

OWL Report on Teachers' Visit to Bo
Teacher Exchange Programme
11-22 February 2017

Preparation

June 2016 - all schools invited to take part in Bo visit Feb 2017

Sept 2016 - 2 schools showing interest (St Anthony's and Lillington)

Oct 2016 - Visit to Warwick by Patrick Tucker, Janet Tucker and Tenneh Koroma - our first face-to-face since Ebola. Visits to most linked schools and planning together on the "Where I spend my time" Project.

Oct -Nov 2016 -flights booked, several meetings to plan together - practical trip details and 'Project' planning

Jan 2017- Visa applications made by post to SL High Commission

Schools involved:

UK Teacher

Jamie Mc Neill, Y5 Teacher, St Anthony's RC Primary, Leam.

Sunita Evans, Y5 Teacher, Lillington Primary, Leamington.

SL Teacher

Amie Brewa Headteacher, UMC Messima, Bo.

Amelia Boakarie, Deputy, Cl.4 Teacher, BDEC Ngai Town.

Visit Programme

- Sat Arrive Lungi 7.30pm - met by OWL teachers, taken to Atlantic Motel close to airport. Dinner.
- Sun Travel Port Loco road to Bo. Un-packing. Welcome Party and Meal at OWL Centre.
- Mon Jamie and Sunita in schools. (Jamie at St Francis for 2 days) (Sunita at BDEC Ngai Town all 4 days)
Liz and John Sandi visit 3 schools (Sewa Rd, UMC Messima, BDEC Messima)
Liz and John meet DD for Education- John Swarray.
Liz and John meet with Maada.
5pm -All visit Paul School for the Blind and meet with Mohammed Conteh, Director.
- Tue Jamie and Sunita in schools.
Liz and John visit 4 schools. (UMC New Site, Holy Rosary, UBC Upper and Lower)
Also visit Rachael Kpatewa and Tenneh Koroma.
Preparation of materials for workshop and football kit.
- Wed 10-3pm Partnership Planning Workshop at OWL Centre : Improving Education in link schools. Mindmapping benefits and ideas for the future.
Rotation of 3 Mathematics seminars. Lunch together.
Liz, Jamie and Sunita -TV interview with SLBC reporter.
4pm -Presentation of Gifts to the 15 primary schools, CKC and Paul School for the Blind. (Football kit, football, pump)
- Thu Jamie and Sunita in school. (Jamie at UMC Messima for 2 days)
Liz and John visit 4 schools (RC Madonna, RC Model, BDEC New Gerihun Rd Upper and Lower)
Liz makes a successful 20 minute Skype call connecting All Saints' Juniors and BDEC NGR Upper who sing to each other and make speeches. Liz and John visit Kula and Cecilia Rogers.
4pm Phonics workshop- introduction to Jolly Phonics method and resources.
7pm Meet with BDC Chairman, Joseph Bindi.
- Fri Jamie and Sunita in schools.
John and Liz visit 4 schools (St Peter's Bo No 2, St Charles Lwanga, BDEC Ngai Town, CKC Sec. School)
Liz and John meet and interview Monica Kamara at SLBC.
Sunita visits Bo Market and Bo Govt Hospital with Yatta.
Jamie returns to St Francis to deliver Maths training.
4pm Football Gala at St Francis.
- Sat Visit to Kailahun District, East of Bo. Villages: Segbwema and Yandohun.
Farewell Party at OWL Centre.
- Sun Church.
Lunch at Dohars Hotel with Chair of District Council Joseph Bindi.
Travel to Bureh Beach.
- Mon Rest day.
- Tues travel to Lungi + flight.

OWL Teachers' Aims during the visit:

- ⤴ Ensure the smooth running of the visit for the 2 new teachers
- ⤴ Help set up various visits outside schools, suggested by teachers
- ⤴ Facilitate Weds and Thurs training/meetings
- ⤴ Visit other 13 linked Primary schools and some Secondary schools if possible.
- ⤴ Ensure all schools understand the ethos of OWL and the agreed procedures of membership (eg. Meeting project deadlines. Enquiring for funding of water project)
- ⤴ Communicate with the wider Bo community via the Media and stakeholders
- ⤴ Discuss sustainable working of OWL teachers committee by developing an Action Plan
- ⤴ Prepare the 2 or 3 Bo teachers who will be coming to UK in June

Developments

Our welcome in Bo was as warm as ever, with many familiar faces as well as a good number of new ones in the teachers' group. The newly elected Teachers' Committee is lead by John Sandi as Coordinator (Head at BDEC Sewa Rd). Other members are: Monjama Vandj, Hawa Kamanda, Janet Tucker, Madam Yatta Boima, Matthew Sagba, Lucy Amara, Amelia Boakarjie, Francis Jusu, Alfred Kanneh and Aaron Sannoh. It is clear that this is a strong team. The week had been planned well in advance with all members playing their part. We had been emailed the draft Programme for the week which was most helpful. The Social Secretaries and team provided delicious food for our Welcome and Leaving parties. The PROs (Public Relations Officers) collated work packages from 14 of the 15 link schools for us to bring back to the UK (the 15th was chased up and did arrive in time). The Football Gala was extremely well organised and an enjoyable end to a hard-working week. Both girls and boys matches took place, playing 12-a-side which enabled pupils from all schools in the two zones to take part. At the end we presented medals (donated by Lillington Football Club) to all the pupils who had played.

Zone 1 - PRO: Aaron Sannoh (St Charles, Lwanga) Dep: Francis Jusu (UBC Lower)	Zone 2 - PRO: Alfred Kanneh (BDEC NGR Lower) Dep: Monjama Vandj (UMC Messima)
St Francis Holy Rosary St Charles Lwanga BDEC Ngai Town UBC Upper UBC Lower St Peter's Bo No 2	BDEC Sewa Rd UMC Messima BDEC Messima BDEC New Gerihun Rd, Lower BDEC New Gerihun Rd, Upper UMC New Site RC Model RC Madonna

Bo OWL
Teachers'
Committee



The OWL Centre staff worked hard all week to ensure we had all we needed, even running errands in to town to support us. The murals depicting rural life have been recently renovated and there are plans to re-do the portraits around the compound walls. During the week the downstairs hall was hired out on several occasions by other NGOs / groups.

Workshops

Partnership Planning / Maths :

Aim: to discuss partnership issues in order to improve education in our link schools.

John Sandi gave an introduction explaining the new focus of working as a team alongside the Executive Committee, in unity rather than as a separate body. He briefly explained the purpose of our workshop.

Liz facilitated a time of 'Reflection', looking back on a slideshow of photos of the 2014 exchange visit (the last teacher exchange) and also showing the impact of the Day of the African Child event in UK with another slideshow.

John facilitated a session looking at the OWL Mission Statement - clarifying WHAT OWL is, and what it is NOT!

In groups teachers were asked to create mind-maps together considering the question:

How does our link benefit our community? Each group then gave feedback.

Responses included: Friendship, teacher relationships, 'Belonging' to the link, safe drinking water, exchange visits and exposure to modernisation, communication, cultural activities (dancing and singing), rehabilitation of Head teachers offices, teaching and learning materials like books/chalk, social interaction, exchange of ideas-education, financial support : water wells and dust-bins, learning cultural/traditional differences, challenge stereotypes, learning about social economy in our communities, helping each other, inspiring children- photos and work sharing, learning new ideas-sharing practices, broaden our thinking, helping each other, recreational- football kits, mutual understanding between UK and Sierra Leone, waste management and sanitation, extension of OWL facilities to other public institutions:BDC, Blind school, children's ward -Bo Hospital.

We then discussed ideas for: **How can I improve our link?**

Suggestions were:

- Be committed
- Attend meetings - report feedback to others
- Promote the link to colleagues
- Meet project deadlines so work can be sent to the UK
- Educate our link colleagues to share problems
- Improve communication - Use What's App, not just Bo to UK, but Bo to Bo and UK to UK.

Action Points as a result of discussion:

1. Organise workshop/training to replicate
2. Organise feedback meetings within each school - as part of staff meeting
3. Gap identification of subject area - what aspects of the curriculum would benefit teachers for future training?

Other learning points from the visit:

Water Well building or renovating is a big deal and must be gone about using the correct procedure. Coordinators on both sides must educate their teachers about this required protocol: If a school in Bo is hopeful that they might receive support with financing a water project they must first discuss their specific needs with the OWL Executive and Teachers committee. They may then be asked to go away and find quotes from reputable, trusted contractors. When a reasonable quote has been found, the Bo OWL committee will contact the Warwick committee teachers group describing the project and giving the approximate cost.

If the initiative arises on the Warwick side, then Liz will contact John and Maada to explain that a school is offering support. John can then invite that school to discuss their water needs.

Maths Training

The second part of the workshop day was a session where a rotation of three seminars on three themes were led by Jamie, Sunita and Liz. All of the seminars emphasised the progression from Concrete to Visual to Abstract. Noting that the concrete can be returned to even after the abstract has been taught, to consolidate learning. Even in Year 6 concrete materials can be used to ensure or deepen understanding.

Jamie: Multiplication and Division Investigating strategies that show the development of Multiplication and Division from the concrete to the pictorial and the abstract.

Sunita: Number Facts. Reinforcing the use of concrete, pictorial and abstract materials when teaching children number facts in order to ensure a firm understanding of numbers as quantities.

Liz: Place Value. Number bonds to 10- children need to physically understand that 7 is larger than six by handling bottle tops or straws. Teen numbers-grasping that $10+3=13$, $10+7=17$ etc. Use of straws in bundles of 10 to demonstrate place value for 2 digit and 3 digit numbers. Use of Place Value columns for teaching ones, tens, hundreds, thousands.

We no longer call *ones* 'units' because of confusion with units of measure (which are cm, metre, kilogram, litre, pint, etc) Column method: Addition - carry the digits by writing them under/below the line. Cross out after you have remembered to add the carried digit in that column.

Subtraction - show exchange/borrowing/re-grouping of the top number by crossing out and writing above the top digits. Understand that you are borrowing a ten, or a hundred (not just 'one' - it is one ten or one hundred). Straws and elastic bands were given to most teachers.

The workshop was well attended (total 40+) with two representatives from every linked school, as well as Paul School for the Blind and CKC Secondary School. An excellent African lunch dish was provided at the end by Nancy Kamara, OWL Centre Manager.

Phonics Workshop :

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

Each school was provided with a pack containing copies of the Phonics chart, a pack of word charts, coloured marker pens and 40 pieces of card for creating flash-cards.

Video materials were used to show the progression of Phonics teaching from Reception class to Year 2. The videos were created by Natalie Johnson and Tim Hussey from Emscote Infants school. The video was paused to give time for explanations, to work examples and to answer questions.

The workshop was well attended by approx 30 teachers. It is hoped that the learning will be cascaded down to all staff in OWL schools and that the flash cards will be made and put to good use in the teaching of phonics.

Presentation of Gifts

A public presentation of the Football kits, balls and pumps was made at the OWL Centre on Weds 15th Feb 2017.

Teacher representatives and children from each school were invited to attend the event and receive their gifts.

A short program of speakers provided speeches about the benefits to education on both sides of the link, including Mr John A. Swarray, Deputy Director of Education, Southern Region. Mr Swarray, 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 strengthening the system in Bo District. He encouraged OWL teachers to continue exchanging ideas, sharing cultural knowledge and observing and learning from each others' behaviour. Previous OWL Chair Mr V.V. Boakarie was an honoured guest and helped to present gifts to each school, where photos were taken for the record.

Visit to Kailahun District

District motto: *The soil is our bank.* (we can see why!)

On Saturday we travelled east of Bo District to Kenema, then to the villages of Segbwema and Yandohun. This was the first time a UK teachers group have been offered this unique opportunity to explore beyond Bo District. We were welcomed in Segbwema by Maada's family who provided a delicious feast of yam and 'fou-fou,' many different meat sauces, oranges, bananas and pineapple. It was an educational trip, learning about the rich rainforest plants and incredible vegetation. It was also an emotional trip - a wonderful privilege to meet with people in Maada's home village, Yandohun. They had even repaired holes in the dirt road leading to their village in preparation for our visit. We find it hard to understand what we've done to deserve this special treatment! They made us feel very special with their noisy, welcome singing and parade to the village 'town hall' where important people were introduced and speeches shared in English and Mende. We were taken to the school where children sang for us and teachers provided a tour of the classrooms. Maada and Liz were both interviewed by SLBC with the back-drop of villagers singing.

Next Steps:

In previous years we have been encouraged by Michael Dennis (British Council, Freetown) to create an Action Plan. This was not worked on formally together but rather, as ideas developed during the week, they have been noted and put together in this report (see below) The suggestion by Michael is that the Action Plan is discussed by all involved and people are held responsible for different tasks. It should be reviewed in June 2017, when the next teacher exchange takes place in Warwick district.

We would like to conclude this report with a huge **Thank You** to all the OWL teachers and members in Bo who helped to make our 2017 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 hope that Bo OWL teachers will be inspired to make the most of the opportunities offered to them by being part of this group. We look forward to continued communication and learning together throughout the coming year.

With best wishes,
Liz Garrett, Jamie McNeill and Sunita Evans
Warwick OWL Primary Teachers
28 Feb 2017

(See Action Plan on next page)

Action Plan

OWL Teachers Group Feb 2017

As well as on-going OWL Teachers' activities and meetings there are some specific actions which need to happen:

What do we need to do?

ACTION	WHO	WHEN?	Outcome?
Set up a meeting for Amelia, Amie and Yatta to help them prepare for their UK visit. Prepare a list of Visa requirements.	John Sandi	ASAP	
Up-date Liz on progress with Visa application so that she can book flights.	John, Maada	March-May 2017	
Buy 500 'I love Sierra Leone' wristbands by June visit.	Nancy Kamara, Yatta Boima	By May 2017	
Buy Super Kids DVDs x15 to be given to Warwick schools in June . Alfred to send samples to UK in March (with Helena White)	Alfred Kanneh	March 2017 -samples June 2017 - 15 DVDs	
Take photos of teams wearing football kits - send on What's App group. Liz to use for Press Release in UK.	Alfred Kanneh and Aaron Sannoh	March 2017	Thanks to Francis Jusu of UBC lower who has already sent on What's App.
Ensure that the Phonics materials/training is being used. Visit schools who did not attend the training session, to explain the key teaching/ how to make good use of their Phonics pack.	??	March/April 2017	
Plan Day of African Child celebration	All.	Friday 16 th June	
Feedback meeting - report from visit to UK.	Amelia, Amie and Yatta	June/July 2017	
Organise OWL adult education film event to show Invictus - very inspiring film about Nelson Mandela as a leader.	Maada Fobay	?	