

Patron: Dame Judi Dench CH

PROJECT'S PROGRESS



SUPPORTERS' NEWSLETTER – Summer 2012

This has been an excellent year for our Whole School Development Programme. There are evident improvements in the teaching of mathematics to pupils in the first three years of primary school. Also, we are forging important links between the Zonal and District inspectorate departments and teacher-training college tutors for formal agreement on ways of assessing pupils' work which could have national significance.

AN AUDIENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT



His Excellency Dr Jakaya Kikwete (c) with Katy and Dilly

On 14th November 2011 the Director, Katy Allen, and the Tanzanian coordinator, Dilly Mtui met His Excellency President Kikwete in the State House in Dar es Salaam. For nearly an hour they

discussed the course books for teaching English in government primary schools which Katy has been developing in the last four years. The books are an amended version of the very successful New Oxford English Course books which were previously in use in all Tanzanian primary schools. Copyright has been secured and the new title, New Original English Course, preserves the well-known NOEC acronym.

The most important key to the success of the NOEC books is the pupils' books. The content draws on the environment, people and things to whom and to which the pupils can relate. The stories are often funny, and mostly follow the same characters through several episodes. The illustrations in the books depicting the basic concepts are clear and good. The exercises are varied and comprehensive covering, among other things, word and phrase recognition, spelling and pronunciation, substitution frames for practice of sentence patterns, good comprehension questions and games. There is built-in group and pair work, and lots of action suggested for the pupils to be able to demonstrate their understanding.

Mr F G French, the original author, was concerned for pupils to master the sentence-patterns that form the framework of the English language. His overall aim was to prepare pupils for reading comprehension as this forms the basis of work in their future education. This is achieved through much oral preparation, some specific preparation for each reading/story, and then many and varied

questions on the reading. Eventually this builds up to structured composition work.

All the NOEC books are accompanied by teacher's books. These are presented (for the first time) in Swahili so that today's teachers can understand the explanations and instructions, and easily see the target English language which is printed in red ink. For help with the target English language each teacher's book has a dictionary, and a pronunciation guide to show the teachers how they can make the English sounds using sounds from Swahili words.

The teacher's books give comprehensive guidelines on how to teach each lesson. The 'stages' of each lesson are clearly set out, and take the place of lesson notes or lesson plans. They also set out extensively the various techniques to be used in teaching the language. There are suggestions as to when to explain things in Swahili to the pupils, and the notes highlight difficulties that will be faced by Swahili speakers and how to overcome these difficulties.

There are no books in Tanzania today to match these for teaching English in primary schools, and there is certainly nothing that forms a comprehensive language course. The NOEC is tried and tested in Tanzania, and those who are now over 55 years old stand testament to its success in English language learning, and they also remember fondly many of the stories. His Excellency the President fully approved the books and said that he would like them to be the single text book to be used in all government primary schools. This was announced on TBC radio on Wednesday 15th November and in a short article in The Daily News. The President assigned one of his economic advisers, Dr Hamisi Mwinyimvua, to liaise with Katy and Dilly.

The NOEC books have now been approved by the former Minister for Education, the Hon. Professor Maghembe, a committee convened by the Tanzania Institute of Education, the Prime Minister, the Hon. Mr Pinda, and by His Excellency the President, Dr Jakaya Kikwete. However, there is as yet no contract for their use.

The monies ordered to be paid by British Aerospace to Tanzania in settlement of the corrupt sale of a radar system some years ago, were paid

on 15th March this year. The majority of the money has been set aside for purchasing textbooks for primary schools. The Department for International Development is to monitor the use of the monies. Katy has been appealing to influential people in Tanzania and in the UK to try to ensure that some of that money is spent on the NOEC books. Lack of good teaching materials is one of the main causes of the continuing decline in education in the primary sector. Recent widely published research has made clear that the majority of children in Year 7 cannot do English or maths exercises designed for use in Year 2, confirming that education is in a critical state.

JANE FIRTH'S MATHEMATICS SEMINARS

Jane Firth continues to share her experience of teaching mathematics to young children. She has made three visits to Tanzania in the past 12 months. On each visit Jane worked with the teachers in Mabogni ward. Mr Msuya, the ward's education officer, arranged and supported each seminar and the follow-up school visits, and he is now an integral part of our team.

The most recent seminars in March 2012 focused on reinforcing the work done in previous seminars with head teachers, and Pre-Primary, Standard 1 and Standard 2 teachers. The final day focused on resource management with a demonstration lesson given by Mary Mtei of Mserekia primary school. Jane emphasises the need to take the pupils step-by-step in each topic working first with 'concrete' items before moving towards 'abstract' concepts. The importance of using 'concrete' objects is paramount and that necessitates aids and resources such as dominoes, dice, straws or sticks for counting, adding, subtracting etc.

One of the greatest measures of success of Jane's seminars has been local teachers not only using new teaching methods but building on them as well. It was a combination of this and class and resource management that immediately caught Jane's attention in Mary Mtei's class. Still fairly new to Jane's methods, Mary has adopted them and used them to develop her own impressive skills. During the demonstration lesson, Mary taught using Jane's methods to great effect with her class of 56 pupils. She showed that, if

managed well, the games and methods can be used with large classes and give strong results.



Mary Mtei shows how she uses resources such as cards and straws for each group to learn place value

Seeing was believing for a number of the other teachers who were highly complimentary of Mary's style, the relationship she had with her pupils, and how she and her pupils used and managed the teaching/learning aids. It was encouraging to see such a positive response from her peers who now are motivated to use more resources with their large classes.

Over fifty people attended Jane's seminars in March, including head teachers, inspectors, the Teachers' Resource Centre co-ordinator, and even the District Education Officer for Moshi Rural District paid a visit.

In March Jane's time was mostly taken up with the seminars as opposed to supporting teachers in their classrooms, but there is now a solid base from which others can make those classroom visits. Jane Bentley, a retired primary school head teacher from Brighton, made many school visits on her assignment with us in 2011. David Jones joined us in February 2012 and after working with Jane Firth in March he is providing support and assistance to the Mabogini teachers. David was part of the gap year programme in 2001 and after working in London has returned to support all aspects of the project, using his previous experience in learning and development.

Jane Firth has recently completed a book which guides teachers through each step of teaching the Tanzanian mathematics topics for pre-primary, Standard I and Standard II. The book also outlines recommended activities and gives details of how to make and use the necessary materials such as dominoes, number-squares, and counting cards.

The book is being translated into Swahili. If we obtain enough money for printing then our intention is to distribute the book to all the teachers in Mabogini for a 'pilot run'. If teachers are supported by a good and detailed book in their own language (Swahili) which guides them through each lesson or topic then the teaching, and the pupils' understanding, of mathematics will improve.

TANZANIANS' VIEWS

During Jane's seminars, Dilly and David took the opportunity to speak to Eliewaha Msuya (the ward education officer for Mabogini) and Mary Makamsha (head teacher, Chekereni primary school) to get their views on the current state of their education system.



Mr Msuya said, "...education was one of the things that used to be better in colonial times. When the benefit of education was seen it became more respected, and was more important than getting into the working world for

example. Most communities fully recognised the importance of education. There is no system now for training or development after a teacher has left the Teacher Training College. Now there are no government funds for seminars. The seminars being run in Mabogini by VEPK are wonderful. Please repeat the same again and again".

Mrs Makamsha told us, "One of the results of Jane's seminars has been the recognition of the importance of Pre-Primary as the foundation on which a child's education is built. Since working



with VEPK, most schools in Mabogini now have Pre-Primary classes, and want good, grade A teachers to teach them. Before, the focus was on the higher classes with better teachers being placed in Standard 7. You can see the difference in the classrooms and these young pupils now have a good start and we think their results will be better as they move up the school.”

HEAD TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

In February 2012 inspectors from the North-East Zonal office and from Moshi rural district office gave a seminar for the head teachers from the 11 Mabogini primary schools. This followed on from the training Evans Lushakuzi had conducted for us in April 2011. The inspectors were able to guide the head teachers through some of the detailed government regulations regarding school accounts, disciplinary offences, requirements for academic and administrative record-keeping, and the general duties and expectations of a head teacher. This was very helpful and well received by the head teachers. Another great benefit was to build a rapport between the senior inspectors and the head teachers and for hierarchical barriers to start to be broken down.

HOW TO ASSESS PUPILS

Dr Anne Samson oversees and researches for the Whole School Development Programme. She noticed from her visits to the schools, and from talking to the Moshi rural district inspectors and then to the trainers at Singa Chini Teacher Training College, that there is a lack of agreement on acceptable methods for assessing pupils’ work or performance. The government introduced the concept of ‘participatory teaching’, or ‘child-centred learning’ some years ago. Teachers have not had sufficient training in how to adapt from their ‘chalk and talk’ approach, and the current emphasis on ‘group work’ can only be a beginning but is, in fact, masking the extent of change that is still needed. However, full participatory teaching is being hampered by continued insistence on having written work as the only way to assess pupils’ performance. In July and again in October 2011 Anne hosted a workshop with the district inspectors and the Singa Chini teacher-trainers to discuss methods of assessment. Jane Firth demonstrated some of her activities and showed how a teacher can assess pupils by their ability in an activity. The Singa Chini tutors agreed that

such assessment is valid, but the inspectors followed their government regulation and could not agree. From the meeting in October it transpired that the inspectors and the teacher-trainers had different government regulations.

Katy Allen and Dilly Mtui travelled to Dar es Salaam to meet the Acting Commissioner for Education, as all regulations should come from that office. All regulations are sent to the heads of the education sectors in the Ministry and from there to Zonal offices, and from there they are distributed to the different districts and colleges. Then Katy and Anne met the North-East Zonal Chief Inspector of Schools, Mr Andrew Tamamu, and he completely understood the problem. Sometimes there is a failure in the chain of distribution, and sometimes documents do not go via his office. It seems that the regulations are in-line with new methods of assessment but that not all inspectorate offices have received them. Andrew Tamamu has very kindly offered to join Anne in a third workshop in July this year to meet his district inspectors and the teacher-trainers so that acceptable ways of assessing pupils can be agreed.

THE GUERBA COMPUTER CENTRE

The GCC is going from strength to strength with Craig Collier as the manager. Craig is now part of the local community and he has a stream of pupils joining his training courses as well as customers for the internet cafe. Three of Craig’s students have now gone to college to study PC maintenance and repair.

Doreen Mzava still looks after the day-to-day running of the centre. Her Tanzanian presence to welcome customers combined with Craig’s technical expertise has helped to make the centre a busy place.

Plans are afoot to extend the centre to be a social centre, with the possibilities of membership programmes, screenings of documentaries, and even food and drink sales.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Some hopes are dashed others are merely thwarted for a while: extraordinary events have brought our new project to a complete standstill.

On a big site on the Moshi–Holili road we began building a new motor repair garage and workshop. This is to accommodate a motor-mechanics training course. The building was roofed at the end of January 2012 and all materials were on site to lay the concrete floors. Work was slightly under pressure as a donated 40-foot container with over 8 tonnes of donated equipment was to dock in Mombasa any day, and on its arrival two of our donors were to fly to Tanzania to help to unload the container and install the equipment.



The arrival of the container outside the new building

Without warning engineers arrived near the site to take measurements and to announce verbally that the new East African Highway is to pass straight through the new building. From then on Katy and Dilly have had meetings with the regional office of TanRoads in Moshi, and with the East African Secretariat in Arusha. The East African Highway is a project of the new East African Community initially funded by the African Development Bank, and soon funding will be requested from other donors. The Moshi–Holili section of the road seems to have lacked due attention by the planners. It is admitted that no proper notice was given to us, or indeed to the land office from which we purchased the land and acquired our building permit. With nobody willing to put anything in writing, Katy and Dilly took the matter to the Minister at the Ministry of East African Cooperation in Dar es Salaam. They met the Minister's secretary, himself an engineer, and were assured the matter was already being discussed. The Tanzanian High Commissioner in London was informed, as was the British High Commissioner in Dar es Salaam and the latter has been most co-operative. At the time of writing the matter is to go to a special committee and we trust a resolution will be forthcoming quickly. There is more than enough land to the north of the building on which to realign the Highway although this

would add to the cost with increased earthworks. The alternative is to be paid compensation. Katy and Dilly assert that the road must be realigned as it should not be possible for a donor-funded highway to cause the demolition of a newly built donor-funded training school. It has not been an easy three months, but Katy and Dilly have fought to get the matter to the very highest level in a short time, and continue to put pressure on those involved. Problems such as these are part of the work of Katy and Dilly in Tanzania, and unfortunately take up valuable time which should be spent on more productive work.

The voyage of the container was not delayed and it arrived at the end of February. Many thanks are due to John Douglas and to the corporate sponsors, the EC Group who arranged nearly everything, and Remit who provided the container itself and much of the essential equipment. Stored now are various tools, hoists and even an old Landrover pick-up which will start the motor mechanics training school well on its way.

There are also plans for the existing vocational training school in Mshiri to become a residential training centre for computer training and for pre-university courses. We are in discussion with Viafrica and Training for Life with a view to working in partnership.



Gisella and Helena making greeting cards

Mama Mlay and Regina continue to run the Village Crafts shop and cafe which is the most peaceful venue in Marangu Mtoni. Two former students of the Vocational Training School work in part of the shop and produce many crafts such as greeting cards, jewellery and Christmas decorations. The shop also promotes the work of

the charity with booklets available for those interested in learning more.

ADMINISTRATION AND PLANS

The success of last year's Kilimanjaro climb encouraged John Douglas to organise another sponsored climb of the mountain. After initial interest the numbers dropped but two determined climbers, Bruce and Chrissie, made it all the way to the top, despite having to abandon their tent due to somewhat extreme weather conditions. Thank you to everyone who supported their climb. John has several people ready for a sponsored climb to take place in or around March 2013. If you know of anyone who would like to join this climb please contact us.

Craig and David have put together a Facebook page for the charity. The site will be updated weekly with photographs and brief pieces of news on all aspects of the project and those working on it. Please search for "Village Education Project Kilimanjaro" and select "Like".

We have many plans for the next 12 months, including another workshop for the District Education Officers and Chief Inspectors of

Schools in the Kilimanjaro region. After visiting each office to gather answers to various questions the next workshop should meet their current needs and act as a discussion forum for ideas for improvements in the primary education sector.

We have plans for another volunteer to join us in Kilimanjaro to complement Jane Firth's work and assist teachers with mathematics in the upper years of primary schools.

We are working with Mr Lusingu and Mr Mkiramweni of Singa Chini Teacher Training College to produce a booklet in Swahili which can be given to primary school committee members (akin to school governors) in order to guide them in their roles and to set out their responsibilities and duties. Training of school committees, whose membership changes every three years, is not sustainable and so a simple but comprehensive guide is needed.

THANK YOU

It goes without saying that none of this is possible without the support of our donors. It is not an easy time to spare money for charity and so every pound is more valued and we do our utmost to use it effectively to help to improve education for young people.



Jane Firth gives support in the classroom



Katy Allen and His Excellency the President

We are committed to long-term projects which combine working with teachers in their classrooms and those involved in government education departments right up to officials in the central Ministry of Education and, this year, the President of Tanzania so that the problems at the very bottom dictate the solutions we are suggesting to those with powers at the very top. With your generous gifts we hope that primary education might improve for everyone

Our overall aim is to enhance the quality of education, especially for village children, in order for future generations to become confident and responsible citizens

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