

ONE WORLD LINK

The friendship link between Bo District in Sierra Leone and Warwick District, UK

www.oneworldlink.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 700714

In this issue

In spite of Covid restrictions and lockdowns a lot has been going on in both Bo and Warwick districts, especially in education. This bumper edition of the newsletter brings you right up to date.

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Chairman's Notebook

The Covid pandemic has impacted on us all and of course has also affected the activities of OWL. The fact that we have not published a newsletter for over a year is evidence to that. I hope that this newsletter finds everyone well and coming through this very difficult time.



Richard Hall

In our previous communication, over a year ago, we advised about a visit to Bo by a group in January 2020, followed by Teacher's Group visit to Bo in February that year. The first group explored the potential for a joint OWL Health Committee and undertook work in relation to Development Planning. There is definite potential for working on a Health Strategy but the Covid situation made it impossible to advance this in the period since. However, a donation from a relative of Helena White enabled a laboratory to be created and fitted out at Yemoh Town Clinic. Johannes Mallah Jr (a member of our committee since last year) was able to visit Bo in March 2021 and was instrumental in getting the project off the ground.

Taking a positive from the Covid crisis, along with many others, we held online (Zoom) meetings. This meant that we could have joint meetings with colleagues in Bo and are possibly staying in touch better than before. Consequently, we were able to agree several improvements to the OWL Centre, including upgrading the solar power and electrical system and decoration of the building inside and out.

In September we agreed a collaboration between an IT Company in Bo and OWL, whereby the Company would use the OWL Centre and equipment. OWL would benefit from good quality internet connectivity and IT support. It is hoped that this will enable the rooms to be used for online training and events in the future and sustain use of the building.

The use of online meetings also proved successful recently, when we were able to have a joint meeting with trustees of Bo Children's Hospital (BCH), from Australia. Wusu Sannoh, OWL Chairman and Trustee of BCH also joined in. Future plans for BCH and possible collaboration on health issues were discussed.

Looking to the future, we are hoping that with travel restrictions easing, we can support a visit to Bo early in the New Year.

A report from Bo

Johannes Mallah Jnr visited Sierra Leone in April 2021 to follow up on OWL work and have a face to face meeting or discussion with our contacts, partners and friends in Bo



Johannes Mallah Jnr on the flight to Sierra Leone

When I arrived in Bo, OWL Bo Chair, Dr Wusu Sannoh gave me a warm welcome. I handed letters, parcels and extended OWL UK greetings to OWL Bo members and friends.

OWL BO Centre

went to the OWL Bo centre the following day to see the status of the centre and find out about the challenges and way forward.

Whilst in Bo, I helped out to ensure the OWL centre electrical and interior painting work is completed before returning back to the UK.

I made contact with a solar technician in Freetown to fix power at the OWL Bo centre and there is currently a solar power light at the top floor and the ground floor power work is expected to commence soon and be completed in October or early November 2021. This will cut down on the running cost of the centre as it is expensive to run the centre on a generator due to irregular electricity power supply in Bo city.

There is road project work going on along the Bo Matru road where the centre is located and when this project is completed, it will add more value to OWL Bo centre.

“COVID cases are very low and there is ease in restriction around the country”

Yemoh Town Clinic Lab

I visited Yemoh town clinic with OWL Bo chair, Dr Wusu Sannoh and we met with Mr Deen, nurses and other staff.

I helped out together with other OWL Bo members to ensure the lab equipment and kits are purchased and to ensure the work commences before returning back to the UK.

The lab is currently running and OWL UK will continue monitoring its operation and provide support in other areas at the clinic in the future.

Bo Government Hospital

I had a meeting with Dr Augustine Eric Fombah, the medical superintendent at Bo government hospital in order to find out about their current constraint and for him to list areas which they require help or support.

OWL UK is in touch with Warwick hospital in the UK to establish a link with Bo government Hospital and the discussion is ongoing but slow due to COVID.

Bo Children's Hospital

I also visited Bo children's hospital and I met with some of the nurses and staff on duty that day. OWL UK is in touch with the hospital partners/trustees in Australia to collaborate and work together in supporting the health link in Bo.

Covid Situation In Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone has been removed from UK red list countries and the government is still encouraging adults to take their covid vaccines. The COVID cases are very low and there is ease in restriction around the country but citizens are also encouraged to put on face masks in public buildings or offices.



Redecoration at the OWL Centre



New baby at Yemoh Town Clinic



Johannes and staff of Yemoh Town Clinic

The Bo One World Link Centre

The Bo Owl Community Centre on Mattru Road has provided a focus for the activity of OWL in Bo since its completion in 2017. John Archer reports on current plans.

More recently, attention has been given to upgrading and additional maintenance and clarifying the legal ownership status.

Whilst the building has been in the practical ownership of Bo OWL since its completion, finalisation of the transfer of land ownership had not been completed.

After recent negotiations by Wusu Sannoh, the chair of OWL with the original land plot owners, this matter has now been resolved and legal title now rests with Bo OWL.

This is an important basis for planning for the future of the Centre. Wusu and the Committee have been looking at how the building may operate and continue to provide a community role in future years. The building has now been repainted both internally and externally and wall and roofing repairs undertaken.

In order to secure the short-term reliability of power another generator has been acquired. To work in parallel with this and provide a sustainable source of power, a programme of solar power provision is under way. the first phase of this has already been undertaken, providing a power supply to meet all the first-floor requirements for lighting, fans, charging and

refrigerator through additional pv panels and associated infrastructure.

Looking ahead, the view is that to maintain and develop its position, further investment in the Centre is needed. Wusu and the UK OWL committee are in discussion with an

educational purposes in the city.

To implement this project, an additional power supply is needed, which can be provided by a second stage of solar power provision. This has now been funded and it is hoped that this can be put in place at an early opportunity. With a

generator for back up, this will mean the Centre is wholly self sufficient in power supply and will be able to function effectively as a high-grade IT hub

The Centre also provides accommodation, primarily used by visitors from UK OWL, but which can also be used to generate income from other travellers to the city. The rooms have had basic

upgrades, with new window mesh, door locks and some cosmetic improvement, though it is recognized that further work is required to washroom facilities to provide suitably attractive accommodation.

Good progress has therefore been made in upgrading the Centre, though further work is still required. Whilst it has not been used as widely as in previous years, this is largely down to the current Covid situation. However, with the current plans for its further development, we are hopeful that it will once more be a destination of choice for many in the city and support the aims of OWL.



The Bo OWL Centre

IT company who are interested in developing an IT hub at the OWL Centre. This could provide high quality internet, satellite TV, IT

“An IT hub at the OWL Centre could provide high quality internet, satellite TV, IT training facilities and other benefits from updated technology.”

training facilities and other benefits from updated technology. This is a potentially exciting project and together with the forthcoming improvement of Mattru Road could raise the profile of the Centre considerably and develop it into an attractive destination for social and

OWL puts plastic waste to good use in Bo

Alfred Maada Fobay*



Alfred Maada Fobay

Bo is Sierra Leone's second city and, just like many other cities in the developing world, it is grappling with effective and efficient waste management activities. Waste collection and transportation coverage does not reach the entire city because of many factors, including poor road networks and inadequate waste management infrastructures. In addition to this, low personal income of the city inhabitants undermines the willingness and ability to pay for waste collection service fees. Consequently, low level of waste education and awareness, the correlation between health and waste, is not known to many people.



Ecobricks ready for use

The emergence of single use plastic as a significant fraction of the municipal waste in Bo is a cause of particular concern. Roadsides, drainage systems, communities, swamps and streams are full of plastic. Children growing up in areas without waste collection suffer from respiratory illnesses, diarrhoea and increased incidences of water-borne and mosquito-borne diseases.

Bo City welcomes, and is ready to collaborate with, partners for plastic solutions. There are many differing opinions regarding the solution to this problem, from a range of

technological developments (including transformation into useful products) to an outright ban. We are at a crucial moment in our development with regard to the



Plastic waste

decision making process. It is important to weigh up all the factors in planning for a sustainable future and grasping the opportunities in emerging innovative plastic solutions for Bo City.

In 2019, One World Link (OWL), as a community friendship linked organization, between Bo District (Sierra Leone) and Warwick District (UK), in their Global School Partnership Programmes, chose a "Zero Waste" theme as a joint project for all 15 Schools. The key activity is the making of Eco-bricks out of single use plastic. The project aims at contributing to "saving the environment and development of low-cost and low health risk plastic treatment technology". The impact is to create a safer environment for both flora and fauna as well as human living.

Eco-brick manufacture is a simple technology, where single use plastics are collected, washed, dried and packed into 250 millilitre PET bottle until a weight of 167g is achieved. The product can now be used as a material to build simple structures such as a hut, flag post, planter, etc. School pupils are thrilled and highly motivated to keep their school environment free from this plastic menace and to be able to provide a practical solution to the waste. The enterprise became an inclusive activity with teachers and pupils working

alongside each other in a spirit of cooperation. Many schools achieving their goal of 100 Eco-bricks.

The action not only ended in schools as pupils and teachers also shared the work at homes and involved family members. For example, Madam Alice Alpha, Head Teacher at R.C Madonna Primary School, Sewa Road, engaged family members in preparing Eco-bricks in her Bo home. Preparing Eco-bricks is becoming a family hobby in Bo.



Making and weighing ecobricks

Many of the school children in Bo raised the obvious question. 'What are we going to do with these bricks when they are completed? Are we just cleaning our school environment or can they be put to a specific use?' Fortunately, an innovative idea came up as to how to turn the Eco-brick into useful resource. In our joint OWL joint committee meeting (parent body and teachers group), we have agreed to build the first Eco-hut at the OWL Centre in recognition of the effort of the children and symbol of their contribution to making a better environment. **This is our dream.**



Children display their ecobricks with pride

*Alfred Maada Fobay was Chairman of Bo One World Link at the time of writing, before his untimely death in December 2019

OWL Health Link

Helena White



Helena White

It has been a challenging start for the OWL health link but we have managed to find quite a few positives from the adversity of a global pandemic.

Sierra Leone responded to Covid-19 in an impressively immediate and robust way that was successful in keeping the numbers of Covid related deaths to a minimum. They are continuing to be vigilant and as a result have just been taken off the 'red list' for travel which means many of our friends can now travel home more freely.



Yemoh Town clinic laboratory - now able to analyse blood samples and test for malaria.

Through the increased use of internet platforms such as Zoom, the UK and Bo OWL Health Link committees have been able to keep in regular contact, discussing the priorities for health care improvement in Bo and the best way to go about supporting that.

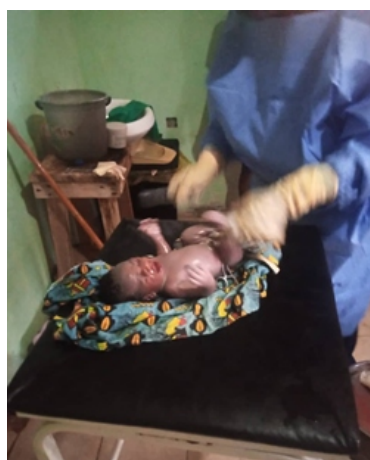
One of the main areas highlighted as potentially improving the health care facilities within Peripheral Health Units (PHU's) was a functioning laboratory, enabling faster, more accurate diagnoses of

common diseases, particularly TB, leading to correct treatment and faster recovery times. Offering this service within the PHU environment also encourages people to seek help earlier leading to more effective use of medications available, also relieving the pressure on Bo government hospital.

We were lucky enough to be in receipt of a small legacy earlier this year and, with the incredible enthusiasm and drive from one of our visiting committee members - Johannes, used it to convert the old labour room at Yemoh Town Health Clinic to a basic laboratory, enabling these tests to start taking place.

We have been working with the District Health Management Team (DHMT) to try and establish government support to meet the basic running needs of the lab. This is still an ongoing process and we are looking to review the running of this facility before rolling this idea out to other PHUs that have been earmarked by the DHMT for improvement.

However, we do receive regular updates from Lansana Deen, the Chief Medical Officer at the clinic, on the use of the new labour ward facilities and this little one was one of twins!



One of the new-born twins

Another encouraging report was on the continuing availability of an ambulance. Getting people to the right help at the right time can mean the difference between life and death. A baby who had to be resuscitated at birth, and continued to struggle, was transferred recently.



The ambulance

Looking to the future of the OWL Health Link there are several avenues that we are looking at and discussing in more detail. The OWL ethos is based on friendship and sharing of information and skills and we are keen that the health branch should retain this. We are therefore going to be initially looking at using Zoom to deliver training sessions on topics requested by the health staff of Yemoh Town Health Clinic (and other PHU staff), Bo government hospital and Bo children's hospital. As Helena is a midwife the first sessions will be based on dealing with obstetric and neonatal emergencies but we will be looking to expand this to other disciplines, in particular paediatrics and tropical diseases. Our UK committee has been discussing this idea of rolling out training to other relevant areas with Jayne Blacklay, from the governing board of Warwick hospital, who has been very positive about this idea.

Helena is Health Coordinator for OWL. She is a midwife with years of experience training midwives in Sierra Leone.

Our History - now in the County Archives



Jane Knight

Over 40 years of records going back to our origins have recently been stored at the Warwickshire County record Office. Details of events, campaigns, visits and a variety of other activities related to the work of One World Link are now available for the general public to access. Jane Knight, who founded One World Link, explains.

As time leaps forward, year by year, I have been increasingly aware of OWL's long history building up especially as it passes its 40th Anniversary. With that history are all the records of its progress.

Because of Lockdown, I spent more than normal time taking part in Zoom sessions with old friends and colleagues around the world. They raised quite a lot of concern about what happens to all our experiences and records once we are gone? There is always the dread that they will end up on someone's bonfire at the end of a garden.

I have no spare space to spread out where I live, and the pressure on me to do something about preserving OWL's archives was mounting. Where to sort? and would anyone want the piles of documents etc. anyway?



Sorting 40 years' documents

By good fortune, my son James who knows OWL well, was willing to let me use his large garden shed which is furnished with shelves and a table tennis table. As his family are moving on, he handed it to me and members of the OWL committee to use as a temporary workspace.

And so on October 6th, Paul Atkins, Kip Warr and myself delivered 2 big boxes of newsletters, press releases, reports and photos all dating back to 1981, to the Warwickshire County Records office.

It was a great relief after we started, to find that WCC were actually interested in what we were doing and they welcomed the materials with enthusiasm. We just hope they will be used in the future.

We came across many letters sent through the years from key friends in Bo.

A special feature is the 'War file' which contains personal experiences of the Sierra Leone Civil War in the 1990s. They were related to us in hasty phone calls made from Bo and Freetown by teachers and friends. Bishop Koroma (then Father) told stories of near escapes when he was expected to, and trying to get teacher's pay out to all the Catholic schools while the war was going on.

One of the file's contents was a letter from Johannes Mallah senior (later Chair of Bo OWL), recounting in detail his terrifying experiences being ambushed by rebels on the way to a meeting in Kenema.



Delivering the documents to the County Record Office

It was a fascinating experience working out suitable categories for sorting, and reading and sifting through a huge variety materials which capture the exciting progress of One World Link in the Bo and Warwick Districts.

There are accounts of exchange visits, across wide sectors of the communities from councils to teachers and midwives which led to strong friendships and practical benefits for 40 years. The partnerships and cultural exchanges, based on principles of equality, have changed the lives of many of us, here and in Sierra Leone.

Remaining in the shed, are records of many of OWL's contributions to the UKOWLA (UK One World Linking Association) conferences and campaigns to spread the linking idea across the UK and there are records of more Global activities (Towns & Development) to promote linking and local government and local community cooperation for development in the South and across Europe. I am still hoping to lodge this small collection somewhere for posterity. So do contact OWL if you know of any possibilities?

The Education Supplement

There is so much to report in our schools that it has a special supplement in this newsletter. Despite COVID, 2020-21 has continued to be a busy and productive time for OWL's Education work with our teachers maintaining close ties and continuing to be in regular electronic contact through school closures and lockdown. What a contrast to the days of the civil war when communication was limited to occasional letters, technology has made a real difference to OWL's work. With children back in school we have been able to deliver our 2020-21 programme focused on the environment and climate action, issues our children care deeply about. The programme aimed to give our children in the UK and Sierra Leone the knowledge, skills and understanding to not only make sense of the world but play a full part as active global citizens. We continue to have 30 actively linked primary schools (15 in Warwick District, 15 in Bo) with Paul School for the Blind (Bo) linked with all our UK schools. On the following five pages we summarise the activities in 2020 and 2021.

UK Teachers' Visit to Bo

Four teachers (Liz Garrett, Tim Hussey, Cathryn Clarke and Harry Purewal) were able to visit Bo in February 2020 before COVID restrictions on travel were enforced. This was Cathryn and Harry's first visit to Bo and was Liz (our School Co-ordinator's) first visit since 2018.



The travelling teachers

They worked alongside colleagues in their linked schools, visited all our partner schools and delivered teacher training on Global Learning and how to achieve learning in literacy through environmental project work. They also worked with all 15 Bo schools to deliver a field trip for teachers and pupils to waste management and recycling sites and local recycling enterprises. After this day of active learning a workshop prepared the attending pupils to share their learning and experiences within their schools. The visit made a strong impression (see page 9.)

The visit also initiated a new OWL tradition of the Alfred Kanneh School Football Cup in honour of loved and respected Bo teacher Alfred Kanneh (page 11).

Commemorating Alfred Maada Fobay

The visit was also significant as our teachers were able to represent OWL at the 40 day commemoration service marking the death of our much loved former Chairman of Bo OWL Maada Fobay. Our teachers were invited to the front during the service so that Liz could say a few words of condolence on behalf of all of us in OWL. The teachers were also taken by Betty (Maada's wife) to their village to pay their respects, and were generously hosted by Hannah (Maada's sister) to a wonderful lunch.

Sadly the Bo Teachers' return visit to the UK had to be postponed due to COVID but we are looking forward to welcoming Bo teachers to Warwick District as soon as is possible in 2022. We hope you will join us in welcoming and hosting them!

Climate Action Project

The project work exchanged between linked schools is the mainstay of our collaborative working between UK and Sierra Leone schools. Over 2020/21 all 30 schools exchanged creative and literacy work related to Miranda Paul's beautifully illustrated book 'One Plastic Bag and the Recycling Women of Gambia', an inspiring true story about West African women who dealt with plastic pollution through recycling enterprise. The children also exchanged pen friend letters sharing views about recycling and the environment. In addition, our UK schools held Assemblies (and follow up activities) about the 'World's Largest Lesson' which introduced the UN's Sustainability Development Goals.

The importance of trees

Our current Autumn 2021 project focuses on the importance of trees in climate action. Schools in the UK and Sierra Leone will be planting trees as well as exchanging work inspired by Wangari Mathai's book 'Wangari's Trees of Peace'. Wangari Mathai, the Kenyan social, political and environmental activist, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize and founder of The Green Belt Movement is 'the woman who planted millions of trees'. We are delighted that OWL's School Tree Project will be launched by Freetown's Mayor Yvonne Aki-Sawyers OBE - the woman who is planting one million trees to transform Sierra Leone's Freetown into Treetown. She will be joining us via Zoom from Glasgow's COP26 for a Zoom School Assembly with all our UK schools that will also be shared with our schools in Bo.

Teachers - Look online

Look out for OWL schools-related videos on Youtube! We are setting up a channel and will be uploading lots of material. The **education pages of the website** will have links along with copious teaching materials. We have recently uploaded more than 150 new photos and other new items and teachers anywhere are welcome to use them.

Campaigning and Environment

Our children have written persuasive letters about environmental, waste and recycling issues they feel strongly about to effect change they want to make happen locally and globally. Our UK schools also participated in the 2020 and 2021 'Send My Friend to School' activities to campaign for education as a global human right including how children are missing out due to climate change (www.sendmyfriend.org). The children's campaigning work from all 15 schools was taken to Parliament by our local MP Matt Western.



Children campaigning for education for everyone

Our UK and Sierra Leone school communities have continued to participate in making eco-bricks to reuse unrecyclable plastic (www.ecobricks.org). Following the creation of the Eco-brick bar at the Bo Owl Centre and the planter at All Saints' School (Warwick), Brookhurst and St Paul's schools (Leamington) have ambitions to use the bricks to create structures. We have also undertaken training in how to create ecobrick structures using cob (wattle-and-daub) to make sure we are using the most low-energy and most environmentally sustainable and traditional materials possible.



The planter at All Saints School Warwick

Cultural and Training Activities

The Day of the African Child is a great example of the difference that technology can make. Since COVID prevented us from getting together to celebrate this day, teachers and other OWL members in Bo and the UK met up in a Zoom meeting in June 2020 for a cross-continent celebration, the first time this has ever been done. The celebration started with the song 'Tel am Tenki' and included a video of recent teacher visits to Bo and the UK and a moving recitation of the poem 'I Am An African Child' by the daughter of one of our link teachers. Bo OWL schools had also been doing important work with the authorities on the theme of 'Access to Child Friendly Justice', particularly for children in overcrowded remand homes. Building on the success of this electronic celebration a full day of inspirational activities and a live link with Bo took place to celebrate the Day of the African Child in June 2021 described on page 10.

Telling tales

In October 2021 as part of Black History Month UK OWL schools also had the opportunity to experience and participate in a live streamed performance by professional Sierra Leonean storyteller Usifu Jalloh. The performance used the transformative power of African storytelling to educate our children about African culture and heritage, as well as the value of embracing different cultures. The feedback has been that our children and teachers were captivated by the music, dance and song and we hope we will be able to work with Usifu again in the future.

Global learning

To support our work our teachers in the UK and Bo have benefitted from a number of British Council trainings including 'Global Learning', 'Connection to the Wider World and Cross-Curricular Planning', 'Curriculum Change, Images and Perceptions' and 'Poverty and Development'. Our teachers and schools have also been given the opportunity to participate in the British Council's Global Teacher Award.

We would like to say a big thank you to our wider OWL community and to the British Council's Connecting Classrooms Programme for making the 2020-21 OWL Education Programme possible - heartfelt thanks to you all.



My first visit to Bo - the most incredible experience.

The story of one of the teachers who visited Bo before lockdown, in February 2020

Harry Purewal

I was keen to visit Sierra Leone to experience different teaching cultures and further enhance the partnership between my school, St Anthony's, and our linked school St Francis Upper Bo. Being a part of OWL (One World Link) and having the opportunity to teach children in another continent was an eye-opening experience. This enhanced my world view and I was able to bring back teaching methods that I had witnessed that my own children would benefit from.



Harry and new-found friends

My visit to Sierra Leone was the most incredible experience I have ever had to date. Going to Africa for the first time was immense and the greeting I received from everyone that I met was full of joy and happiness. Having the opportunity to teach children at St Francis Upper Bo was surreal. It felt like a dream, the rapport that I had with all the children was immense, they would not let me leave the school, I felt like a famous person. I taught children in Year 4 and in Year 6 a variety of subjects including Maths, Literacy, Reading and Science.

There were 15 linked schools overall in Bo, that have partnerships with 15 schools in Warwickshire. On our 'Field-trip' day, two children from each linked school, visited the Bo Waste Management Centre. Here the children learned about recycling and why burning plastics is harmful to the environment. Even basics (to us) such as throwing rubbish in the bin and not littering in the street will help. They found out that re-using materials will reduce the effect of pollution, whilst recycling materials such as plastic you can create bags, wallets and rucksacks, which can then be sold at the market.

The children returned to their schools and talked to their peers about good waste management practices and the potential benefits it has. They spoke of how the waste collection services can help. This really developed their confidence, especially the two boys from St

Francis, they were enthusiastic, energetic and passionate when they were speaking to the other children. In our project we wanted to model how pupils can be great teachers too, rather than always the adult sharing

knowledge. It was really good to see this idea working.

The boys from St Francis were enthusiastic, energetic and passionate when they were speaking to the other children

Alongside the other UK teachers, I also presented a workshop to teachers from the 15 linked schools. Their opportunities for professional development are much more limited than ours, so it was exciting being part of this teacher development. Our aims were to get the teachers thinking about climate change, sustainable development and opportunities to develop new skills for teaching. Our chosen text, a story called 'One Plastic Bag,' (about a Gambian woman and her successful plastic recycling project) was used as the main stimulus of the teaching. During my input I spoke about story mapping using pictures and arrows, this helps aid understanding especially when each child does not

have access to the book. I taught this lesson at St Francis and the children found it fun and engaging and were also able to create their own story board. The best aspect to this method is that story mapping is adaptable to any story and I was so impressed when we visited St Charles Lwanga school later in the week to see a teacher using this method to teach about Mary. It made me feel joyous to see and it was so encouraging to observe the teacher put it into practice.

On my final day at St Francis, I had requested to play some football with the boys. To my surprise the whole school was outside and the head teacher (Mr Wonneh) had two teams (both dressed in kit which OWL had provided in the past) He was playing for one of them and myself the other. The match went all the way to penalties and my side were victorious! It was the ideal send off, the school were brilliant to me the whole week, the staff were kind, caring and the head teacher even invited me to his house for lunch twice. What a privilege to have this inside experience of life in such a different culture, but where I discovered we have more in common than different.



Teaching in a new environment

Some other memorable moments from my visit were seeing different schools in a variety of settings (a town centre government school, a rural school, church and non-church).

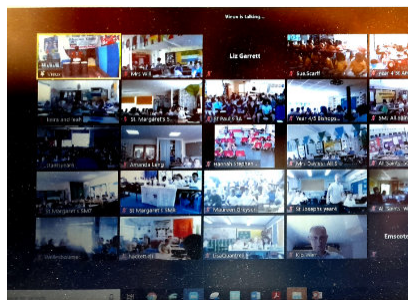
There were some schools that had class sizes that were over 100, with only a single teacher. The children's colourful uniform was also a highlight of the trip, whilst their singing was beautiful. Going to church was also extraordinary, then finally being able to relax at Bureh Beach was the perfect way to end the trip.

The Day of the African Child - a virtual celebration

Schools from across Warwick District and in Bo met online to celebrate the International Day of the African Child, 2021

The 'Day of the African Child' is an international event, celebrated every year on 16th June, to raise awareness of the continuing need to promote children's rights and to improve education to African children. One World Link has been celebrating this event with schoolchildren across Warwick District since 2009. Usually, we arrange a large day-long celebration involving over 500 local children. 2020 and 2021 were – by necessity – a little different. Since the Corona virus prevented us from getting together to celebrate this day, schools in Bo and the UK met up in Zoom meetings.

For the second year running we had to adapt our plans for celebrating our links and promoting Education for All. There has been no need for a marquee for two years and much disappointment from the lack of physical celebrating.



The online call bringing schools together

However, perhaps learning from our Bo colleagues' need to be always resourceful and positive, we planned a Zoom Event with surprising success! It is actually quite easy to note the advantages:

We were able to 'meet' our MP at a convenient time for him, despite last minute changes for us- we saw him at 9.15 instead of 2.30 as originally planned! We hosted many other OWL, British Council and Send My Friend guests without any travel miles, important when our theme is about reducing our impact on the environment (UN Sustainable Development Goal 13: Climate Action). Teachers were able to choose which parts of the day to take part in; some did the whole day with virtual singing,



Sharing a classroom, over 3000 miles apart

drumming and dance workshops, others came to just the campaign assembly. We possibly doubled/tripled our reach to over 1000 children participating from their classrooms, since this was open to the whole school. Most importantly, our children in Bo were able to

participate for the first time, sharing wonderful poetry performance and drama skits.



The Bo Team

Pupils at St Joseph's Primary, Leamington engaged their virtual audience, including Matt Western MP when describing this years Send My Friend campaign. Here is their summary:

Our task for the campaign is to think about all the challenges children face that prevent them accessing education and then think about what your ideal school of the future would need.

Some examples we have considered are:

- *solar water pumps to prevent dehydration,*
- *well trained teachers that are able to teach the many needs within a class,*
- *adults educated in equality to make sure no-one is left out,*
- *enough resources including stationery and technology*
- *trained health professionals in school to help with physical and mental health,*
- *free medical supplies such as sanitary towels to help all feel comfortable,*
- *barriers around schools to prevent dangers from outside*
- *schools that are kept safe from flooding*
- *and a germ force field to kill all illness so schools never have to close again.*

All of these ideas require one thing – MONEY! Therefore, we are urging our Government to increase our aid to education and encourage other nations to spend more, much more, on global aid.

We would like to ask our MP to ensure that our Government will do what it has promised in terms of funding education around the world – ensuring that all children can receive a quality education.

It seems that OWL education is continuing to develop Global Citizens for the future.



OWL Schools' Trees Project

This autumn our school children will be planting trees and preparing project work such as posters and art work to share with their linked schools in Bo. The programme has no less than four sources of inspiration:

- the United Nations COP 26 conference currently taking place in Glasgow,
- the true story of Wangari Maathai, Kenyan environmental activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner, which is described in a children's book,
- the example of Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr, OBE, Mayor of Freetown in Sierra Leone, who has pledged to plant a million trees to protect the city from the damage caused by deforestation,
- Warwickshire County Council's announcement that a tree will be planted for every resident in the county; over half a million new trees are to be planted.

Children will learn how deforestation has not only impoverished the atmosphere but also leaves the soil unprotected. The result in Freetown was a huge landslide that demolished houses and killed more than a thousand people, hence Mayor Aki-Sawyerr's plan to "Make Freetown a Treetown" by planting a million trees.

The schools project will be launched with a joint assembly for all fifteen schools and Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr has been invited to open the event in a digital link. OWL have ordered a selection of tree saplings from the Woodland Trust. These will be shared between the OWL schools for them to plant. The aim is that children will have better understanding of: global inequality, the power of action, courageous advocacy, teamwork and effects of deforestation.



*"The earth was naked.
For me the mission was to
try to cover it with green"
Wangari Maathai*

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The Alfred Kanneh Memorial Cup



The winning team receive the cup from Mrs Tiangay Kanneh

Alfred Kanneh organised a friendly football competition between all fifteen One World Link schools in Bo. It was held in February 2018 during a visit by teachers from the UK. The schools were divided into two zones and each school brought two girls and two boys - the event was a fantastic showcase of the unity of the OWL schools.

Alfred was a teacher at BDEC New Gerihun Road and the Public Relations officer for the Bo teachers committee but sadly he passed away later. The competition was held

again in 2020 in his memory, now named the Kanneh Cup, with the trophy awarded to the winning team by his wife and children.

Here's hoping it can be played again soon and can continue to represent working together.

Your membership of One World Link

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