fact that only a few years ago it did not exist.

Al Alouane School
The artwork represents the future of the river. The pupils had to imagine how the two banks of the river would develop through the decades and also how the pollution would affect the river and its creatures.

Peterborough

City of Peterborough Academy
Students examined the economies of rivers, in particular, the emerging river economies of Peterborough’s radically modernised South Bank. They focused on the new South Bank art centre which regenerates one of the city’s largest riverside industrial mills.

Oxsthorpe Brushfield Academy
The students explored the ancient roots of Peterborough’s existence and relationship with the River Nene. They researched maps of the city’s major milestones and using a variety of spray-paint and stenciling techniques, the students used this research to inspire the chain link design.

Thomas Beacon Cathedral Academy
The students investigated the church in the city and looked at what is in it and why it is in there. The students created a visual history of Peterborough. They did lumen printing by laying out objects on photographic paper and exposing it to the sunlight.

St John Fisher Catholic High School
Students created a series of collages representing the wildlife and habitats of the River Nene. They also experimented with images of clean healthy water and others by introducing toxic water. Students then created wire sculptures of water creatures.

Queen Katharine Community School
Students discussed how pollution and discussed the wildlife and habitats of the River Nene. They then experimented with images of clean healthy water and others by introducing toxic water. The students designed boats and then built them three-dimensionally using yellow and paper.

Ethiopia & Warrington and Halton

1 Pupils from Cardinal Newman High School by Kirsty Rae
2 Pupil from Abune Gorgorios School by Martha Hardy
3 Pupils from Bridgewater High School by Kirsty Rae
4 Pupils from Nazareth Secondary School by Martha Hardy

121x177 to 190x341
219x177 to 288x341
23x177 to 92x341
**Artist, Ethiopia**

Martha Hardy

Martha grew up in London where she studied fine art then illustration before working as a book illustrator and artist in schools. About 12 years ago she was invited to train fine artists in Addis Ababa on textbook illustration and she never left.

She continues to do similar work there, teaching art, training teachers to be more creative, making artwork with students, taking photos, and drawing pictures. Her work is varied, but arts and education are always at its core.

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**Artist, Warrington & Halton**

Kirsty Rae

Having spent a decade teaching in further education, artist educator Kirsty Rae is now freelance and working with schools, colleges and universities in the north west of England. She holds a degree in Fine Art from Newcastle University and has a wealth of experience delivering a wide range of artistic techniques to students of all ages.

Kirsty is particularly interested in drawing, painting and printmaking and uses these processes in her own practice. She has a keen interest in educational projects and community arts.

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“When the students create their RotW artwork the classroom constantly changes. One moment it’s silent, and then the adults must be silent too so that the students can deeply concentrate. The next moment it’s over excited, the next full of challenges, then achievements and celebration. It is always dynamic. One students said, ‘It helped us use our brains!’ another explained, ‘I started to realise what I am capable of doing’, and ‘I am very, very happy’. I think this is how a classroom should always be.”
Students researched hydroelectricity, pollution and songs associated with their river and made lovely artwork using recycled materials, shoelaces, shells and beads.

"Please continue the project as it is inspiring. I want Rivers of the World to be embedded in the curriculum."

Ayenew Terete, teacher from Fasilo Secondary School

"Art has no boundaries, no limits, you can use anything, anywhere to make art."

Pupil from Ghion Secondary School
The workshops in Warrington and Halton focused on the industrial history, boats and pollution of the River Mersey. Students used bunting, inks and printmaking to create their artwork.

"I learnt lots of new techniques and had fun. I didn’t really know much about the river before I do."

Dylan, pupil from Wade Deacon High School
Menelik II School
The Tekeze River is a main tributary of the Abay River, which flows into the Nile. A backlog of manmade and natural waste builds up in the Tekeze. Students depicted this by creating standing sculptures of things which should be in the river, like birds and boats, but making them form the places of waste such as old boxes and sweet wrappers.

Warrington & Halton
Wade Deacon High School
Students looked at the River Mersey’s history of severe pollution. They learned about the devastating effects on the surrounding ecosystem due to the chemical industry during its rapid growth. The industrial revolution.

Africa Andatel No 1 School
The school is in the heart of Addis Ababa, situated along the trade routes. The area is famous for its fish, and cultural ideas, one word such as unity and friendship, and invented patterns to represent them.

Alwine Ogarrot School
Alwine Ogarrot School is an elementary school. Students created a timeline showing the history of trade by drawing the intense network of roads and towns that are situated along it. The area is a resource for communication between students in Ethiopia and traders in Sudan. Students considered what messages they would like to send to fellow students in Sudan and how to get them there. They refined their messages to one word such as unity and friendship, and invented patterns to represent them.

Abune Gorgorios School
Abune Gorgorios School is a Catholic school in Ethiopia. Students came up with the idea of a timeline showing the development of the Blue Nile. Students learnt the local name for the Blue Nile, (Abay is the Amharic name for Abay, Abay, Abay, Abay, Abay) where their school is. They created circular artworks on traditional Ethiopian dress.

Rozanith Secondary School
Rozanith Secondary School is a renowned school in Ethiopia. Students explored making a map of the river and lakeside location. They created river sketches and bead necklaces in the local style, decorating them with pebbles representing rocks such as bananas, mangoes and fish, and small islands which were also shared along the trade routes.

Haile Selassie High School
Haile Selassie High School is a Preparatory School. Students considered how their city had grown through networks of trade due to the river, and trade location. They created river sketches and bead necklaces in the local style, decorating them with pebbles representing rocks such as bananas, mangoes and fish, and small islands which were also shared along the trade routes.

Fasko Secondary and Preparatory School
Fasko Secondary and Preparatory School is a Preparatory School. Students created a map of the river. They practised making a map of the river and lakeside location. They created river sketches and bead necklaces in the local style, decorating them with pebbles representing rocks such as bananas, mangoes and fish, and small islands which were also shared along the trade routes.

Ethiopia

Malawi & Exeter

Wadham College
Wadham College is a Preparatory School. Students studied the story of the return of the Atlantic Salmon to the River Mersey. Students considered how the river is used for trade in modern times and did charcoal drawings of the history of trade by drawing the intense network of roads and towns that are situated along it. The area is a resource for communication between students in Ethiopia and traders in Sudan. Students considered what messages they would like to send to fellow students in Sudan and how to get them there. They refined their messages to one word such as unity and friendship, and invented patterns to represent them.

Sir Thomas Boteler High School
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Beamgitter High School
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Cardinal Newman High School
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Culcheth High School
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1 Pupils from Balaka Secondary School by Akulu Lipenga
2 Artwork from Dawlish College
3 Pupils from Liwonde Secondary School by Akulu Lipenga
4 Pupils from Dawlish College by Liz Lithgow
5 Pupils from Ferry LEA School by Akulu Lipenga

Artworks
Malawi & Exeter

Artswork from Dawlish College
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Artists, Malawi
Macpherson Ndalama and Akulu Lipenga

Macpherson Ndalama, 24, is one of the most diverse Malawian visual artists. From a young age, his passion has been to make a positive impact through his skills in arts and his desire for shared values. Through the art collective, Zaluso Arts, which he helped start up as a student, he has worked with countless local and international organisations and individuals.

Akulu Lipenga is a talented visual artist based in Malawi. He graduated from the University of Malawi’s Chancellor College in 2017 with a Fine Art Major. He has since been creating and experimenting with art, working with illustrations and writing. Akulu is co-founder of a Malawian art collective known as Zaluso Arts where he manages their social media platforms, helps in event management, curating and working as a visual artist.

“I’m really glad to have been part of helping the kids experience things they’ve never had a chance to experience before. It was amazing watching them pick-up the building blocks so easily and seeing what they came up with. I was a bit jealous.”

“It’s an awesome experience watching kids use art techniques that they have never been exposed to before and still be able to come up with masterpieces. I am humbled to have been a part of their artistic metamorphosis.”

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“The trip was a life changing experience and I have formed strong partnerships with the teachers from our cluster locally. We hope that this project will lead to the expansion of our existing school links and wider impact for our St Peter’s Malawi Education Trust. We hope to widen our whole school participation, in involving the Global Development Goals in our teaching. It was eye opening teaching in Malawi as part of this amazing project. The students in Malosa Secondary School really loved the opportunity for creativity and group work, and this experience has helped me bring the project to life for my students back home. It has inspired me to tackle more global issues within the art curriculum.”

Vanessa Crocker, teacher from St Peter’s Church of England Aided School

Photo by Vanessa Crocker
Students from Malawi researched the River Exe in Exeter and made artworks as a response to pollution, wildlife and city life, using origami, Lego and painting.

"I’ve learnt what an artist is, that it’s not just singing but drawing and dancing too. I like that!"

Beatrice Banda, pupil from Liwonde Community Day School

Opposite: Artwork detail: Ferry LEA School with Macpherson Ndalama and Akulu Lipenga
1 & 2 Pupils from Namzomba Community Day School by Akulu Lipenga
3 Pupils from Liwonde Community Day School by Akulu Lipenga
4 Pupils from Malosa Secondary School by Akulu Lipenga
Schools in Exeter took inspiration from their travel to Malawi and made work to represent the culture and wildlife of Liwonde. One school chose to base their work on the River Exe and the life that exists within it.

The trip allowed me to gain knowledge of other cultures first hand to share with my students and family and it altered my own thoughts and outlook on life and consumerism. The teacher training session was a great way to facilitate positive action in the schools in Malawi – gender equality, mental health and tackling the UN sustainability goals in interactive cross-curricular lessons. The teachers are planning to visit each other’s schools during the return visit. We are planning an Africa week at Dawlish College in October to coincide with the Malawian teachers visit.

Liz Lithgow, teacher from Dawlish College
Artworks

Kenya & Worcestershire

Malawi

Liwonde Secondary School
The students discussed the value of bridges and their importance in connecting communities. The college showed a mixture of bright solid shapes set against bridge structures which are left in black and white for contrast.

Malossa Secondary School
The students learnt the story of Countess Isabella, a story about resilience and innovative individual who has inspired women empowerment. Students were asked to draw how they think, or they'd like, Countess Isabella to look like. After which, they built the type of castle that the Countess may have lived in.

Bokasa Secondary School
The artwork is a response to the fact that most of the river or water pollution in the world is caused by humans. They imagined a world where robots would help tackle pollution and safeguard the river.

Ferry LEA School
The students had an amazing discussion on the resourcefulness of boats as a way of transforming the river. In teams, they created their own Lego boats and made a pattern from hand-made origami swans around it. They were particularly interested in hearing that the Queen’s swans can be found on the banks of the River Exe.

Liwonde Community Day School
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Namaloma Community Day School
The students learnt about some of the animals found in Exeter and also learnt about animals that they’ve seen in Liwonde. With photo references, they were tasked to draw and paint the animals they had learnt about.

Exeter

Atkinson School
Students focused on female African role models as gender inequality is such a big problem in Malawi. They produced linocut prints based on the portraits of Gregoire Boonzaier and looked at colourful African fabrics. Animals and patterns from the River Shire and Malawi were used as inspiration.

Dawlish College
Students looked at the environment of the River Exe, focusing on the panoramic locations that can be seen and creating line drawings of them. They used different media to create backgrounds giving the illusion of water such as ink, pastel and collage. They decided to include a map reference to give it a place and show the proximity of the river to the sea.

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Balaka Secondary School
The artwork comes as a response to the fact that most of the river or water pollution in the world is caused by humans. The students imagined a world where robots would help defeat pollution and safeguard the river.
James Njoroge is a collage and caricature artist based in Limuru, Kenya. He learnt most of his skills at Kenyatta University where he pursued a Fine Art Degree and graduated in 2012.

"Learning about the River Severn with schools has been such a great experience and journey for me. I’m sure students can say they visited the UK through this project. I deliberately chose different mediums and techniques for each school because every school is unique and they can learn from each other. Most of the materials we used were collected just to show we can make art from anything around us."

Sarah studied Applied Arts at The University of Hertfordshire graduating with a First Class Honours degree in 2010, where she specialised in glass and used illustration in her work. She enjoys adapting techniques to apply to different materials, most specifically Sarah has a keen interest in working with glass and vinyl.

Pete Ashton is a multidisciplinary multimedia artist creating transformative site-specific work, online and offline. His work uses media technologies to explore how we perceive and understand the world around us, from camera obscura lens art to algorithmic image manipulation.

"It was a real pleasure to bring the simple power of the camera obscura to Rivers of the World this year, having students build their own working scientific and artistic tool from plastic magnifying glasses, tracing paper and cardboard boxes. Using a visual focussing device to create a work which ties together two schools 4,000 miles apart felt nicely apt."

Pete Ashton, artist from Worcestershire

"The Rivers of the World project gave many children here in Kenya and everywhere else a golden opportunity to explore their options in art and protest peacefully against the pollution of our beautiful rivers."

Naila Herah, pupil from Langata Junior School
The students from Nairobi researched the River Severn and the River Avon. They used collage, role-play and printmaking to convey stories and represent their findings.

“This year’s project proved to be an eye-opener to the pupils as they got a chance to learn new art skills as well as grow their scope of knowledge of different rivers especially the River Severn.”
Arnold Njoroge, teacher from Langata Junior School

Opposite: Artwork detail: Langata Junior School with James Njoroge
1 Pupils from City Primary School by James Njoroge
2 Pupils from City Primary School by James Njoroge
3 Pupils from Juja Primary School by James Njoroge
The schools in Worcestershire focussed on their partner country of Kenya, from where many of the teachers had just returned. They made work referencing patterns & fabrics, plantations, safaris and skylines.

“Wow we loved it! Some of the boys were really inspired by the way Pete merged his photographs together and are developing their own work in this style.”

Clodagh McGee, teacher from Nunnery Wood High School
“The trip was a once in a lifetime experience. A chance to experience new things/cultures and broaden one’s own horizons. This can only have a positive impact on our teaching back in the UK.”
Stephanie Wellings, teacher from Chadsgrove School

“I have gained confidence and renewed excitement about teaching and the power of Art to change lives. I have, in the process of planning for the trip and since getting back, begun to develop new resources and projects and will be rolling these out in the next academic year with many age levels in the school. The project has also stopped me from feeling isolated, it gave me a new teacher network to share good practice with and develop expertise, and the friendships that developed are an unexpected bonus.

The visit to Kenya has resulted in collaborations with artists and schools. Further projects will be carried out in the new academic year including a mail Art project.

My students are also doing work inspired by the Kenyan Kibera slums with a view to creating an exhibition locally with some fundraising ideas woven into the project.”
David Reid, teacher from Pershore High School

“Visiting and working in Nairobi, in particular Langata Junior School, was a privilege and an opportunity that will reside for a lifetime. I was humbled by the experience which provided a vast contrast to our environment here in the UK but was equally full of warmth and happy, vibrant students”
Claire Mills, teacher from Tudor Grange Academy

Photos by Claire Mills
**Kenya**

Brookhouse School
Inspired by the Dragon Boat festival on the River Severn and an ancient Roman relief sculpture showing the invasion of the Romans into Britain, students created colorful paper reliefs using collected materials.

Bramston Academy
Students were inspired by the discovery of oil along the river and how that spurred the industrial revolution and the growth of cities. They created wire and cardboard models of cities. They created wire and cardboard models of cities.

City Primary School
The students created a photographic comic strip to illustrate how the River Severn got its name from Deadley Thompson’s History of the City of Bristol. They created the comic strips, hand-drawn and scanned, and used their formal school architecture as a prop.

St. Theresa’s Girl’s Primary School
Students worked at different ways the River Severn is helpful to people who live and work around it. They chose different activities and created beautiful collages using Styrofoam plates.

Alja Road Primary School
Students created different types of fish found in the River Severn using foil paper and combined with a watercolor background. They were inspired by the huge variety of fish found in the river.

Langata Junior School
Students were inspired by the interesting ‘marbling effect’ that oil and liquid pollution has to the river. They collected items the students found polluting the river and created a marbled effect on them using nail polish.

Worcestershire

Pershore High School
The students visited the artist’s studio to explore their work based on the local waterways of Worcestershire. They started by building the city using different materials. They then added people to the scene using an illustrated script, storyboard and costume. They used this as their inspiration. They used different materials and animals to create work.

Northwick Manor Primary School
Coffee plantations near Nairobi are a big source of pollution for the river. Students learned about working with coffee and how to create patterns and shapes inspired by the river. They created shadow puppets of animals and made their own shadow puppets using paper and cardboard.

Oxburgh Primary School
The students created the rooms and animals inside the buildings and bridges found along the river. They created drawings of different ecosystems within the river. They created different resource ideas for both artists and students to use in their project visit so the children could explore different medium to create work.

Tewkesbury High School
Artists created a resource for both artists and students to use in their project visit so the children could explore different mediums to create work.

Chadsgrove School
Students took inspiration from the use of new objects. They used liquid to create patterns and shapes inspired by the river. They created different resource ideas for both artists and students to use in their project visit so the children could explore different mediums to create work.

Runnymede Wood High School
Students created a resource for both artists and students to use in their project visit so the children could explore different mediums to create work.

Tudor Grammar Academy
Using photos from Langata Junior School in Nairobi as inspiration, pupils explored their school with camera obscuras looking for patterns and shapes before decorating them using patterns found in nature. The resulting work combined images taken and made by all pupils.

Palestine & Dagenham

1. Pupils from Jericho by Hareth Youssef
2. Pupils from Eastbury Community School by Shona Watt
3. Henna artwork from Riverside School
4. Pupils from Jericho by Amer Shomali
Amer Shomali is a Palestinian multidisciplinary artist. He uses painting, films, digital media, installations and comics as tools to explore and interact with the sociopolitical scene in Palestine.

Born in Kuwait in 1981, Shomali holds a BSc in Architecture from Birzeit University in Palestine, and a Master’s degree in Animation from Bournemouth University in the United Kingdom. He is currently based in Ramallah, Palestine.

“It was an interesting exercise this year, trying something more contemporary and conceptual rather than actual representation, focusing on feeling rather than events, exploring the future rather than revisiting the past.”

During our visit, the artwork that I liked the most is “Flower of Salt” by Hasan Daraghmeh. He combined many videos all together on one screen. Each one is very small and you cannot tell what is happening, everything is disappearing like ruins.

Samer Wahdan, pupil from Aqabet Jaber Basic Boys School.
Amer invited all 75 students from the six participating schools to visit the Palestinian Museum in the town of Birzeit and see the current exhibition Intimate Terrains, which examines the Palestinian landscape and the river as one of its elements. They made artwork inspired by what they saw.

“We visited the Palestinian Museum. I loved most of all an artwork by Simran Masur called Drought. It is a fragmented scene of a house, made of dry clay and broken into small pieces. It is fragmented and broken in a way that makes you cannot tell where it anymore.”

Jumana Awatleh, pupil from Masqat Secondary School for Girls
Barking and Dagenham
UK

The schools from Barking and Dagenham are in their second year of the programme and so based their artwork on their partner city, Jericho. They used embroidery, collage and sculptures to make their designs.

1 Detail from Riverside School
2 Embroidered glove from Robert Clack School
3 Pupils from Dagenham Park School by Shona Watt
4 Artwork from All Saints Catholic School
5 Artwork from Dagenham Park School
6 Pupils from Robert Clack School by Shona Watt

“Ikram, pupil from Eastbury Community School

“Rivers of the World was very enjoyable and provided a good opportunity to communicate and talk others. Though the project I learnt that if you try try and try again you can reach your goal. I had to re-create my wave because I didn’t do too well but in the end I made a masterpiece which actually looks amazing!”
Artworks

Palestine

Apal Qabir Boys School
Inspired by Hanan Barqawi’s Flower of the desert, where minute memories of place become a starting point on the screen, the students created a piece of work entitled Our Share which represents the lack of water in Palestinian territories.

Auja Basic Co-Ed School
Inspired by Steve Sabella’s work No Man’s Land, the students created a piece of work entitled Our Share which represents the lack of water in Palestinian territories.

Ein Al-Sultan Co-Ed School
Inspired by Anisah Zonour’s Nation State, which represents Palestine as a high-rise tower, in commenting on the continuous land confiscation, destruction and demolition, the students created work based on imaginary scenes that one would see from inside the tower block.

Jericho Secondary School for Girls
The students imagined the River Jordan and created an artwork, Our River, which highlights the injustice of water access and distribution between Palestinian and Israeli territories.

Barking and Dagenham

Barking Abbey School
The Rose of Jericho, otherwise known as the Resurrection Plant grows in dry deserts and can live without water for years. It curls into a ball without water then magically unfurls into its original green state with a touch of moisture. Students made elements of the plant using recycled metal as a reference to the problems with water shortages that the Palestinians suffer from.

Eastbury Community School
Palestinians in the past would dig out black stones from the riverbed. They were known as Dead Sea Stones and were made into plates and vessels. These were highly decorated with patterns. Students made isometric drawings and designed their own patterns with which to decorate their plates.

Dagenham Park Church of England School
Embroidery is an ancient craft in Palestine. Brightly dyed silk thread is used, mostly on women’s dresses to illustrate symbolic references from nature and recently, has developed into political references. Students made images on graph and isometric drawing paper illustrating various elements of past and modern embroidery.

Robert Clack School
Indigo dye was traditionally used by newly widowed Palestinian women to dye their wedding dresses. The indigo plant from the Jordan valley was used to produce multiple shades of blue dye which the widow would use to colour all her dresses. The students made real embroidery pieces on gloves dyed in indigo blue.

Masqat Secondary School for Girls
Students made artwork from photos they took in the museum and inspired by research of their local area on google maps. They found that their surroundings, including the river, were unrecognisable as the images were pixelated so as not to reveal Israeli military locations.

Riverside School
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Fatima Al-Zahra Secondary School for Girls
Students imagined living in a high-rise tower block in Jericho, with no access to land, the breeze or natural smells. They depicted how the tower could be seen by someone standing by the river.

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Artwork detail: All Saints Catholic School with Shona Watt
Thames Festival Trust is delighted to have launched a teacher focused art based learning programme for primary schools called The Story of Water.

Schools in Newham, Warrington, Halton, Peterborough and Lagos have started their journey by taking part in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions, art workshops and international partnership meetings. Based on a new Story of Water educational resource pack, schools have begun to develop a host of work including poetry, artwork, displays and whole school Global Goal learning.

“I really enjoyed the CPD and I think it is a great initiative. There are many strengths to the project but overall it is great that we have the opportunity to broaden ours and our children’s understanding and knowledge of international schools, environmental issues and global geography in a very real and meaningful way.”

Rubina Rehman, teacher from Elmhurst Primary School

“I liked using rubbish as collage because it showed us how dangerous rubbish in the water is for animals.”

Pupil from Southfields Primary School
At Leighton Primary School, two Year 3 classes took part in The Story of Water project. We began with an initial assessment which, as we suspected, revealed that most children were very unsure of what a river was and how it was different to other bodies of water such as lakes, ponds, the sea and streams. It also showed that the children had very limited awareness of what could be done to look after our environment which for most children was limited to not dropping litter and switching taps and lights off.

We taught the children about rivers and their features, and we spent a day in Nene Park doing a range of activities close to and connected to the River Nene.

The following day we began our Art project, led by artist Stuart Payn, which took place over three days. On the first day the children experimented with mark-making and spray-painting with stencils. The outcomes were used on the second day to make individual collaged fish, and then on the final day to produce a final group collage of a river scene. These collages were photographed and combined digitally to produce a permanent river tableau which will be mounted on a wall by the main entrance of the school.

Alongside the art project, we have also written descriptive river poems and have learnt about the plastic crisis, its impact on river and marine life and potential solutions.

Moving forward, we have incorporated the Rivers of the World units of work into the Geography curriculum for each year group in Key Stage Two, and we plan for our classes once they move into Year 4 to learn about our partner school’s country, Morocco and to conduct an art project based on their local river.

The children have really enjoyed working with a professional artist, and have learnt many new skills from Stuart. Already an artistic class, he has inspired many of the children to pursue their artwork. The children have also begun a learning journey which will continue over the next four years which will make them much more aware of the Global Goals for Sustainable Development and of their own impact on climate and the environment.

Andy Moore, teacher from Leighton Primary School

“Overall the strength of the project was being able to involve everyone across the school and the great artist sessions. Amazing! I have loved it!”

Peter Richards, teacher from William Law CE Primary School

“I enjoyed how our teacher taught us different skills and techniques. It has really helped me in all ways to love art.”

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Abigail, pupil from St Joachim’s Primary School
“The CPD provided inspirational art ideas which could be used across the curriculum. There was a very clear explanation of the Story of Water and the education resources. Good networking opportunities too.”

Richard Jones, teacher from Farnworth CE Primary School
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Riversoftheworld.org
#riversoftheworld

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