Supporting School Counseling in Belize: Establishing a Middle School Career Development Program

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Abstract

Within the education field, international partnerships to address career development have been successful around the world (Brown, Bim Rose, & Hughes, 2005; Nazali, 2007; Prideaux, Patton, & Creed, 2002; Repetto, 2001). Career development programming impacts the educational development for children and adolescents (Gottfredson, 1981; Gottfredson & Lapan, 1997; NCDA, 2011). School Counselors are often an untapped resource in the schools to design, implement and evaluate school-wide programs centered on career development. This article explores the benefits of career development and the creation of a career development school-wide program for the 6th grade level in Belize. This is accomplished through an international partnership between the Ministry of Education in Belize and a University in the Northeastern United States. This article explains the school counselors role as well as best practices for international partnerships when creating a full-year, school-wide career program at the middle school level in Belize.

Keywords: Career development, Primary school, Career counseling

Introduction

Academic development in school for children and adolescents is a universal goal throughout the world. Educational literature explains how learners, regardless of country and culture, are not one-dimensional, thus a holistic approach to education has positive impacts (Oser, Beck, Alvarado, & Pang, 2014; Snyder, Vuchinich, Acock, Washburn, & Flay, 2012). Adjusting to meet the developmental levels of the students and address the schools' culture and community are critical steps at all grade levels.

Significant efforts have been seen in the United States to implement career-based developmental programming that will inform the whole child at the primary and secondary school levels (Coogan, Neary & Evans, 2014; Gottfredson, 1981; Gottfredson & Lapan, 1997; Gysbers, 2005). The general goals of these programs are to help inform the children (and their parents) and begin establishing skills, attitudes, and knowledge for transition into the workforce. Efforts are also seen in Ireland evidenced by the Transition Year Programme first implemented in 1974 that focuses on career and workforce

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readiness at the secondary school level (Moynihan, 2015). Although these two countries offer comprehensive examples that could be replicated, the reality is that most countries do not focus on career development as a part of the primary education training. However, considering the twenty-first century global economy demands a variety of skills that are evolving and growing as new technology surfaces impacting the workforce, preparing our students as early as the primary levels can be beneficial across many levels. For many developing countries there is a heightened focus on career development for children and adolescents because of the potential impact on the labor market (Watts & Fretwell, 2004; Richard, 2005). The literature has supported the positive implications intentional career programming can have on occupational aspirations for decades (Gottfredson, 1981; Gottfredson & Lapan, 1997; Gysbers, 2005; Moynihan, 2015; Nazli, 2007; Rowan-Kenyon , Perna, & Swan, 2011).

Exposure and awareness are the key goals for career development among children and adolescents (Andersen & Vandehey, 2012; Gysbers, 2005; NCDA Guidelines, 2011). Implementing a career development program at the primary school level provides the children with more time to practice critical transferable skills that are expected and required for success across any occupation in the 21st century global economy. Transferable skills such as communication (written and verbal) that infuses technology (e.g., emailing; and using power points for presentations) (Moynihan, 2015); problem-solving skills and critical thinking that infuses both analytical and global thinking are all required in this fluctuating labor market.

Many schools, especially in the United States, at the primary and secondary levels already have a key resource to successfully assess for the needs, implement, and evaluate the career development program that is best suited for their school. This resource is the School Counselor; a master's level and state-licensed professional counselor who is trained in academic, career, and social-emotional development for children and adolescents as well as research, program creation and evaluation and various forms of delivery counseling services (e.g, individual, small group, large group), (ASCA, 2012).

Understanding the School Counselor's Role

The School Counselor is a support service personnel employed in the primary and secondary schools. Some countries refer to this role as a "Guidance Counselor". Since the early 1900's, there was a direct focus on vocational counseling, and some efforts to impact the public school sectors (Coogan, 2014). However, there were no positions in the schools at that time that parallel the focus of responsibilities of the school counselor. The concept of vocational counseling was being fine-tuned, and the schools that provided this service to their students were calling on Teachers or Administrators to add extra duties to their positions (Gysbers, 2005). As an ancillary position, not all students had access to vocational counseling services.

The Vocational Guidance Counselors' role was formalized and funded in the United States as a standalone position in the middle and high school levels as a result of the 1958 National Defense Education Act (NDEA). These counselors focused on academic and career development, with particular attention paid to identifying students who had aptitudes in math and science as a strategy to help the country remain competitive during the "race to space" (Coogan, 2014; Jolly & Kettler, 2008). In the first few decades, the student needs and the position evolved encompassing more responsibilities and duties that would impact child development. In addition to support for identifying gifted and talented children (Jolly & Kettler, 2008), another outcome from the NDEA in American Education was the establishment of the Vocational School Counselor. The role evolved into a stand-alone position in the schools quickly, and a chartered professional organization was

formed in the mid-1950's as well, the American School Counseling Association [ASCA]. A few decades later, ASCA sought to re-name this critical support role in the school understanding the holistic and vastly comprehensive skill set this role utilized on a daily basis; thus, the title of the role was changed to the Professional School Counselor. Today, the shortened title commonly used is the School Counselor.

There are several barriers to academic success challenging students across the world. Some barriers are environmental (e.g., the student and his/her family are homeless, or perhaps there are unsafe or unsuitable living conditions for the child). Other barriers are mental, including various challenges with learning, development or the student is a gifted and talented learner. Sadly, many schools across the country are not equipped to support the needs of gifted and talented students (Jolley & Kettler, 2008). There are also emotional barriers due to developmental or biological factors if a child struggles with emotional regulation, coping skills and overall wellness and self-care. Any of these examples are within the scope of the training of the twenty-first century school counselor. School counselors can help children and their families to identify different types of barriers, design a specific plan for that student based on their needs and abilities, and provide continued support so that the child has the opportunity to be a successful learner.

As a key resource for American schools, the school counselor is someone students, families, teachers and administers can rely on to address barriers along with academic and career development needs. In many countries, however, this role does not exist or, the job responsibilities are very different than how the role is performed in the United States. When there are limited or no School Counselors, programming and evaluation needs often fall on the building administrators or teachers. This is seen often in third-world countries where resources and personnel are already limited.

In Belize, the role of the School Counselor is a newer role to the educational system (Smith-Augustine & Wagner, 2012). Within the founding group of school counselors in Belize, the majority do not have the formal training in line with various standing and accrediting bodies such as: the U.S. National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC), the U.S. Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Educational Related Programs (CACREP), and the American School Counseling Association (ASCA). However, the Belize School Counselors Association (BSCA) continues to grow and advocate to add positions for school counselors across all grade levels in primary and secondary schools throughout the country (Smith-Augustine & Wagner, 2012). As the country of Belize continues to expand their educational support personnel by adding School Counselors to the primary and secondary levels, additional programming and evaluation will be possible to support and implement.

Collaborative partnerships are one mechanism that can be used to create and implement career development programming across all school levels. Implications for such partnerships can directly impact the local workforce in a country exposing students to career available in their own backyard at an early age. Waiting until high school is not necessary and hinders the career development process. Focusing on programming at the elementary and middle school levels with a developmental lens contributes to the increased self-efficacy, self-concept and self-esteem of the child (Anderson & Vandehey, 2012; Hutchins & Akos, 2013).

Identified Career Development Needs in Belize

The Ministry of Education in Belize is the government agency that oversees all education for the country. In May, 2013 the Ministry of Education in Belize conducted an internal review of their educational systems. One of the areas of exploration was looking at career development and career decision-making among the youth. A report was published by the

Inter-American Development Bank for the Ministry of Education in Belize focused on these concerns. It recognized recent efforts by the country to invest in their educational system; however, the access to education, quality of education and the equity of education throughout the country still showed much needed improvement (Naslund-Hadley, Alonzo, & Martin, 2013). One cause for concern was the alarming drop-out rates between primary and secondary where more than half of Belize's students choose to leave schooling after Standard 6, the United States equivalent of eighth grade (Nasulnd-Hadley, et al., 2013). The outcomes from this report prompted exploration of the glaring question, "What factors are contributing to the current retention issues seen among the middle school level?" Upon closer examination it appeared that there was no career development program in existence in any of the primary schools. Based in part on the success seen in the United States, Belize sought to create a career development program for their middle school level as a developmental prevention strategy to address the current retention issues. The method to accomplish this goal would call upon an existing partnership with the Ministry of Education and a University in the Northeastern United States.

The primary goals of this partnership were to specifically address significant retention issues that had been observed in Belize throughout the middle school level. It was noted that the highest dropout rates were seen among the equivalent of eighth grade. In Belize, this is a natural transition point in the educational process. Creating a program to inform career development awareness, knowledge, and practice among the middle-school aged students is predicted to have a significant impact on career decision-making. The following describes the environmental factors that informed the need in Belize as well as the process to create a school-based career development program through an international collaborative effort. It is the hope of this author that this article may serve as a "how-to" guide to create a school-wide career development program and encourage collaboration at the international level.

The team formed to create the school-based career program and address the retention issues noted at the middle school level included: a School Counselor Educator from the Northeastern University in the United States who specializes in school counseling training and career development; a Career Counselor from the same University who specialized in career counseling and career assessment; representatives in Belize from the Ministry of Education, the Belize Counseling and Care Unit, and target schools' administration and teachers. The objective of this team during the first year was to create a full-year career development program that could be implemented in identified target schools throughout Belize in the first year as a pilot test. Based on those results, any modifications identified would be made, and the program would be available for implementation country-wide.

Belize's Geographic Background. Belize is a small country located on the eastern coast in the heart of Central America. It is the only country in Central America whose official language is English, though Belizean Creole and Spanish are also commonly spoken. Belize is bordered on the north by Mexico, on the south and west by Guatemala, and on the east by the Caribbean Sea. According to a country profile report conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2014), in 2013 the country's population was approximately 332,000 with 34% of this total population representing children ages 14 years and younger. In 2010, more than 90,000 students were enrolled in Belize schools and colleges at all levels, including almost 4,000 in preschools, 63,000 in primary schools, and more than 15,000 in high schools. Close to 6,000 students were in post-secondary studies. Additionally, 55% of the total population in Belize lives in a rural geographic area (UNESCO, 2014), which is also informed by the primary areas of the Belizean labor market. According to the Belize 2010 census, the five main ethnic groups, in order of proportion, are: Mestizo representing approximately half

of the population in the country (the result of the mixture between colonial Hispanics and Maya); Creole representing approximately 21% of the population (the result of the mixture between the British and their African slaves); Maya representing about 10% of the population (made up of three linguistic groups); Garifuna representing approximately 5% of the population (originally from St Vincent where maroon African slaves blended with Amerindians); and, Mennonites representing approximately 4% of the population (originally from Germany via Mexico) (Palacio, 2013).

Belize's Labor Market and Economy. The economy is primarily based on agriculture, tourism, and services. The primary exports are citrus, sugar, and bananas. In 2013, (UNESCO, 2014) estimated that 41% of the population lived below the poverty line. As a part of the Belizean Labor Act, the general minimum age of employment is reported to be 12 years-old. In 2013, The United States Department of Labor Bureau of International Labor Affairs published a report stating how children in Belize are an active part of the labor market, and nearly 9% of children between the ages of 7-14 are going to school and also working in the agriculture industry or street peddling merchandise before or after school (UNESCO, 2014). This is considered to be a primary factor for the retention issues that were noted in the Inter-American Development Bank report of 2013.

Belize's Educational System. Compulsory education defines the specific age span during which children are legally obliged to attend school. In Belize, compulsory education lasts eight years and spans ages 5-12 (UNESCO, 2014). It may be better understood why the minimum age of employment is 12 when this is noted as the same age where education is no longer legally required. In recent years, there has been a steady increase in the overall percentage of students enrolling in primary school. In 2004, 96.4% of the total numbers of students at the primary school age were enrolled at that level (UNESCO, 2014). While this percentage fluctuated slightly over the years for the primary school level, it has remained mostly consistent at 96.6% in 2013 (UNESCO, 2014). It is likely the various efforts by the Ministry of Education in recent years to support education have had a direct effect on the increase noted in primary school enrollment.

In Belize, education is managed jointly by church and state. This merger is a part of the country's history as a British Colony. As such, it is not surprising to learn the parochial and catholic schools are considered to be the best throughout primary and secondary levels (UNESCO, 2014).

The grading system in the schools is mixed. Some schools follow the Kindergarten – 12th as is custom in the United States. In these schools, the typical school year will begin in September and end in June (UNESCO, 2014). Schools that do not follow this format, will refer to each grade level as a "standard," a model more in line with the British educational system. Students will begin at the grade level known as standard 1 (the equivalent of Kindergarten in the American system). Their primary schooling will continue through standard 6 (the equivalent of 8th grade in the American system). Secondary school, also known in the United States as high school, may or may not be a catholic school. The best schools are often found in Belize City and in larger towns because of the availability and access to various resources including but not limited to: personnel, supplies, and typically larger populations which means more students enrolled in the schools. Many of the schools lacking in resources appear to be in the rural areas of the country, often in the south.

There are several possible reasons that contribute to a child ending their educational career at such a young age of 12 in Belize. One reason can be informed by financial burdens felt by the families as the cost of schooling will increase exponentially as secondary school and additional education is no longer free. Even if a family is among the

fortunate to receive tuition subsidies offered by the government, this support is intended for compulsory education. For families who are not part of this program during compulsory age, the education tuition can be an additional expense that while likely seen as a value within the family, it still is a burden on the family budget.

A second reason is that several children may be dropping out is due to opportunities other than school. Some students are struggling in certain areas of the country with safety matters and may join gangs for reasons of perceived assistance the gang says they can provide, or because that gang may provide the child with a sense of community they are not able to achieve in another outlet (Dugal, 2015; Peirce & Veyrat-Pontet, 2013). And, still others are asked to contribute to the family income by entering the workforce as a child. One example of this may been seen in large tourist areas where the children work as street peddlers selling various goods made by the families. Another example may be seen among families that are heavily involved in the agricultural sector, and may require the assistance of the child to continue meeting productivity goals.

Educator Training. Examining the field of education in Belize, we see there is no requirement of a higher education degree in Belize to be a primary or secondary school teacher (Lindhauer, 2014; Nasulnd-Hadley, et al., 2013). Furthermore, there is no license of minimum subject matter knowledge or other competencies regulated by the Ministry of Education, as we see in every state Department of Education across the United States. In 2013, approximately forty percent of Belizean teachers instructing at the high school level had received only a high school education themselves (Nasulnd-Hadley, et al., 2013). When looking more closely at all educators across Belize, it appears that approximately 70% of all teachers regardless of subject area or grade level are professionally trained (Lindhauer, 2014; Nasulnd-Hadley, et al., 2013). One effort the Ministry of Education implemented to work to address this was through a recent amendments to the Education Act of 2010 that seeks to have all teachers professionally trained as a requirement to obtain a teacher's license (Dugal, 2015; Lindhauer, 2014; Naslund-Hadley, et al., 2013).

Many state Department of Educations within the United States all have minimum requirements for education curriculums outlining benchmark standards the students must demonstrate competencies in. Currently, this is the direction that the Ministry of Education is working towards to provide minimum levels of knowledge and competencies in education through a country-wide curriculum. One goal for this program is to contribute to these efforts focusing on the career development of the young adolescent and through a developmental lens, help to inform career aptitude and knowledge such that the student may reconsider their perspective on continuing to high school, and possibly higher education.

A Model Career Development Program in Middle School

Focused on addressing career development needs among middle school (7th grade specifically) in the American system, Starr and Gysbers (1992) created the Career Horizons Program as a prevention tool in the schools. The School Counselor was identified in this program as the best resource to deliver and evaluate the effectiveness of this program in the schools. Given the training that school counselors have across academic, career and social/emotional development among children and adolescents (ASCA, 2012) this is a perfect fit. While the foundational assumptions made to determine the need of the Career Horizons Program match the circumstances that the author was presented with, the international factor would not allow for the program to be directly transferred into the Belize schools. Therefore, the author and her team created a new program predicated on the parallel assumption that career-development is a life-long process that grows with experiences and intentional focus. Furthermore, at the middle school ages, the main goal is

career exposure and assisting the students to develop the necessary self-skills that will support their on-going self-reflection and self-awareness, which will be required for effective career decision-making when the developmental time comes. In addition to the normative developmental needs of career development, the growth process may vary greatly based on cultural and economic factors. This is seen clearly when considering the limited career development opportunities and development available for the middle school equivalents in the country of Belize.

The Belize Career Development Program for 6th Graders

The initial project plan was formulated based on the Inter-American Development Bank report of 2013, consultation with the Ministry of Education and the local Belizean team assisting with this project, and a field observation conducted by the primary author of the program in April of 2013 to complete an informal needs assessment. The Starr and Gysbers (1992) " Career Horizons Program" was also referred to as an example of a model program. Taking the information from these sources, a pilot program was created.

Members of the local team in Belize mainly worked in Belize City for the Ministry of Education or the Ministry's subdivision referred to as the Counseling and Care Unit. The Counseling and Care Unit provides counseling and related educational support services to schools throughout the program. There were four full-time members of the Unit at the time of this project who had divided the country into sections that they were each responsible for. Upon a closer look, it appeared a lot of the work in the schools performed by these individuals mirrors the work of both the School Social Worker and the School Counselor seen in the American primary and secondary educational system.

The team identified overall goals to help direct their efforts during the first year that included: (a) creation of a full-year career development program that would include six modules for implantation monthly throughout the school year by a classroom teacher who may not have had any formal training in career development or assessment/program evaluation; (b) prepare all associated assessment tools that will be used in specific modules; (c) prepare all associated assessment tools that will be used to determine the overall effectiveness of the program during its initial year of implementation, (d) create a supplemental training manual for the teachers that outlined strategies for effective implementation and student-centered teaching techniques.to support the teachers as they will be the personnel in the school administering this program, and (e) educate and support the Ministry of Education in Belize to understand how School Counselors can be a helpful and critical resource to addressing career development, social-emotional and academic needs of students across all grade levels, thus advocating for the hiring of more School Counselors country wide. Following the first year, the team would reevaluate the aforementioned goals and curriculum to identify any necessary modifications to the program, implementation, or evaluation steps in preparation for dissemination throughout the country.

The program, assessment tools, and the supplemental teachers' manual were created with the understanding that the primary role working with this program will be the classroom teacher. While the ideal is that School Counselors administer and evaluate the program, there are simply not enough School Counselors in Belize at this time to support that being an active role with this program. One hope is that through the evaluation procedures, the teachers and the local Belize team will have evidence to present to the Ministry of Education and the local University to support continued investment to grow the role of the School Counselor in the primary and secondary schools as well as establish degree granting graduate programs to provide the adequate training. The teacher's manual that was created was intended to provide the classroom teachers with

comprehensive supplemental information to support their success as a key administrator of this curriculum and program in the general areas of teacher education training, classroom management, differentiated learning, program and curriculum development and evaluation. As the program grows, modifications may be made to the manual accordingly. The ultimate goal is to expand the program country-wide. Therefore, in addition to the creation of the curriculum, the team sought to secure additional financial support to create a kit of supplies that would contain all materials needed for every curriculum (e.g., crayons, paper, chalk, string, etc.). The curriculum was created during the 2013-2014 academic year for the implementation at the start of the 2014-2015 academic year.

If the opportunity to continue education beyond the 8th grade is presented, clarified and benefits stated that directly inform this population, the potential impact could be great for the individual student, their family, the community where they live, and ultimately, the country's labor market. A fundamental assumption of this project is that if the schools are able to (a) provide information through intentional psychoeducational programming to children earlier in their educational career, and (b) identify students who are considered to be "at-risk" of dropping out earlier, than those children may choose an alternative path way for their career and educational future.

Students may be deemed "at-risk" for reasons beyond intellectual and scholastic abilities. Other external factors such as, but not limited to: parental involvement, socioeconomic status, family dynamics, ethnicity, gender, and geographic limitations to access education may also be contributing facts. One result of external factors that impede children's career development is the construct coined by Gottfredson of circumscription, the process by which children will almost unconsciously narrow their definitions of acceptable and unacceptable adult work roles, thus narrowing the scope of what occupations are attainable or even possible for them to consider (1981; Gottfredson, 2002; Gottfredson & Lapan, 1997). A similar construct she proposed is that of compromise (Gottfredson, 1981; Gottfredson & Lapan, 1997), where the child will make adaptations and modify their ideals related to the world of work.

The final product that was created over the course of one academic year included six modules designed for the 6th grade level to be completed over the span of an academic year. The five parochial schools that were identified for the pilot year followed the American education system academic calendar. It was assumed, as is in the United States, the first month (September) would be busy with various administrative tasks to start the school year. As such, the first module would not be administered until October, and would continue through April. May is noted as a "celebration" of completing the program, recommending parents and family join at the school on a designated time and date to celebrate the work and growth accomplished by the students throughout the year. With the support of their building principal, the curriculum asks classroom teachers for 90-minutes one day per month to implement the lesson for that module. Actively involving the building administrator serves as a secondary on-site support for the teacher and also can assist to identify the best day in each month so that the curriculum can be administered as consistently across all students in the 6th grade level. A calendar with a recommended timeline for administering the modules was provided. At the end of the academic year, the students would have a completed binder with various pieces of evidence of their hard work and dedication to the activities.

This 6th grade curriculum was designed to provide the foundational skills that will not only help the students to inform their career exploration and career decision-making, but also provide them with transferable learning skills that contribute to being a citizen of the world. The first module provides an overview and defines career awareness and is focused

more on career exposure. The second module centers on strategies for effective communication with teachers, parents, and other adults as the child seeks to apply critical thinking and continue engaging in the career exploration process. The third module centers on academic goal setting differentiating between short-term and long-term goals, and providing strategies for adaptive goal setting. The fourth module centers on adaptive study skills and habits, which are considered to be transferable skills in school as well as in the workforce. No matter which career field a student may chose, there are expectations of the individual to prepare and accomplish tasks assigned. Study skills and habits may directly impact the students' current role as a student, but what they learn and the self-efficacy established will impact them later in life as well. The fifth module was broken into two sections that begins to integrate the skills and practice from the earlier modules. In this module, students will focus on self-awareness and self-exploration that inform career explorations and their individual career development. This is the module where the transition from exploration to individual ownership of their career goals and interests are defined. Finally, the sixth module culminates with the student successfully identifying three (3) careers that are of interest to him or her. They are able to articulate why that career is of interest directly connecting the rationale to elements learned during the self-awareness and career self-discovery process. All modules have activities and assessments included so that the teacher can monitor progress of each student. All activities and assessments are collected in a binder for each student. At the end of the year, this binder may be displayed as evidence of the career exploration journey the student had just completed. The data collected from the assessments will be shared with the local project team, who can then work with the larger project team to complete the overall program evaluation analysis. The overall project team is responsible for creating the report shared with various stakeholders as well as providing any recommendations for growing the program.

Ideas brainstormed for future plans include, but are not limited to: (a) developing a formal teacher training program (e.g., professional development opportunity available even if the program is not being implemented) to better prepare and assist classroom teachers who may not have had formal training as a teacher educator with critical skills such as classroom management, differentiated learning, and empowering autonomous learning at developmentally appropriate levels; (b) creation of electronic resources (e.g., DVD's and the DVD players) to facilitate modules and lessons, which may relieve some teachers who may not be as familiar with the content being discussed in the lesson; (c) working to secure program investors or other financial support so that comprehensive kits and all relevant supplies can be provided to every student at each school that participates in the program; (d) expanding the program to add curriculums for the 7th and 8th grade levels building upon the learning from the previous year; (e) begin to infuse parent involvement as a part of the career exploration journey in a more direct way as there is a possibility that many parents may not have had formal career guidance; and, (f) continue to create or modify assessment tools enhancing the outcomes-based approach for this program.

Conclusion

Career development is an important aspect of the developmental process that is often overshadowed by academic goals and outcomes in schools world-wide. While the question "what do you want to be when you grow up?" is common place is many countries, the actual supports that are in place to guide a student through the career exploration process earlier on in their lives are not as strong as they can be. The primary and secondary schools are able to implement different programming and curriculums to address this need. The School Counselor is the primary resource in the school poised to address all

elements as well from identifying the unique needs within a school, district, or a community to creating and designing intentional programming that best meets the identified needs to collecting evaluative data on whatever delivery system and plan is created to have empirical evidence available to support the effectiveness of their efforts. While the School Counselor is not a common place role in all schools in all countries, education systems and countries are encouraged to consider adding more counselors to the permanent staff across all grade levels. The breadth of services the School Counselor is trained for supports the holistic student across their primary and secondary educational career.

There are many opportunities throughout childhood and adolescence for adaptive and meaningful career development to take place regardless of the individual's country of origin. While not all countries have the same systems and resources available to support various elements of learning, we can capitalize on intentional partnerships to provide necessary supports. Whether the support needed is a consultation, expertise to complete a needs assessment, or it is an intervention to address an identified need, international partnerships are attainable and productive strategies in this 21st century global economy.

Schools, districts, communities and countries will have needs that cannot always be addressed with the local resources. This is when partnerships can be a helpful approach to meeting identified needs be they local, national, or international collaborations. This article showcases the benefits and success to address identified needs by the Ministry of Education in Belize and a University in Northeastern United States. Regardless if the reason for the partnership is based on the content area or a lack in resources to accomplish the identified task, collaborative partnerships is a helpful method. This is enhanced when the partnership is able to cross borders and support different cultures, communities, and labor markets; especially given our 21st century global economy. The success from one country can have an impact on the world.

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