

Report to Bo Committee - 14th November 2003

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General Remarks

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee for the hospitality and sensitivity they have shown me since I arrived. I have thoroughly enjoyed every minute of my stay so far and have learnt a great deal about the social, educational, political and cultural situation here just in these two weeks.

This report is intended to clarify the aims of my visit, to detail where I think I have gone some way to achieving them and to identify for discussion work that needs to be done in the rest of the time here. The aims I have stated for each area of work are those identified by the Warwick OWL committee. They can be changed should this committee wish to discuss this.

School Linking Aims of my visit –

To facilitate communication and understanding between schools who already have links to maximize mutual benefit in achievable ways

To research and obtain materials that will be useful for classroom teaching in UK schools and to explore what materials would be of value for classroom use in BO

To explore ways in which school linking can develop

Progress report -

I have enjoyed visiting all the schools and have learnt a great deal about the education system here.

I feel I have a reasonable understanding of the journey of each pupil and the organization of the schools and teaching methods. I am glad that I will have a chance to read through the Curriculum as this will be key to the achievement of my aims.

I have delivered children's work and letters from staff to the linked schools where this has been possible. I have taken photographs of all the schools, and detailed ones of those that are linked

I have been shown the materials including computers that have been delivered from Warwick OWL and received useful feedback from the staff.

David is compiling a list of contacts and school text books from the schools that will be extremely useful for the Warwick committee.

In regard to classroom materials and developing school linking -

I will need to take catalogued photos of particular activities within the community (I suggest I do this on a particular day with either one member of the committee or with Keith as he has a vehicle).

I will need help to compile useful texts, stories and information from schools for the teachers pack. My ideas for this are

To ask Bo teachers College to ask for volunteers among their students to help me

To ask CKC to give me a group of older students to help me

To gather a group of interested staff from linked schools to help me

To divide the task up and work with each of the linked schools on it.

I would like the committee to discuss this and give me guidance.

The committee discussed this and decided they would write letters to each of the Link registered schools plus Bo Teachers College asking each one to send volunteers to help. The first meeting of this working group is scheduled for Friday 21st November. After the initial meeting I am intending to run two workshops, one on the pack for Leamington teachers on Bo and the second to identify the content Bo teachers would want in the pack about Leamington.

I intend to leave the last week of term (ending 19th December) to visit each of the linked schools again before I leave.

Women's Groups

Aims of my visit –

To assist the Kayoma Women's group to develop and identify means of implementing its goals and to assist in any other way

To liaise with the Warwick OWL support group and help it identify constructive means of support

To identify that Kayoma have satisfactory security of funds and that they have received funds already raised for the benefit of Kayoma by Warwick OWL

I have met the members of Kayoma group and attended one of their meetings. I have introduced the idea that I need to have a good understanding of how they work, what they do and what their plans for the future are in order to report back to the Support Group. The support group will then plan their fundraising and support around these plans.

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The Support group also want me to try to help the Women's Group to identify sustainable funding for their plans if this is relevant.

Teresa is in the process of planning a programme for me to meet the other groups.

I would like to spend at least one whole meeting of the Women's Group as a workshop for me to gain a good understanding of their plans.

Two workshops, for the Kayoma Womens group have been arranged - a planning day on 29th November and a workshop on writing business plans on 6th December. The group will then decide if they want any more training from me.

In addition, I have found out that the group hasn't opened a bank account due to lack of funds -- this will take place before I leave. Also discussed the relationship between the group and the other groups who want to join the link, which I will be visiting in the coming week. Raised idea of microcredit which was received favourably!

Other

My aims for the visit -

Community Centre

To assist Bo OWL to develop their plans for the Centre in any way that Bo OWL identify

I have seen the building and have had discussions about the problems of water and power supply to the building. I have had a short discussion about the possibility of getting funding to subsidise the provision of meals from the Centre.

I have asked John to research on the internet any local sources of funding for these and to provide me with an estimate of the power supply needed for the computers.

I intend to visit DfiD, the British High Commission and Christian Aid, as well as any other NGO's that might help, while I am in Freetown.

The committee discussed 3 quotes for the internal wiring of the building each, for about 8 million Leones (4,000 sterling?). However during the discussion I realised that they hadn't taken into account the number of sockets that would be required, for the PCs. They are however talking about 3phase electrics (which I think means it will cope). They set up a sub committee to deal with the quotes which I will attend. However it would help if I knew what spec we need! Also the building is ready to float and they discussed getting children to act as unpaid unskilled labourers to lay the concrete. I didn't say anything although health and safety and discipline was discussed.

I would also like to extend any help I can in the form of training or information to the committee in regard to running the Centre (based on my experience as manager of Bath Place Community Venture).

Community Linking

To explore ways in which linking between community groups might be encouraged to develop

I have met with Moussa Conteh and discussed his plans for the Bo Koliseum.

I have talked to Kinie Kaitibie about the possibility of linking sports activities for young people.

I would be interested to know the Bo committee's ideas about how to progress here.

Conclusion

I feel I have made a good start to my visit thanks to the leadership of the committee. I am now in a position to plan the rest of my visit.

Recommendations

- That the committee decide how I should work on the teachers pack
- That the women's group arrange a time for me to run workshop about plans
- That the following time be spent along the following lines -

17th – 22th Nov - visiting women's groups and working on teachers pack

24th – 29th Nov - visiting women's groups and working on teachers pack

1st – 6th Dec - visiting Freetown to research cost/supply of text books, possible funding for community centre, options for water and power supply

8th – 13th Dec - finish teachers pack, re-visit linked schools 15th – 20th Dec - visit women's groups, write report

22nd – 27th Dec - holiday!!!

This timetable was agreed

The other item on the agenda was my accommodation. The committee agreed to move me to the French Centre opposite the police station which took place on Saturday.

Maria Franchi