

OWL Report on Teachers' Visit to Bo
"Connecting Classrooms"
7-17 February 2014

Preparation

June 2013 - schools invited to take part in Bo visit 2014

Sept 2013 - 2 schools showing interest in applying for Connecting Classrooms grants

Oct -Nov 2013 - meeting to plan together and share support for form filling

9 Nov - 2 schools submit grant applications to British Council (DfID funding) 'Connecting Classrooms' (CC)

Dec 2012 -OWL agrees that a second coordinator would be beneficial to the visit so Jenny Bailey is invited to join the team

6 Jan 2014- Liz contacts British Council to find out if grants have been successful- they report problems regarding IT so outcome not yet known

13 Jan 2014 - finally news that both schools had been awarded the CC Grant (£1500 per school, each way)

Schools involved:

<i>UK Teacher</i>	<i>SL Teacher</i>
Katy Traynar, Y6 Teacher St Patricks' Primary, Leamington	Philomina Egujama St Peters' RC, Bo No.2
Tim Hussey, Y1 Teacher Emscote Infants School, Warwick	Alfred BDEC New Gerihun Rd, Lower, Bo.

Also, as UK OWL Coordinators, Liz Garrett representing All Saints Juniors, Warwick, and Jenny Bailey from Clapham Terrace Primary, Leamington.

	Visit Itinerary
Sat	Morning in Freetown, visit Gwen Smith at Transformation Education. Travel to Bo, Welcome Meal.
Sun	Church, walk around Bo.
Mon	Tim and Katy in schools. Liz and Jenny meet Paramount Chief. All-Civic Reception with Mayor. Liz and Jenny meet with Michael Dennis from British Council, Freetown.
Tue	9-4pm Partnership Planning Workshop at OWL Centre (Michael Dennis) Mind-map training (Jenny Bailey). Lunch together. Afternoon workshop on Effective Partnerships.
Wed	Tim and Katy in school. Liz meeting with OWL teachers executive at Centre -IT training and Action Planning. All- Visit Bo Hospital. 4pm Workshop - Literacy training (phonics video material from Natalie Johnson-Emscote School) 5pm Presentation of Gifts to the 14 schools (Football kit, thermometers, 2 laptops)
Thu	Tim and Katy in school. Visit to Waste Management Projects. 4pm Maths workshop -using number-lines.(Jenny Bailey)
Fri	Tim and Katy in schools. Visit Blind School. 5pm De-brief meeting with OWL Executive Committee. 6pm Farewell meal.
Sat	Depart Bo for John Obey Beach-Tribewanted, sustainable/Eco -tourism project.
Sun	Rest day.
Mon	travel to Freetown + flight.

OWL Teachers' Aims during the visit:

- ⤴ Ensure the smooth running of the visit for the 2 CC teachers
- ⤴ Help set up various visits outside schools, suggested by teachers
- ⤴ Facilitate Tues,Weds and Thurs training/meetings
- ⤴ Visit other 12 linked Primary schools and some Secondary schools if possible.
- ⤴ Support other linked schools with up-dates on their partnerships
- ⤴ Communicate with the wider Bo community and stakeholders
- ⤴ Meet with Moinina Kamara. Discuss future IT training for teachers.
- ⤴ discuss sustainable working of OWL teachers committee by developing an Action Plan
- ⤴ prepare the 2 Bo teachers who will be coming to UK in June

Developments

Bo is clearly developing and improving at a pace! The whole town centre now has solar powered lighting. The OWL Centre was found to be in good condition with friendly and helpful new staff replacing the dearly-missed, late Pa Willie. Further murals depicting rural life have been added to the compound walls and the portraits have recently been renovated. The computer room is being rented out to Restless Development, working with Youth. 2 long-term ex-pats are currently living long-term at the Centre.

We visited the impressively clean and well resourced Government Hospital for the first time and saw a smart, recently opened maternity building. The Bo District Health Minister kindly gave us a full tour.

The Mayor has chosen Education as his focus for the coming year so various concerns about Education were raised with him, such as unpaid salaries and termly subsidies. Sewa Road school has completed the building of an impressive new well on it's school compound. Their OWL school partner assisted with funding but the project has been well managed by John Sandi and staff, involving many stake-holders from the local community who will also benefit from the well. BDEC New Gerihun Rd Primary Upper is having 3 new classrooms built, government funding (they currently share classrooms with the lower school).

Workshops

Partnership Planning :

Aim: to discuss and address partnership issues in order to make school links effective and sustainable.

Jenny Bailey demonstrated the use of Mind-mapping as a useful tool for collecting and organising information, for both teachers and pupils. This had been demonstrated on previous visit but further training was required. Participants were asked what aspects of life in UK they would like to learn about and the responses were written up on a mind-map. Then, in school groups, teachers made their own mind-maps of 'Our Partnership', adding aspects such as benefits, constraints, curriculum etc.

Michael used his International Learning Resources to up-date teachers and talked about the "Connecting Classrooms" grant process, strongly urging schools to register on-line and set up email accounts. Moinina Kamara was again asked to explain the Digital Hub at Bo School where he works. He will help schools set up email and will provide training.

Teachers must contact him direct.

Bo teachers were asked to discuss 'Challenges to Linking' which lead to a useful feed-back session, some problems were resolved eg. In order to benefit schools more fairly, the next visitors from UK will spend their time working with different schools, not necessarily their own Partner school. This will then allow a teacher from a school who has not yet participated in Connecting Classrooms, have the chance to visit UK.

Teacher's were asked to share benefits of linking:

- the new well at Sewa Rd School – the handling of the project has been admired by the whole community and must be used as a model for future similar work. This follows a succession of visits between the 2 schools (John Sandi and Yatta Boima from Sewa Rd, Bo and Jenny Bailey and Liz Holberton from Clapham Terrace School, Leamington)
- During a visit to UK - seeing resources found on the internet and good teaching modelled. This inspired a Bo teacher to make better use of the 5 senses when teaching children. She has used this on several occasions as an effective way to encourage children using a multi-sensory approach.
- Observing different ways of teaching. Seating arrangements have been changed in some Bo classrooms following a more child-centred approach to teaching and learning, allowing children to discuss together more easily.
- Getting ideas for fundraising such as children organising a cake-sale or the school holding a non-uniform day where children donate money if they are allowed to dress in casual clothes on a specific day.
- At a personal level one Bo teacher says she was so impressed by the clean streets in UK that she no longer drops litter. Her visit prompted her to give an interview on local radio about what she'd learnt professionally, relevant to CCTT(Child Centred Teaching Techniques). She encouraged schools to invite UNICEF trainers to their schools to explain CCTT.
- Teachers have stopped using corporal punishment at their school as a result of observing alternative methods of discipline which don't involve shouting or violence, eg. Using a clapping pattern to get children quiet and attentive.
- Bo teachers noticed that Bo is now so well recognised by many schools in Warwick District. This is clearly seen

at the annual Day of the African Child Celebration (DAC), attended by nearly 500 children from our link schools. They are surprised that even little kids know about life in Bo – global citizens!

- Similarly the Bo celebrations of DAC were praised as a successful annual event involving cultural dancing and the opportunity for different schools to get together.

The meeting was well attended (total 40+) with several representatives from every linked school.

Literacy Workshop :

Aim: To enhance the teaching and learning of phonics/phonetics (early reading skills)

Video materials were used to show the progression of Phonics teaching from Reception class to Year 2. The videos were created by Natalie Johnson from Emscote Infants school who had led the training in Bo last year. It is very much hoped that the videos will be shown again so that a wider audience of teachers will be able to benefit.

The workshop was well attended by approx 40 teachers.

Maths Workshop :

Aim: To explain the use of the horizontal number line in the teaching of primary level calculations.

Jenny Bailey explained a number of pre-required mental maths skills needed before a number-line can be taught effectively such as a good grasp of number pairs to 10. Teachers were then introduced to the number line method for the 4 operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division). It is used in UK schools before more formal methods are taught (eg. Vertical column addition). Bo teachers asked many questions about the method which was new to most of them. Other ideas were explained for making the learning of calculation fun at an early level such as mental maths games that can be played.

The workshop was well attended by approx 30 teachers.

Presentation of Gifts

This year we decided to take gifts, as a token of our friendship, for all 14 schools in the form of football kit and thermometers. Brookhurst School donated two laptops for the Bo OWL teachers' committee to help improve communication. It was decided with the OWL committee that these gifts should be formally presented to the schools at a large meeting of stakeholders in order to publicise and raise the profile of the on-going work of the linked schools, including teacher exchanges. Teacher representatives and children from each school were invited to attend the meeting and receive their gifts.

A formal program of speakers provided an hour of speeches about the benefits to education on both sides of the link, including Mr Alpha B. Bah, Chairman of Bo City Education Committee, and Mr John A. Swaray, Deputy Director of Education, Southern Region. Mr Swaray, who himself has taken part in the DfID funded exchange by visiting Kent schools in UK, spoke of how he saw OWL's education work enhancing all three pillars of good practice: access and equity, equality and relevance and strengthening the system. He emphasised the importance of teachers, who themselves benefit from an exchange visit, cascading the information they learn to their colleagues so that others may benefit. He encouraged OWL teachers to continue exchanging ideas, sharing cultural knowledge and observing and learning from each others' behaviour.

Next Steps: A very helpful development this year was the creation of an Action Plan by the OWL Teachers' Committee (see below- amended version). This was suggested by Michael Dennis (British Council , Freetown) as a vital tool for sustaining the partnerships. It is hoped that all committee members will support the Coordinator in his role and complete the tasks out-lined. This will be reviewed next February.

We would like to conclude this report with a big **Thank You** to all the OWL teachers and members in Bo who helped to make our 2014 visit very successful and enjoyable. We really value the friendship you showed us and the many memorable opportunities you enabled us to have. This relationship is unique and we have plenty to be proud of ! We look forward to improved communication during the coming year.

Liz Garrett and Jenny Bailey
OWL Primary Teachers' Coordinators
22 April 2014

Action Planner

OWL Teachers Group Committee-Bo 12th Feb 2014

What would we like our group to be doing in one years time?

- Schools showing commitment to their Partnership Agreements
- Schools who have never had a visitor being engaged in the Connecting Classrooms program – exchange visits
- Schools attending meetings at the link centre
- Schools participating in OWL activities
- All schools taking part in the planning of the Feb visit.

What are our priorities?

- ⤴ Encourage and support for 2 teachers going to UK
- ⤴ Open a school email address for each school
- ⤴ Register with schools on line

What do we need to do?

ACTION	WHO	WHEN?	Outcome?
Set up a meeting for Alfred and Philomina	Joseph Bockarie	Sat. 15 th Feb. 2014 Date to be re-arranged	
Encourage all schools to open an email address with Moinina at Bo school	Emmanuel Senesie	Feb. 2014 ? May 2014	
Meet with OWL Executive to report on outcomes of visit and Action Plan.	All OWL Teachers Committee	Fri 14 th Feb. 5pm	Positive feedback meeting was held at OWL centre. Bo and UK teachers all contributed.
Organise meetings when needed. eg. In May to prepare for June visit exchange of work	Emmanuel Senesie	Between Feb and June 2014	
Feedback meeting from visit to UK.	Tenneh Koroma	June 2014	
Plan Day of African Child celebration	Joseph Boakarie	June 16th	
Organise a workshop on phonetics to use the video again and repeat.	John G Sandi	1 st March	
Organise a film night to show Invictus- film about Nelson Mandela.	Tenneh Koroma and Maada Fobay	March and April	

? Extra- communicate with Gwen Smith in Freetown regarding future training events in Bo ?

To be reviewed February 2015