



Oxfordshire-Uganda Partnership Project Newsletter: July 2009

An occasional newsletter to keep schools in touch with our activities

In the last twelve months almost 100 teacher and student exchanges have taken place between Uganda and Oxfordshire. This is evidence of the commitment by all concerned to engage actively in building deeper knowledge and understanding of life outside the country in which we each live. In a rapidly globalising world - with the twin impacts of economic recession and climate change - we need more than ever to prepare our young people to face the challenges of the present as well as the future.

The newsletter celebrates activities from the February visit to Uganda and the June visit to Oxfordshire. Many schools, like Wakitaka/Willowcroft, Entebbe Juniors/Dunmore and St Agnes/Langford - have focused on sustainability as a curriculum theme, and young people are now sharing the growing, preparation and eating of healthy local foods whilst learning about different growing conditions and the economics of production. Other schools are beginning to explore challenging and difficult themes such as social justice and human rights. This issue includes some innovative collaboration between Mbarara Preparatory and Sibford using video technologies to begin work on developing a common charter of rights. And thanks to Makarere College we have young people's voices reflecting on their recent experiences in the UK. Ultimately, it is through our influencing and shaping young people's lives that we must judge our success (or not!). I strongly commend all schools to make sure that the focus of work is on active participation to improve young people's lives through better understanding and mutual collaboration.



Ugandan teacher workshop in the Old Library of St Mary Virgin Church, Radcliffe Square 15 June 2009

PARTNERSHIP LINKING MAKES 10 YEARS

The Oxfordshire-Uganda linking programme is ten years old this year. With the exception of Burford School's link which has been going for over 15 years, the earliest links started in 1999 with many schools joining in 2004.

In February this year a group of 32 teachers and 6 students visited Uganda and in June the return group of 36 teachers and students arrived in Oxfordshire. Some of the teachers had visited previously, but the majority in both directions were first timers. In October individual school groups visiting Uganda totalled 15, and this was followed by reciprocal visits of 5 Uganda teachers, 2 of whom came to the Warriner in January and experienced snow for the first time! An increasing number of schools are developing a global citizenship curriculum that extends well beyond the limits of the British Council grant schemes. Each year several staff from Pegasus School visit Nakanonyi School, and the October visit included teaching assistants as well as teachers. Jill Hudson, headteacher, recognises the professional development the opportunity such visits afford, as well as helping to create a whole school commitment to the partnership. Almost all of the staff from Blewbury School joined headteacher Marion Mills on her annual pilgrimage to Butagaya School - and it is indeed a long trek on a very bumpy dirt road an hour north of Jinja.



Several secondary schools are now developing substantial links. Wheatley Park School extended their link with Makarere College School by including students for the first time this year. The school funded 6 students to visit Uganda in February, and then these students hosted the reciprocal visit by Makarere students in June. Faringdon School has been visiting Kazo Hill for several years and in October took over 4 staff and 9 students in October, and as this newsletter is printed a group of students and teachers from The Warriner will be hosted by their partner school. Our Lady's in Abingdon also have an active student visit programme with Maryhill School in Mbarara.

This year has also seen some changes in the leadership of some Ugandan schools. Rose Isisingi has left Makarere College School to take over another Kampala school (we will be keen to make another secondary link here) and is replaced by Agnes Katangole. John Ssesmugooma's move from Bless Sacrament to St Charles Kasaali in Masaka coincided with Sue Mortimer's move to Rose Hill Primary, so this is a new partnership but based on much previous good work and good friendships. Finally, Alex Isabirye has left Nakanyonyi to turn around another local Jinja school and has been replaced by James Mwase. We wish all these good friends best wishes in their new jobs. Sadly, each year a few partnerships do not manage to keep going which is disappointing for the young people in both schools. However we are welcoming several new schools - mostly in the Kampala area, but also a second school on the Ssesse Islands.

SEVEN YEARS AND GOING EVEN STRONGER BETHEL SCHOOL, KAMPALA AND EWELME SCHOOL

Congratulations to the Bethel-Ewelme partnership, and to the imagination and effort of Marjorie Slatter, who writes here about a link that has lasted seven years and is getting stronger.

Bethel and Ewelme Primary Schools have been partners for 7 years. The partnership was formed in the early years of Oxfordshire links with Uganda and, despite a break in curriculum exchanges, the schools have been in continuous contact. I was very pleased, therefore, to be making a return visit to Kampala in February - so many years after joining the very first group of Oxfordshire teachers to visit there. I found the experience very rewarding in many ways, but chiefly because of the amazing and positive changes that have taken place recently at Bethel School.

We have been exchanging pupils' work about improving environments and sustainability, and contributing to staff CPD to improve the teaching and learning of reading and I was delighted to see at first hand what a lot had been achieved by the hard work of everyone at Bethel. The physical environment has been improved by building a retaining wall and grassing areas of the compound to reduce mud/dust, with new trees planted to provide shade. There is a phased programme to replace unsuitable buildings and improve others.



The change to the children's learning environment is equally impressive and was commented upon by visiting UK teachers from other schools. There are now displays on classroom walls which include work from both partner schools, and posters (made by the teachers) reinforcing aspects of learning in literacy, maths, science and social studies. Learning is supported by a more interactive and questioning teaching style. There is a very caring atmosphere and ethos throughout the school.

Teachers at Bethel reported the following after visiting Ewelme last year:

"My visit to UK helped me change my views about young children in Uganda. Having observed many lessons during our visit to Ewelme, I thought I had been so unfair to my pupils. I noticed that lessons in UK are so real and practical, something that never happens in most schools in

Uganda. Children are given a chance to talk about each other's answers and this makes them understand more. This has changed my attitude of how I have been conducting my lessons. I have now adopted the skills learnt to my teaching situation."

"The children at Ewelme have a special way of how they look at and manage the environment. Our school has tried using the UK experience and there is evidence in reduction of littering and waste in the compound."

"In our link we are learning a lot from each otherin order to put children at the centre of the learning process."

We at Ewelme have a lot to learn from our colleagues at Bethel about how quickly change can be effected when new ideas are welcomed and experienced at first hand.



P2 dance performance. Some younger members of the school community just couldn't resist joining in!

DATES FOR NEXT UGANDAN WORKSHOPS

The provisional arrangements for the follow-up workshops to the meeting in June will be:

Monday 10 August: Jinja (venues yet to be confirmed)

Tuesday 11 August: Kampala

Wednesday 12 August: Masaka

Thursday 13 August: Mbarara

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WAKITAKI AND WILLOWCROFT SCHOOLS KEEP FARMING

John Gray, Headteacher of Willowcroft, writes:

This week we shared with the children our trip to Uganda. The children were very interested to learn about their partner school in Wakitaka. They found out about how the money we raised two years ago had helped pay for a piggery. This has supported the Ugandan children by helping them learn about farming techniques. It has also helped the school to find sustainable funding by continuing to breed the pigs and sell them to the local community. Using some of the money that we made from last year's walk at the Clumps we have given the school £400 towards buying two cows for their 'heifer' project.

Our link with Uganda is very important for our children as it gives them a real insight into how children live and work across the world. As well as supporting our link school we also learn a great deal from their education system. For example they are light years ahead of us in how to recycle and the use of their outside environment as a learning tool.



PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY AT ST AGNES PRIMARY SCHOOL



We both had a wonderful week at St. Agnes school, Entebbe. We were made to feel very welcome by Sister Angelina, the Headteacher, and also by the other members of staff and of course the children.

We enjoyed our teaching and worked hard on our joint curriculum projects. We were particularly thrilled to hear about the success of our joint chicken project. Last year Langford School helped St. Agnes to buy a small number of chickens. They now

have over one hundred! They are laying eggs for the children to eat at school, but there are also enough to sell. In addition to the income from selling the eggs, the school have recently been able to start selling cockerels. A very successful initiative which we hope will continue to develop.

Andrea Flear and Georgina Eastwood, Langford Village Primary School, Bicester.

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

Has your cluster formally adopted a partnership agreement? This is a good idea because it sets out the entitlement for both schools, and helps to ensure common understanding about how the curriculum project will work. We have sample partnership agreements, although it's always good if you personalise them to your specific link.

SOWING SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE

Ian Moore, Deputy Head and SENCO at Dunmore School writes:

When Sally Tucker (Head of Foundation Stage) and I journeyed from Dunmore Primary School in Abingdon to Entebbe Junior Primary School in Uganda we knew some of the differences to expect.

Large classes of up to sixty; children repeated the year if they failed to reach a certain standard; lessons tend to be 'chalk and talk' with the same content for all; many less resources than in the UK.

But it wasn't the differences we noticed when we arrived, it was the similarities.

Children laughing and smiling. Children singing. Teachers under pressure over end of year results. Teachers wanting the best for their children. Schemes of work, lesson plans marking. The School Council want more outside play equipment!

There are differences of course there are, but people are people, wherever in the world you go. So that was lesson number one, so obvious you may say but such an important one nonetheless.



Another similarity we share with our partner school in Entebbe - and within our wider cluster encompassing St Agnes School in Entebbe and Langford Village in Bicester - is our commitment to building for the future. We spent our evenings working with the two Ugandan headteachers on the application for funding for next year, and with beginning to consider how the partnership can develop once visits stop.



We have given serious discussion to children taking part in the exchange, an idea that appeals to me the more I mull it over. Maybe not children from Oxfordshire visiting Uganda - we need to fill out copious risk assessments just to take them to the post box on the corner! - but why not some P6 students from Uganda visiting us here?

One way we plan to build on our work is via the internet.



Entebbe Juniors is fortunate in that it has a computer room, and it is the vision of newly appointed Headteacher Othieno Julius that each computer eventually will have internet access (something the school currently can afford for one month per term) and our children communicate via email and webcam. In the shorter term we have considered purchasing a DVD camcorder so that children from both schools can record messages and performances for one another. It really is exciting stuff!



At the polar opposite to all of this digital wizardry was digging a school garden literally with our bare hands on our second to last day. The staff at Entebbe Juniors had provided a plot, and we took out a group of P4 children to plant red peppers, courgettes, onions, carrots, parsnips and lettuce seeds that we brought from the UK. As I was scraping a trench with my hand I had a eureka moment - *I'm digging a school garden in Uganda!* Back in the UK we've now begun our own school garden (although we've had to invest in a mini greenhouse to combat the frost!), and hope to plant some Ugandan seeds in June when Julius and teacher George visit us. These two gardens symbolise so much about our partnership and its future - they both need ongoing work, things in both countries need the same things to grow, they will both bear fruit that we can't currently see.

Finally, after visiting Uganda and the subsequent work I've done with the Dunmore children back here in Oxfordshire, I know we really can't over-estimate the importance of this partnership in challenging stereotypes.

Lions weren't wandering around Entebbe; not all English people are white; Ugandans speak English; there are poor people in the UK; children around the world laugh, cry, dream, can feel lonely, take pride in their achievements.

The more our children can talk to one another - whether by visiting, via email, through a DVD recording or by writing a letter or sending their work - the more similarities they will see in one another. Kids are kids.

POSSIBLE DATES FOR NEXT YEAR; VISITS AND CONFERENCE

The new pattern of a February visit to Uganda with a reciprocal visit to Oxfordshire in June has worked well. The warmer weather and longer days have appealed to the Ugandan group! So we will probably offer to coordinate a visit to Uganda in the February half term 2010, and organise the return visit of our Ugandan partners to a June date (assuming we can get a decent flight deal) that will coincide with a Global Citizenship conference. This will be an excellent opportunity to showcase the curriculum projects of the last three years.

VIBRANT ENTEBBE JUNIOR AND DUNMORE SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Julius Othieno and George Takaisa of Entebbe Juniors report on their recent visit to Oxfordshire: The Dunmore - Entebbe Junior Partnership has developed over time with four teachers having visited the UK so far; the latest being Julius Othieno the Uganda school headteacher and the School Partnership coordinator George P. Takaisa. The benefits of the partnership can be seen to be real with the experiences we have gained as a result of our stay in the UK. These benefits include sharing knowledge and experiences on joint curriculum projects. We were also able to share the general views about our work under the different establishments. We had three projects being implemented with our partner school. The School Council, school garden, the environment and recycling. Much of this project continues to be implemented for the 2009/2010 program. This is aimed at fulfilling the millennium goals which is a key concept to globalisation.

There has been lots of shared knowledge which makes the partnership an outstanding programme. Children in both schools have been able to celebrate their similarities more than their differences.

The similarities stem from diets and foods and fruits eaten such as oranges, pineapples, berries, tomatoes, apples and lemons. We also learnt that we both eat potatoes, rice, beef and fish among other foods. We were so pleased to have been present to harvest lettuces, carrots and radishes from the Dunmore garden as in the photograph below. These experiences make the joint curriculum objectives achievable.



Whilst visiting the school, we lived with our hosts Mr. & Mrs. Garson. We also toured London, Oxford, Abingdon, Roves Farm and a recycling centre. We attended a workshop at The University Church St. Mary's the Virgin Church, High Street, Oxford; at the end of which certificates were awarded. After, we visited Christ Church. These are just some of the highlights of the fascinating places we visited.

As a means of strengthening and sustaining the link, we plan to have more correspondences between the schools and to boost future sharing of knowledge by hopefully instituting Internet facility at our school. This will enable us to have our classrooms linked with the partner school. Children will also be able to directly write to their friends and future project- research can also be done online. This is a sustainability plan for the partnership that will not only be cheaper in the long run but also involve the whole school and benefit a wide range of children directly.

GROWING PLACES: SIBFORD SCHOOL AND MBARARA PREPARATORY

Maggie Guy, Deputy Head of Sibford School writes:

Now in the third year of our partnership Mbarara Preparatory School, Uganda, and Sibford School, Oxfordshire, are going strong. We have continued to develop the original focus of our project on sustainability through comparisons of growing seasons and vegetables in gardens in both schools that have now doubled in size since the project commenced. Comparisons of weather conditions and use of the recording instruments in the Stevenson Screens in both schools have revealed weather conditions that are occasionally similar, but also wildly different, as during our February snow event.



The focus of recent work has now shifted more towards aspects of global citizenship. Pen-pals have continued to communicate, some for four years. However, through the use of technology we are able to share DVDs of pupils in action. Pupils at Sibford viewed a debate on equality between boys and girls conducted at Mbarara Prep School by Nicholas Okech. This was repeated during their recent visit to Sibford with Nicholas and Maggie Guy working with a group of year 7 pupils, which will be viewed by students in Mbarara.

Mbarara Preparatory school has now established their own Student Council and their student campaign was filmed for Sibford's Student Forum to view, and gets tips for future campaigns. Winnie Mpaabwa and Nicholas Okech attended a Student Forum discussion on Children's Rights, which will be repeated when Maggie Guy and Angy Bovill visit in Mbarara in July. Both schools will then formulate a joint Sibford School and Mbarara Preparatory School Charter on Children's Rights to be displayed as a joint project in both schools.

Curricular developments in reading have long been an interest of forward looking Head Winnie Mpaabwa. She spent a profitable session with a specialist teacher looking at Sibford's *Reading Works!* programme, taking away teacher training materials to use in her school to enhance the quality of learning through sharing of good practice.



One of the most eagerly anticipated activities by Sibford students was learning some traditional craft skills. By popular demand Winnie taught students how to make pictures using banana leaves and students made unusual father's day cards. Nicholas taught students how to make rope and was pleased to see how quickly they picked up these skills. Following a music lesson, Nicholas demonstrated some traditional drumming and put a group of boys through their paces teaching them traditional male dancing.

However, the students were also able to engage Winnie and Nicholas in English traditional dance teaching them how to May-Pole dance without muddling their ribbons!

Nicholas is keen to develop drama at Mbarara so he observed several lessons. Students shared their favourite 'warm-up' games and showed reflective practice when offering constructive feedback on filming of recent classroom performances.

The bond between our schools is enhanced by the fact that Sibford is a school for pupils from 4-18 years. Our sixth form Uganda Challenge Team 2010 is currently working hard to self fund a visit to Uganda in July 2010 and this will add a new dimension to our partnership. Having met with Winnie and Nicholas the students will spend the year preparing to share work as diverse as sustainability, music and drama, netball coaching, scenes from Shakespeare and conflict resolution. The key to our success as a partnership is that we have become more than just two schools in two different countries sharing cultures and curriculum; we are actively one community, one family sharing our lives and learning.



Sibford School World Challenge Team, 2010



THE FUTURE STARTS HERE FOR ENTEBBE JUNIORS

Teacher Hudson is Teacher, mathematician and ICT technician all rolled into one. Here he is changing a PC's motherboard.



Hudson and Sally in the computer room at Entebbe Junior School

UGANDAN CARNIVAL TIME IN THAME

Barley Hill Primary School is linked with Adullum Primary School in Mbarara. During the past five years many Barley Hill staff have been able to visit Adullum School and have been inspired by the children's happiness and thirst for learning when, in comparison with children in this country they attend a school with such basic resources. In June Pastor Naboth Tumuhairwe and Robert Muhangi from Adullum visited Barley Hill. Naboth is the local church pastor who founded the school and Robert is one of the teachers. During their visit they met with different classes of children and various groups presented musical and dance items that they had prepared. Naboth's and Robert's visit coincided with a 'Focus on Thame' fortnight being held at the school. On the middle Saturday the Thame Carnival was held and Barley Hill organised a walking procession on the theme of 'Ugandan Carnival'. Hundreds of children dressed up in Yellow, Black and Red T-shirts, the Ugandan flag colours, and Naboth and Robert headed the procession dancing in traditional Ugandan costume. Earlier they had joined an art workshop at school that made a model of a Red Crested Crane to carry at the head of the procession. The following week our visitors were invited to a civic reception to meet the Mayor of Thame, Jeannette Matelot Green and most of the Town councillors. The visit has given a tremendous boost to our partnership and the staff and children are all looking forward very much to running our special curriculum project next year focussing on environmental issues and food. We even hope to produce a joint cook book!



LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCES FOR MAKARERE COLLEGE STUDENTS VISITING WHEATLEY PARK SCHOOL

In June 2009 we had the opportunity to meet the friendly and courteous teachers and students from Makerere College, Kampala. The link with our Ugandan friends aims to give students from both schools the opportunity to experience life in a different country and culture. This means becoming aware of the differences but also the remarkable similarities between us. In February 2009 Mr Hall, Miss Stickland and five Sixth Formers travelled to Kampala to represent Wheatley Park School. Their successful trip paved the way for the next phase of the project in which six more students will visit Uganda in February 2010 and our friends from Makerere will return in the June of that year. The visit this June has seen three teachers and four students from Makerere in school, going on visits and working on joint creative projects. It has been a great success in which the punting skills of the Ugandan students proved superior to those of the Wheatley Park students and in which the creative ability of both groups of students has been truly impressive. There have been poetry writing, screen printing and calligraphy workshops run jointly by teachers from both schools. In the next stage of the project we will be working on traditional folk stories from both cultures which will be presented in a variety of mediums to an invited audience in June 2010.

Here is what we wrote about the visit:

" Generous thanks and congratulations to all those involved in this exchange programme. It is through such experiences that we get the zeal to carry on. The fun, knowledge and contacts that I have had will last a lifetime. For all the generosity, hospitality and love that we have received may God bless you and grant us the chance to continue in brotherhood and love. I have a great story to tell about England and especially Wheatley Park School when I get home."

Scovia Akello

" Whilst our visitors were with us we came to realise that while our country is wealthier it is not necessarily better. We learned that attitude, hard work and friendship is more important. Being with Dahlia, Scovia, Robert and Yusuf made us realise that we should be grateful for the resources we have and that we should never take anything for granted and to make the most of what we have."

Chris Cornall

Holly Williams

"Since our arrival we have been privileged to experience the English culture. Being treated to dinner as sweet as honey and given a warm bed, I relaxed and thanked God I was in England. History is a story retold and, on our first day, we learned about the history of Wheatley Park. . The tour of the school was very interesting and I got to see the good fortune of the children at the school. Brilliant - so opportunity knocks once but for them it knocks everyday. The students were really welcoming although some were a bit big headed but that's normal. I enjoyed working and eating with our new partners in school and on the outings. Sharing food and knowledge was very special. The teachers were all brilliant - helpful and patient. Truly, everything has been good and with this I put my pen down and say thank you for being our hosts."



MAKERERE COLLEGE GOES TO LONDON TOWN...



- Ugandans in London**
13 June
- Good weather
 - Trooping the colour
 - Picnic in the park
 - South Bank walk
 - Trafalgar Square



SUSTAINABILITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP AT MARYHILL

Geraldine Kabacenga, a teacher at MaryHill High School, which is partnered with Our Lady's in Abingdon, writes:

Maryhill High School with its policy "Keep environment clean" has tried to sensitize the community about the benefits of a clean environment. The school administration has been cooperative in facilitating the construction of three rubbish pits i.e. one for plastics and polyethylene papers, another for biodegradable materials and another for broken bottles and tins.

The community has embarked on separating rubbish and putting it in appropriate bins. Once the biodegradable materials have decayed, the materials are used by the Entrepreneurship Club to manure the Club's pineapple garden and the Teachers for their individual gardens. The excess manure is given free to the public.

Waste paper is used to make ornaments (necklaces, bracelets and earrings) that are sold to fellow students and other members of the community. Plastics are so far being burnt in an open space, since we have not yet found away of recycling broken bottles, however, we are doing underground research and we are hopeful that we will get a solution soon.

The weather project is going on well and students, headed by Miss Andebire Audrey are consistent in taking proper records. Research about the Native trees is headed by Mr. Bataringaya Vincent, Mrs. Geraldine Kabacenga and Miss Batamuliza Sharon are spearheading the campaign on proper litter and rubbish disposal.

The photographs show the rubbish disposal system, S.6 Entrepreneurship students in their pineapple garden and Natureeba Barbrah (S.5 Science) modelling some of the ornaments made out of paper and beads.

I am sorry for delaying this article, our internet has been a stumbling block. I hope to get back to you soon.

NOTICEBOARDS

Do both schools have a notice board where photographs and articles about the partnership can be seen by all pupils and parents?

Kiswa School has recently constructed an external display board to greet all pupils, parents and visitors on arrival at school. It tells them about their links with St Thomas More in Kidlington. Other schools have signs around the school (for example Namugongo Girls School) - but not everyone has something to show their partnership work. Could this be a commitment for all schools by the next visit?



WHAT NEXT? SOME IDEAS FOR FUTURE CURRICULUM PROJECTS:

These are offered as possible areas for activity in future years. They explore some of the ways in which our lives are so closely interconnected. They offer the opportunity to explore values and attitudes—some of the harder edge features of being a good global citizenship who is, in Oxfam's phrase, 'outraged by social injustice'.

- Producing and marketing an international recipe book, based on collaborative research by pupils in both countries
- Joint business venture producing and selling Ugandan jewellery and crafts (Ugandan production, and Oxfordshire marketing and publicity)
- Re-writing folk tales (starter in one country, finished by pupils in the other)
- Pupils guide to conflict resolution (experiences from the playground and the local community)



GETTING TO GRIPS WITH EVALUATING ACHIEVEMENT

Several schools will be approaching the end of the grant funding scheme and will therefore be interested in how to sustain the links with no external resources. Much will depend on how well the links have developed, and whether there are tangible and valued benefits that neither partner wants to lose and is therefore prepared to commit of their own limited resources to make sure the partnership is sustained.

Partners will be keen to know how well the supported activities have achieved their intentions, and whether they are worth keeping going. In addition, the British Council requires that partnerships are accountable for funding through effective self-evaluation and dissemination. We will therefore focus our support on two elements: working with cluster groups to evaluate achievements, and organising a dissemination conference in Oxfordshire for pupils, teachers and schools. It would be good if we could plan this event to coincide with the visit of Ugandan partners next year.

Some key questions for partnerships to consider:

- In what ways does the partnership agreement and activity relate to the aims of the school, its ethos and its practices?
- What are the curricular impacts and staff development benefits of the links?
- In what ways has the partnership impacted on young people's experiences and understanding of being a global citizen?
- How may the link be sustained in future years?

