

One World Link

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

www.oneworldlink.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 700714

Investing in the Future of Sierra Leone

Glenn Fleet reports on the waste management project where DFID are investing and OWL and Warwickshire are providing support to clean up Bo and provide youth employment

WHY ON EARTH do I keep going back to Bo city in Sierra Leone? Because so much has happened in the last six years in the development of their waste service, and I have been privileged to be their technical support with Derek Greedy covering landfill management. The icing on the cake has been in the last few months, when Bo City Council has won an award as the cleanest city in Sierra Leone.

But what will happen and where are they going from here? Well over 90% of Bo's waste is compostable material. The remainder is mainly plastic, a few broken bottles that can no longer be reused (everything that can be reused is reused). Their target is to separate this material into two fractions: inert waste that can be landfilled safely and the 90% plus turned into compost.

The early work was a pilot programme on a limited budget, so we only had one skip lorry and a small number of skips. All the politicians wanted a skip in their ward, so plan A of two skips at each location went out the window, but the pilot showed that residents did want to use the skips and the City has become a lot cleaner.

In 2013 the Department for International Development (DFID) approved £3.2m funding to expand the service over the next four years. As part of the project they are funding an NGO called Welthungerhilfe (WHH), who are working in the country with support from One World Link. The project supports youth groups to set up small businesses. They receive training in Health and Safety, accountancy management, team building, opening bank accounts etc. to make sure they have all the skills to manage a sustainable business.

Sixty new jobs in collection and recycling

Some of the youth groups collect the waste from individual households, take it to the skips, and separate out any materials that can be recycled and sold separately. The remainder is then moved to the landfill site. They charge the householders directly and the scheme has been so popular that the council are struggling to clear the skips as quickly as they are filling up.



Youth groups collect waste from individual households



Making cooking pots from aluminium cans melted down

Another part of the project was to support small businesses to make new products from recyclable materials. The support includes a small amount for tools, but is mainly for business skills. The photograph shows one of the winning businesses that recycles aluminium cans into cooking pots. Between the youth groups and the other small recycling businesses some 60 jobs have been created in the past year, with 200 anticipated in total from the extended project.

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Chairman's Notebook



For any organisation, it always helps to think about purpose. What are we about? Are we still doing what we intended? How effective are we?

I was drawn to this following the fascinating talk on aid held on 12th May where Professor Franklyn Lisk and Yash Tandon gave us an insight into the complex and controversial world of international aid and its effectiveness, or lack of in moving developing countries forward.

OWL is often perceived as being part of that world. After all, we have very close links with a Country that needs to develop its undoubted talents to improve life for its people. It is often easy for people here to see us as part of the "aid" complex. And sometimes we may see ourselves that way as well.

But we are different. And our difference underlies our success over 30+ years. Just reflect on what we say on our website:

"One World Link (OWL) promotes friendships between two communities across the world: those of Bo District in Sierra Leone and Warwick District in the UK. The link that has been running between these two communities since 1981 is inspired by a desire for justice, equality, human understanding and mutual support. Over the years it has helped to strengthen both communities and their awareness of global and development issues."

We are partners with friends in another country. We look to share experience and understanding. Of course, we can take part in capacity building, such as through the waste project and other aspects of local governance and we can act as a conduit for others to provide assistance where specific needs are identified. But we should not lose sight of our central purpose. Friendship on an equal footing with the community of Bo lies at the heart of all that we do. We continue to work to keep that friendship alive and healthy.



Saying goodbye is hard

The Mayor of Bo City, Harold L. Tucker, visited OWL in November 2013 and made a moving farewell speech. Here are some extracts.

It is such a difficult task describing how sad I am to be leaving very kind people like you.

I have cherished every moments spent here during this visit, be it at the land field site, around the green fields, the cold night listening to the Swaps, the town hall reception with distinguished Mayors, a deliberately followed scheduled set of meetings of my aspirations, visits to Strafford, the ancient Warwick castle, Coventry and London to the Member of parliament and in the House of Commons, nights out with OWL Members for the best of evening meal and drink, meeting with a well experienced professor in global development and economic advancement of developing nations at Warwick University, tactfully avoiding a newly found mother from pampering me and sometimes wanting to take me to places when John also wished to, the presentations at the AGM Meeting; an unending experience sharing and learning new things in council offices of Leamington and Warwick, the meetings with the fire services and rotary representatives, meetings, with very lovely school children pushing for non violent communities and a world without chemical weapons, I will add weapons of all types.



Mayor Harold L Tucker

This list may not be exhausted. All I could say, my stay with you people have been a wonderful ride as a result of caring partnership. Many times I have been humbled by the kindness of your hearts.

You have helped the people of Bo when we were going through some difficult times, and we have shared the joyous times in yours. Some people judge their lives on what they do, others on who they are, but I want us to be judged on this relationship we continue to sustain.

So. . . until the next time we gather, my very dear friends, farewell for now.

Investing in the Future of Sierra Leone (continued from front page)

Improvement of solid waste management will reduce environmental health risks. Solid waste accumulated in the streets and drains provides a home for vermin which exacerbate the spread of diseases such as Lassa fever, and leads to blocked drains which flood in the wet season, spreading water-borne disease. The accumulated waste is unhealthy and unsightly and can undo the benefits of improved water, sanitation and hygiene programmes. Improvements in waste management will also deliver positive environmental impacts, including reductions in flooding, water, soil and groundwater pollution, reduction in open air-contaminating indiscriminate burning of solid waste in urban areas, and significant reduction in the quantities of decomposing waste around the city.

Glenn Fleet is Group Manager - Waste Management , Warwickshire County Council

AID – Benefit or Burden

OWLTALK: The views of two eminent speakers on the good, the bad and the ugly aspects of international aid at our public talk.



Professor Franklyn Lisk

Professor Lisk gave us a very lucid analysis of the main forms of aid: official aid, private aid, charitable aid and a more recent phenomenon, aid linking partner developing world countries. Whilst an immensely complex topic, he considered that key tests would have to be: is aid relevant to development needs? Has aid been productive in terms of results? Who benefits?

He concluded that, so far, aid has not helped reduce poverty and inequality significantly. Aid should be used to release the energies of millions of able, active and vigorous Africans, rather than retain them trapped in relationships that favour donor countries. For aid to be

effective it should be regarded as temporary, should be targeted directly at the grass roots where it reaches the poorest, not the higher echelons and it should be targeted at sustainable long term growth.

Yash Tandon spoke passionately about his perception of aid being an integral part of the international global crisis. Apart from crisis/humanitarian aid, he considered most aid to be part of the global economy; highly centralized in the hands of a few hundred global corporations that control the market for commodities and a few dozen finance and banking corporations. The developing world was a victim of this approach.

Africa may have gained political independence, but did not have economic liberation. He felt that this would only come when their neo colonial regimes were replaced by popular local regimes accountable to their own people, not international bodies. There was considerable energy and resource within African nations, they needed to be liberated from the constraints of global economic control dressed up as "aid" and allowed to develop their own futures.

The presentations were followed by a lively discussion session. We were extremely grateful to have had the opportunity of hearing two such experienced and well regarded speakers at our event and felt that all who were present had gained a great deal more understanding, even if we did not all agree on a solution!

Professor Lisk is from Sierra Leone and currently works at Warwick University on, among other things, global health governance, the political economy of African development and China-Africa relations. He has recently provided consultancy and technical advisory services to the African Development Bank, the World Bank, UNDP, and many other agencies and governments.

Yash Tandon is from Uganda and has worked as an academic, a teacher, a political thinker, a rural development worker, a civil society activist, and an institution builder. He was involved in the democratic struggles in Uganda and was member of the interim Uganda Parliament (1979-80). From 2005 to 2009 he was the Executive Director of the South Centre.



Yash Tandon

Connecting Classrooms

OWL and the British Council collaborate again in a teacher exchange.

Katy Traynar, from St Patricks' Primary, and Tim Hussey, from Emscote Infants School, visited their counterparts in Bo with funding from the British Council's 'Connecting Classrooms' programme. The programme promotes better teaching and more awareness of global issues. They had a busy ten days, coordinated by OWL's Liz Garrett and Jenny Bailey, visiting their partner schools and running workshops for teachers on partnership planning, early reading skills and maths. They took with them football team kits for all 14 linked schools, causing great excitement.

The visit was about more than classroom activities and included a meeting with the Mayor of Bo and with a Paramount Chief, a visit to the hospital ("impressively clean and well resourced") and seeing a newly-completed well for Sewa Road School. "Bo is clearly developing and improving at a pace!" said Liz.

Before returning they had a chance to relax on the eco-tourism John Obey Beach.

There will be a return visit from two Bo teachers in the summer.



The football kit was a hit!



The new well for Sewa Road school

A very positive and close relationship

John Archer visited Bo in December

When I visited Bo just before Christmas I was looking to follow up on the recent visit to the UK by the Mayor of Bo, Harold Tucker, build up our links with Bo OWL, and help work up school contacts.

I was accompanied by Glenn Fleet who was providing technical assistance to the City Council's Waste Management Project (see front page). It was a very successful visit. The Waste management project was developing very well, with local recycling initiatives and a collection service manned by local motor tricycle teams working effectively. It was managed by an enthusiastic and friendly WHH worker, Raphael and a team of local council officers, including Maada, who was providing effective financial control for the project. We could see that there was real Council commitment to making progress.

The Mayor was very pleased to see us and I was introduced at a number of Council meetings. He was very supportive of the link and it was clear that his visit to the UK followed rapidly by ours has really cemented a very positive and close relationship between OWL and the City Council.



The Fire Force with the new fire engine

We visited the Fire Force headquarters to see how we could build up links with Warwickshire Fire Service. They were very keen and we could see how limited their equipment was. They had no protective clothing and their Chinese built fire engine was the only appliance for the whole of the Southern Region (population about 1.4 million). We could see that there is scope for practical links with our local Fire Service.

Bo OWL is very strong. I was invited to formally commission the new bungalow development that OWL have constructed with the legacy funds we share. It was an enjoyable ceremony, meeting up with many friends and colleagues from OWL. I also met up with the BO OWL Committee where we discussed matters arising from visits, the future of Bo OWL, how to continue to make our relationship work and options for improving the existing OWL Centre.



John Archer speaking at the commissioning of the OWL bungalow

I visited a number of schools to meet up with teachers and to find out the potential for linking with secondary schools here. A number of new contacts made that we can now follow up. I also met with a group of primary teachers to discuss arrangements for the forthcoming teacher exchange visits.

It was very encouraging to see how the City is moving forward. The City Centre and approach roads are now all well lit by solar street lights, the streets are certainly cleaner and a new piped water supply is promised.

Both Glenn and I had a very enjoyable and fruitful visit. We met old friends and made new ones. We saw a city that is making real progress and look forward to visiting again.

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for OWL -
and it costs you Nothing!

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Register with easyfundraising.org.uk, and choose OWL as your beneficiary, You can shop online with all your favourite retailers and they will donate a percentage of everything you spend to OWL.. So why not check it out and register today!

OWL is the Mayor's Charity for 2014

We are very grateful for the Mayor of Leamington, John Knight, for making OWL one of his charities for his mayoral year, 2014/15. We will be very happy to provide any support to the Mayor in any of his activities that relate to our organisation and will ensure that all monies that OWL receives as a result of this will be directed at strengthening and deepening our link with the Community of Bo.

Your membership of OWL

Stay up-to-date and involved - renew your membership.

What - not a member yet? - see our website for more details: oneworldlink.org.uk or email membership@oneworldlink.org.uk

What's going on in Sierra Leone? Read the One World Link Newsblog tinyurl.com/owlnews

Our news service has a web page of its own.



It provides extracts from national and international press about Sierra Leone with links to all the original articles

If you want to know more about any of the projects or topics covered in this issue, please visit:



www.oneworldlink.org.uk

