

One World Link

Newsletter : January 2006

Registered charity no. 700714

www.oneworldlink.org.uk

Leamington Proud Hosts of Local Vision for Global Friendship

"I am completely inspired by the idea of linking and what it means for the planet as a whole"

Friday December 2 and Saturday 3rd December saw the first ever UK/ Sierra Leone Community Linking Conference in Leamington Town Hall.

In his opening speech Cllr Dave Shilton, Chair of Warwickshire District Council, welcomed delegates from across the UK, Sierra Leone and even Ireland!

Sierra Leone and Union Flags flew on the Town Hall to honour the occasion.

The event, hosted jointly by Warwick-Bo OWL and UKOWLA, was deemed to be a great success by organisers and delegates. Although there is still much work to be done, one delegate went away with "an overwhelming sense of optimism about links with Sierra Leone."



Delegates enjoying Margaret Burr's Toolkit of Linking session on Friday

Friday night hosted speaker Krishna Sarda, (right) whose words were met with great appreciation, as he voiced the sentiments of the conference, "the only real security in the end is the love we have given and the love we have received. All else can be taken from us. So pour out your love and friendship and do not hoard it. And do not delay or hesitate in standing up to be counted with the oppressed."

The talk was followed by live acoustic music from 'Two Man Ting' who provided a fusion of African dance, jazz, folk and pop styles.



*Krishna Sarda,
Director of the
Council for
Ethnic Minority
Voluntary
Organisations*

There were four case studies presented on One World Link Warwick-Bo by Jane Knight; Bo District Descendants Association; from their director, Martin Tarawally; the Diocese of Chichester/Diocese of Bo link by Trevor and Daphne Murdoch; and Youlgrave Bangbutt Village Community Link by Barbara Scrivener and Carole Sutcliffe. These were an opportunity to share ideas and experience, one attendee commented "we have a lot to learn from each other and I welcome the contacts that have been made here".

Other sessions included a Toolkit of Linking by Margaret Burr, and a talk from Mark Collins, Director, Commonwealth Foundation. There were six workshops on the Saturday morning and each group was asked to come back to the plenary with issues and recommendations relevant to their specific workshops on Women, Faith, Health, School, Community, and Local Authority. Later workshops were held on Money Matters and Basic Steps to Linking, Communication, Networking in Sierra Leone and the UK, Stereotypes and Perceptions, Whose agenda? and Widening your link. The conference concluded with a plenary session with two panels to answer questions, one made up of the facilitators of the 6 workshops and the other panel included the representatives of the various agencies, including Peter Penfold the former UK High Commissioner in Sierra Leone, Mark Collins, Director, Commonwealth Foundation, and Nick Maurice, Director of UKOWLA.

There were many positives to take away from the event and feedback demonstrated a desire to continue this momentum, with "regular meetings of this nature where awareness can be raised and addressed. More involvement in the diaspora organisations and more publicity". Committee members from Warwick-Bo link will shortly be meeting with UKOWLA to see what can be learned from the experience and agree on the way forward. Hopefully we can keep you updated on progress.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in the conference, caterers, town hall staff, the Chair of Warwick District Council and to UKOWLA.

To read the full conference report go to www.oneworldlink.org.uk

If this Newsletter is no longer required please inform:

OWL POSTBOX c/o 31 The Greswoldes, Radford Semele, Leamington Spa, CV31 1TP or e-mail owl@31cv311tp.freemove.co.uk

Local Government Developments

Hussine Yumkella The UK Local Government Alliance for International Development annual conference was held between 17-18 November 2005 in Leeds.

The theme of the conference was how to keep international development local. Local government has a key role to play in reducing poverty but this is often overlooked. Politicians including the UK Secretary of State for International Development, Hilary Benn, academics and leading figures in the development field gave keynote addresses. Issues discussed included local authorities and the Millennium Development Goals, working in partnership and how local authorities can get involved in international development.

Emmanuel Gaima, director of the Decentralisation Secretariat in Sierra Leone, one of the keynote speakers at the conference stressed the fact that there is a national capacity crisis in Sierra Leone. If decentralisation is to be effective it will need people in the engine room – staff and professionals – who can deliver local democracy.

There is an urgent need for staff and professional exchanges with their counterparts in countries such as the UK who are experienced in local governance matters. With this he also highlighted the view that when we talk about global development with partners and local initiatives, we must be mindful of the peculiarities of the local area. Unless those are taken on board, the initiative will not receive local buy-in and implementation will become difficult because it becomes an imposed programme and not the people's programme.

This was followed by a presentation of the 24 year old Warwick-Bo community link that has recently developed into a local government partnership involving WCC. Councillor Jane Knight of Warwick District Council who made the presentation, encouraged anyone considering involving their local authority in international development work to include the local community, pointing out that "You are much more likely to sustain the link if it doesn't change politically at election time."



Raise the Roof Appeal

We are very pleased to announce the completion of the first phase of the Bo OWL Community Centre. It is now in use for general meetings and activities. At this stage the plan had been to redirect our fundraising from the building itself into equipping it for its various functions, e.g. a resource centre and a café and a social centre. We have delayed this at the urgent request of the Bo OWL Committee who have made such an admirable effort in getting the centre built, and who will be responsible for its operations. The reasons are as follows:

- The concrete floor of the upper storey currently acting as the roof has turned out not to be weatherproof. There are leaks!
- An additional layer of concrete is unlikely to be effective for long because the intensity and frequency of torrential rain has increased of late and the rainy season is lasting longer
- A purpose built sloping roof to the second storey is the only sure way of protecting the beautiful new first storey and the equipment and activities it will house
- This roof will also afford shade and shelter for some activities to take place on the second level, so there will be an additional benefit.

Bo OWL have received the first instalment of money raised for the "raise the roof appeal". This has enabled them to purchase more materials such as sand and cement, so that the block making can recommence for the support of the second story roof. They are now optimistic that the roof will be in place before the next rainy season in May; but that does depend on us still meeting our target of £6,000. Nearly £2000 is still needed.

Thank you kindly to all those who have donated. If you are interested in donating please contact OWL Secretary John Myers at secretary@oneworldlink.org.uk

Interested in beekeeping? We are in the early stages of a possible beekeeping link between Bo and Warwick Districts. If you are interested in more information, please contact John Myers, Secretary One World Link, 44 (0)845 458 0601, secretary@oneworldlink.org.uk

The Leamington Library has allocated OWL its own space on the bookshelves. There are some really interesting books there. Would you be willing to provide a short book review for the newsletter? If so please contact Mary at maryweir@gmail.com

On behalf of all of us, thank you so very much Brian for the production of the newsletter for so many years. You have been the reporter, editor, printer, and distributor. It has come out regularly three times a year, full of accurate information and interest, since September 1986. It has been the lifeblood of our communication with members and our wider net of supporters and stakeholders; and an important element in promoting ourselves to others. A job very well done!

AGM – and New Beginnings...

A new chair was elected unopposed at the AGM on 22nd October, at Bath Place Community Venture. Maria Franchi, the new chair, spent 2 months in Bo in 2003, on behalf of OWL working with the Teachers and Women's Groups. A new position of Vice-Chair was proposed and accepted by the committee under section 7e of the constitution. The position was filled by Hussine Yumkella, born in Sierra Leone, who now works for Warwickshire County Council and is active in work towards the Local Authority "Development Partnership" in Bo.

The event saw the formal end to Bill Evans' time as chair, which concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Jane Knight, for all of his work as chair, and seconded by John Myers, who emphasised the importance of his determination to visit post-war Bo during his term of office which acted as a real stimulus to all that has followed.

John McFarlane will continue as Treasurer and John Myers as Secretary. Other members were proposed and elected – Cllr Bill Evans, Janet Alty, Cllr Jane Knight, Cllr Bob Crowther, Andy Smith, Myf Hodkin, and Sylvia Lee. Lee Hales stood down having completed his degree and moved away, appreciation for his work and best wishes for his future were expressed.



Maria Franchi in Bo in November & December 2003 with Fernie, Ferncumbe School Mascot, and Britannia, a gift from the children of the Ferncumbe School to the children of their link school

Volunteers Required

We are forming a publicity, promotion and development awareness sub-group to help stimulate and coordinate our activities. There are many different things to be done:

- To maintain and develop OWLs display boards and materials
- To identify opportunities for these to be used publicly and help organise the actual display
- To identify items of interest to the media, and prepare press releases
- To make video and photographic (audio visual) records of OWL activities
- To monitor and develop our public and in house library resources
- Archive our existing materials, e.g. photos, reports, artefacts etc
- Organise seminars and other educational activities

Lots of things are developing at present in OWL and we really do need more people to be helping to bring those developments to success.

If you think you could help in one of these ways either as part of a team or working more individually, please contact John Myers, Secretary One World Link, 44 (0)845 458 0601, secretary@oneworldlink.org.uk

Fundraising Gig

Sierra Leone Flags had pride of place on the November 26 when local bands held a marathon gig in support of Bath Place Community Centre and its sister One World Link Community Centre in Bo. As a result £288 was raised in support of the "Raise the Roof Appeal".

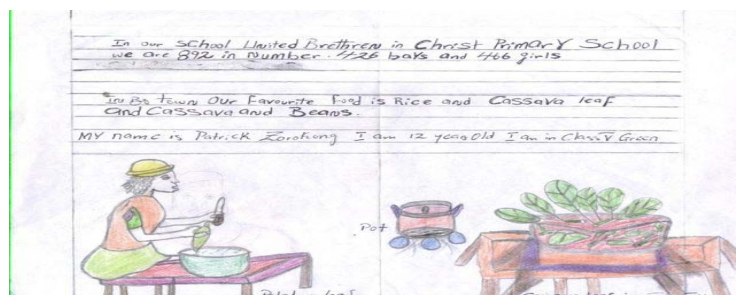
Our thanks to all the musicians who took part, to Viv Joseph and Kate Brown at Bath Place, and above all to Hannah Morland and her small band of volunteers who brought it all together. Hannah organises the live music at the Jug and Jester on Monday nights under the name of Abandon the Jug.

African Cocktail Party

Katherine Everson, a third year student at the University of Warwick, has been working closely with One World Link, partly on fundraising. She is organising, with Warwick Volunteers, a fashion show and African Cocktail Party in aid of the charity. No details have been finalised yet, but it is provisionally planned to happen on May 2nd at Warwick University Union. There will be an African theme, with many decorations and live music and dancing, so lot's to see!! If you are interested in helping or coming to the event please email Katherine at k.s.everson@warwick.ac.uk, and she will keep you updated on the plans.

Visitors to Bo

- Danny Foulstone, a professional computer practitioner, has volunteered to go to Bo to help sort out an effective means of email communication based at the Bo OWL Community Centre, and to explore what is needed to get the IT training centre up and running. He's hoping to go along with those from the schools group – see 'Global Warming' below.
- Only a few days later on an overlapping visit, our Chair Maria Franchi will be going to meet with Bo OWL to discuss plans for the next stage of the community centre projects, and to review our developing relationship with Bo. She is likely to be accompanied by Jane Shakespeare a student at Warwick University who is writing a dissertation on micro-credit. Jane will be working with the Kayoma's Women's groups on a review of their microcredit scheme.
- Hussine Yumkella our Vice-Chair is also expected to be in Bo in February on behalf of the WCC, who are examining the potential for a development partnership with possible initial cooperation on the need for a clean fresh water supply in Bo.
- There is also the possibility of a visit by two youth workers in the first part of next year returning the visit of two Bo youth workers in May last year. The funding and practicalities of this are still being worked out. The purpose will be to stimulate and support linking activities between youth in the two communities



Exchanged student work from primary schools Brookhurst, Leamington and UBC Primary, Bo

Global Warming

During October three primary schools from Warwick District received visits from their partner schools in Bo District, as the first half of a Schools Cluster Reciprocal Visit funded by the Global Schools Partnership. Joe Pyne, deputy mayor of Bo and Principal of St Francis Upper Primary School, linked with St Anthony's RC School. V. V Bockarie, Principal of Bo UBC Primary and Bo OWL executive member, partnered with Brookhurst School and Josephine Komeh, Principal of Kakua Primary linked with Ferncumbe School, spent their first week focusing on their partnered school while the second week was more community oriented.



V. V Bockarie, Joe Pyne with five-year-old pupil, Sam at Ferncumbe School. Taken from Royal Leamington Spa Times October 26

The visits coincided with the Warwick OWL AGM where the head teachers presented their verdict on the visit. Joe Pyne related that their visit to our schools with their contrasting wealth of provision leaves them wondering what to say, "We have come and seen and answered your questions. You need to do more for us to help narrow the gap." Joe further stated that the spirit of love and friendship still counts. Brian Austin put forward the idea that community links can do little to redress the material imbalance, but that people's attitudes have to be changed and governments have to be persuaded to act. The AGM concluded with a speech of thanks from Josephine Komeh.

The forthcoming reciprocal visit of our teachers, Sarah Davies, Alison Bryan and Joseph Canon, to Bo, will take place February 10th – 24th 2006. The intention is to develop and co-ordinate their activities for the maximum benefit of all the children involved. They will be accompanied by Brian Austin the convener of the One World Link Schools Group. Brian has a long standing invitation to stay with Joe Taylor in his home in Bo. Joe and Brian have been friends ever since Joe stayed with Brian and family nearly twenty years ago. Brian will be helping to develop the framework for all the schools involved in linking between the two communities. We wish them a very successful trip and look forward to hearing their report.

News in brief

Mobile Need

Mobile phones have transformed communication with and within Sierra Leone over the last couple of years. At the same time they have become a prime target for thieves. David Ngombu Bo OWL Secretary has been the latest OWL victim when his was stolen 3 weeks ago. On Sunday 18th December a young man infiltrated their house and made away with his wife's phone. However he was spotted leaving the house and was surrounded by a crowd of angry neighbours. David had to change role from aggrieved victim to his day job at the Commission for Democracy and Human Rights, and intervened to protect the young man from abuse suffering a bruised finger in the process. The would be thief was then handed over to the police.

Any unwanted or superseded mobile phone will be put to good use in Bo, please ask anyone you know who is upgrading their phone to consider donating their old one to OWL.

BODDA Civic Award 2005

In September we received the following message from Martin Tarawally, President Bo District Descendants Association London, 'as I have already informed you OWL UK has been nominated to receive an Award on the 1st January 2006. I would be very grateful if you can please send someone to represent your Organisation on the day. You have done so much for the people of Bo and we think its time for even the lay man in Bo to know about your activities'. Unfortunately we have been unable to find anyone able to be in Bo on January 1st; but we have recorded a video clip of Martin speaking to Bill Evans as retiring Chair of OWL, and Bill's acceptance speech. We expect that Johannes Mallah Bo OWL Chair will accept the award in person on behalf of both ends of the Link. This is the second year that BODDA will present their civic awards, and it will include 3 days of events and competitions.

Congratulations!

Our Vice-Chair Hussine Yumkella will be in Sierra Leone at Christmas to celebrate her engagement to Mohammed, who comes from Bo. An engagement is an important event which will be celebrated in the traditional manner with their families. We wish Hussine and Mohammed every happiness and success in their future together

DIARY DATE We are planning a public meeting for the evening of 24th March to report on all the visits to Bo; and hope to confirm time and venue soon.

A Happy and Peaceful New Year to you all!

YOUR COMMITTEE 2005-2006

CHAIR	Maria Franchi, 35 Henley Rd Leamington Tel: 338298	chair@oneworldlink.org.uk
SECRETARY	John Myers, 44 St Mary's Rd. Leamington Tel: 425403	secretary@oneworldlink.org.uk
TREASURER	John McFarlane, 87 Larch Walk, Birmingham B25 8QP Tel:0121 6280969	finance@oneworldlink.org.uk
VICE-CHAIR	Hussine Yumkella	
COMMITTEE	Janet Alty, (Women's Group, shipping) 427773, Brian Austin (Schools) 428635, Bob Crowther, Bill Evans, Myf Hodkin, Jane Knight (local government) 311807, Sylvia Lee, Andy Smith, Cllr Mota Singh (WCC Representative)	

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