

# Education Uganda Project Update - Summer 2009

## 3 week project in Kasese School District

We have just returned from a very successful trip to support the EU project. You will be pleased to know that as a result of individual contributions and fundraising from participants the whole trip drew less than £100 from EU's working budget!

The team consisted of Chris Lloyd, chair of trustees, Marilyn James, and Hilary Powell all of whom had visited 2007, and: Alan Josling (trustee and EU treasurer), Sally Josling, Beth James, Ann Smyth Headteacher of Lockerley Primary School, Honor Houghton, Geoff Anderson, Jonathan Rooke lecturers from the University of Winchester. All were accommodated very successfully in Agape guesthouse, Kasese.

The aims of the trip were to:

- Evaluate progress in the use of slates, with a report to the Ugandan Management Committee before we left
- Research the possibility of links between the University of Winchester and Bwera and Canon Apollo Primary Teacher Colleges, with a report back to the University Education Faculty
- Promotion of twinning links between schools in Uganda and in Hampshire
- In addition the EU treasurer worked with the Diocesan Finance secretary and EU project staff to audit the current budget and develop more efficient budget procedures, and researched possible cheaper supplies of chalk and slates.

This meant that the following practical steps were achieved:

- Evaluation was carried out in 19 schools and a report was made to the Management Committee (appended )
- The initial findings of the visit by University lecturers on possible partnership were shared and developed in a seminar 29.07.09 and a report will be submitted to the Faculty of Education at the University of Winchester
- The following school to school links were supported and/or promoted: Wolverdene/Ibanda; Kings Somborne Primary/Kamaiba; Calmore Infants/Kagando; Shakespeare Junior/Kitalikibi; Stockbridge Primary/ Kihara; Broughton Primary/Kajwenge, St Peters Nyamwamba/St Andrews prep Reading.

The following new links were established:

- Lockerley Primary/Katojo
- Kings Worthy Primary/Kisinga
- Overall the visit was a great success, and all objectives were achieved. The new members of the team found the experience extremely stimulating, and the hospitality of our Ugandan colleagues was, as always, overwhelming.

### **Key issues to report from the visit were:**

19 schools were visited : Kyanya, Ibanda, Kisinga, Kagando, Kamaiba, Kajwenge, Nyakabale, Bwera Church, Kitalikibi, Kanyatse, Kisabu, Atlas Modern, Katojo, Kajwenge, Kihara, St Peters Nyamwamba, Good Hope, Dr Keith Waddell and Daylight.

From interviews with headteachers and selected teachers, and observations of slates in use in classes, the following issues emerged:

#### **Training**

- All schools had received at least a full day's training in the use of slates. The training was found to be very useful in all cases. All schools requested more training. Examples were:
  - Refresher training as the material on the first day had been too much to take in fully
  - Time management with slates
  - Class control with slates
  - When and how much to use slates with older pupils
  - The training manual was only in some schools. There was no evidence that schools had used it for internal training as yet. The manual will be field tested with a small group of teachers until May 2010
- In all schools supervision had been provided by the project coordinator after training. Schools welcomed this and said it was both of high quality and essential for success. .

#### **Impact of use of slates on pupils' learning**

- The impact of slates on learning was judged both by school and by direct observation in over 50 classes to be very positive and beneficial. Key examples of positive impact on pupils were:
  - Higher levels of participation in class
  - Reduced boredom
  - All pupils answer the question/make contribution
  - Improved writing and spelling which carries over into exercise books where these exist
  - Children self correcting
  - Greater enjoyment of learning evidenced in some cases by higher attendance and lower drop out rates

## **Impact of the use of slates on teaching**

- Many teachers reported that they were changing their teaching approaches as a result of introducing slates into their classrooms. Key changes were identified through interview and verified through direct observation:
  - Wider variety of activities in each lesson
  - Quicker identification of both able pupils and pupils who need additional support in writing/spelling/ critical thinking. As yet there are few strategies emerging to provide differentiation for these pupils. This will remain a major challenge given the size of classes and low staffing levels.
  - More child centred approaches and opportunities to develop problem solving and critical thinking. However this is limited by the narrowness and prescriptive nature of the Ugandan curriculum.
  - Group and paired activities and increased opportunities for learning through speaking and listening, but this was not yet seen in sufficient lessons. This is a major area to be developed.
  - Opportunities to use the slates at the beginning of the lesson for quick warm up activities and at the end for short games both to reinforce learning and as a reward which were introduced in the initial 2007 training have yet to be developed. We intend to support this development from the UK with the production of a teachers manual entitled 'Fun and Games with Slates'
  - There is an emerging understanding in many schools of the relationship between slates and exercise books. The importance of slates for practice/ trial and error learning, with the exercise book as the means of recording finished work for future reference and revision and possible assessment through marking is now being understood in the older classes. As one teacher interviewed put it very well:

*'Slates are thinking tools.....exercise books are memory'*

**Schools monitored were ranked for effectiveness. The 4 original model schools, Kamaiba, Kitalikibi, Ibanda and Kagando were ranked very good, as were St Peters Nyamwamba and Daylight Pri, which was exceptional (small private school with small class numbers inevitably contributed to this judgement)**

## **Concerns and worries about the use of slates**

The main concerns from schools were:

- Lack of slates and chalk
- Concerns about maintaining good levels of class control when so many more pupils are active.
- Congestion in classes: 5 pupils in a desk using slates is impossible, 4 is very difficult, 3 is manageable, 2 is ideal.(This issue was addressed at the seminar 29.07.09,see separate report)
- The size of slates for younger children. This will be remedied when the order of new slates from China is made. (See below)

## **Progress data**

- This survey set out to discover whether there is any evidence in pilot EU schools over 2 years that the use of slates has improved matriculation rates, attendance rates or lowered drop out rates etc.
- The monitoring did not identify any changes at this early stage, but it was decided that this year the management committee will gather a range of baseline data and monitor progress in slate using and non slate using schools over a 4 year period up to 2013. A small group headed by the Bishop of South Rwenzori will be convened to ascertain what are the changes they wish to see, so that they can gather appropriate data.
- Most schools have been really energetic, and many have made amazing progress in even a short time with education being truly transformed.

## **THIS PROJECT IS WORKING REALLY WELL, HAS TO BE THE MAIN CONCLUSION.**

2 possible areas of focus emerged for next year's visit:

- Filming of good practice in use of slates by Ugandan teachers in order to produce a training DVD
- Possible funding links with tourists to Mweya Safai Lodge through the offer of brief visits to schools as part of their safari holiday package. This could also involve the production of a short promotional film.

Some images from this trip may be viewed overleaf:

Chris Lloyd September 2009

## Kasese School District – Project Trip Summer 2009



P1 pupils using slates at Daylight Primary School, Kasese



The summer project team in the Congo, after visiting a remote mountain school



The Education Uganda Management Committee with project team, Kasese 2009,..and the bishop's dog!