

**Report on Visit  
to Review Teacher Effectiveness in  
Food For Thought Schools,  
Uganda.**

**July 2007**

**by Jean Harrison, MA, B.Ed.**

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## **1. Executive summary**

This document records the visits and conversations held with teachers and others involved in education during three weeks in June/July 2007. I have attempted to record significant points from those conversations and have drawn them together into a recommendation for a way forward.

This recommendation is to run a residential refresher course for four teachers from each of the *Food for Thought* schools. This course would be in two sections (P1-P3 and P4-P7) and would deal with the main issues that they identified in my meetings with them (see Sections 8 and 9 of this report for details). This must be followed by a period of support-supervision in the classrooms. Such a programme will require serious funding (accurate costing will be an important part of the planning) and suitable trainers will need to be identified.

A second recommendation is to meet the urgent need to identify ways to improve pupil access to reading materials.

I have done my best to reflect the situation as accurately as possible, though I am aware that there are many issues with which I am not familiar and which I may have misrepresented. Apologies for these.

I have not been able to record here everything I observed, though it is probably in my notebook, and I am sure that much more will emerge in the process of planning for the future.

## **2. Introduction**

Earlier this year, Jean Harrison, an education consultant, approached Devon Development Education to offer her expertise to the *Food For Thought* programme. *Food For Thought* is a School Links Programme, which started in 2001 and links schools in Devon with two Districts of Uganda – Gulu in the war-torn north, and Mubende in the central area.

The key aims of the programme are to provide:

- ✓ A direct, positive link between pupils and teachers in the link schools;
- ✓ A ‘Window on the World’ for pupils, beyond their schools, in both countries;
- ✓ Practical experience of growing food, with all schools in both countries running organic/sustainable food-growing school gardens;
- ✓ An education programme to enrich pupils’ learning experience in both countries – not primarily a charity or fund-raising initiative.

This year, 2007, we have seen new developments, as Gulu District has been split into two Districts, Amuru and Gulu, and *Food For Thought* has taken on new schools in Berkshire. To cope with expansion, we have taken on part-time coordinators in Mubende and Gulu/Amuru.

We have had two evaluation reports carried out – in Uganda in 2005 and in Devon 2007 – and both have demonstrated that the *Food For Thought* programme is having a positive, tangible impact in schools in both countries.

However, we are concerned to increase the impact of this work. So we asked Jean to go on a three-week fact finding visit to Uganda (all at Jean’s own expense) and we are very grateful for her work. Here is her report. This will help us all plan the next stage in the development of the *Food For Thought* Programme.

Sue Errington, Devon Development Education,  
and Elijah Kyamuwendu, Kulika Charitable Trust (Uganda).  
August 2007

*Food For Thought is a programme of Devon Development Education, (Charity reg no 1102233 and Company reg no 482496) and Kulika Charitable Trust (Uganda) (Ugandan Reg no 5914/1070)*

*Copies of the two Evaluation Reports can be found on our website:  
[www.globalcentred Devon.org.uk](http://www.globalcentred Devon.org.uk)  
or by contacting us at [dde@globalcentred Devon.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:dde@globalcentred Devon.wanadoo.co.uk)*

### **3. Acknowledgements and thanks**

Many thanks to the following institutions and individuals who made me very welcome and answered lots of questions. Particular thanks to Frederick Ssegujja and James Anywar who organised my time in Mubende and Gulu, making all the practical arrangements and accompanying me. Also to Elijah Kyamuwendo of Kulika and Flugencia Tumwesigywe, FFT coordinator in Mubende, for their advice and for keeping an eye on everything.

#### In Mubende

Benny N. Bugembe, District Education Officer,  
Basulaizi Core Primary Teachers College

The Head teachers meeting and the teaching staff of the following schools:

Kirume Primary School  
Kasaana Primary School  
Kyamukona Primary School  
Kabowa Primary School  
Katoma Primary School  
Kakenzi Primary School  
Kasambya Das Primary School  
Maaya Primary School

#### In Gulu

Rev. Ocheng Vincent Ocen, District Education Officer  
Gulu Core Primary Teachers College

Gulu National Teachers College – but no staff available

Christ the King Primary Teachers College

The head teachers and teaching staff at the following schools:

Ajulu Primary School  
Koch Koo Primary School  
Reckiceke Primary School  
Keyo Primary School  
Gulu Primary School Head teachers meeting – which I was invited to address

#### Kampala

Florence Kabahamba Ameri, Kyambogo University

Betty Jawolio, UPHOLD (Uganda Programme for Human and Holistic Development)

Susan Luswata and Shiphrah Kiiza, British Council

Angela Kyagaba, NCDC (National Curriculum Development Centre)

Dr Mary Ocheng, Makerere University

#### **4. Methodology used for visits to the *Food for Thought* schools**

It was not possible to spend the same amount of time in each school. This was partly because of the distances involved in travel, but mainly because it was thought important to visit every school, rather than a selection only. As my own time in Uganda was limited, the visits therefore had to be fitted into the time available. I was able to spend most of a day at Kirume, but only half a day or less in the other schools.

The visits followed a common pattern: In each school I spent 20-30 mins in as many classes as possible, observing the teaching that was taking place. In three schools, no classes were occurring and in other schools the number of classes was limited for various reasons (see listing below). The class visits were followed by a meeting with as many of the staff as were available. This number varied from school to school. I had hoped to conduct a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) exercise at each teachers meeting, but time did not permit this so the procedure consisted of brief introductions, a short explanation of the purpose of my visit and then straight into asking the staff to tell me what they saw as their major professional needs. Invariably they began with issues such as lack of staff housing, poor pay and unsatisfactory government policies. I tried to circumvent this by saying in my introduction that unfortunately I had no power to change government policies but that my concern was to help them to be more effective in the classroom, but frequently the lack of staff housing was so significant a factor that the staff had to include it.

The head teacher was present at this meeting in every school except one where she was ill and so was unable to take part. However, this particular head had already taken part in the special meeting for head teachers in Mubende.

## **5. Schools visited in Mubende District**

### **i. Kirume**

#### Classes observed

P1 Number/PE  
P2 Science  
P3 Social Studies  
P4 Maths  
P5 Science  
P6 RE  
P7 Social Studies

#### Needs/weaknesses identified by teachers

Lack of resources  
Lack of parental interest  
Lack of writing materials  
Children come up to two weeks late at start of term  
Changes to system and lack of support to meet them  
Large classes  
Views of teachers are not considered  
New policies come without warning and with little training  
Lack of refresher courses  
Training takes place during the holidays  
Pupil absenteeism  
Lack of appreciation of teachers  
Teacher transfer system  
Syllabus more academic than practical  
Children's short attention span because they lack food

### **ii. Kasaana**

#### Classes observed

P7 Maths  
P6 Science  
P1 English  
P3 Science

#### Needs/weaknesses identified by teachers

Large classes  
Lack of training  
Lack of resources  
Lack of sanitation  
Poor drinking water supply  
Poor classrooms  
Lack of teacher housing

Little change when upgraded  
Hard to arrange school trips  
Lack of resources and equipment  
Lack of fencing

**iii. Kyamukona**

Saw no classes as pupils all were outside involved in agricultural activities

Needs/weaknesses identified by teachers

Poor pupil attendance and many drop outs  
Transfer of teachers  
Lack of child management  
Large classes  
Lack of resources  
Curriculum contains too much to cover  
Poor parent-teacher relationships  
No main hall  
Lack of secondary education  
Lack of lunch for pupils and teachers

**iv. Kabowa**

Classes observed

P3 English  
P4 Maths  
P1 Number

Needs/weaknesses identified by teachers

Lack of learning aids  
Lack of staff housing  
Large classes  
Shortage of desks  
Hungry children – no lunch provided  
Shortage of writing materials  
Lack of classrooms  
Need refresher courses: how to use learning aids in lower classes  
teaching skills  
Lack of sports equipment, musical instruments  
Lack of skill in teaching P1  
How to organise free activity and IPS (Integrated production skills) lessons  
Lack of Science equipment  
Lack of reading books to practice  
How to handle the many languages spoken by the pupils

**v. Katoma**

Classes observed

P5 Science

Needs/weaknesses identified by teachers

Irregular attendance by children

Large classes

Children's negative attitude to learning

Dust in classroom – jiggers

Need refresher courses for new schemes eg agriculture, IPS (Integrated Production Skills)

Lack resources for P6 & P7 Science topics on human body – need charts

Teacher has to use Luganda for P1 but has never learnt to read and write it and lacks refs to find out

Poor English vocabulary – need dictionaries

Classrooms lack desks so hard for pupils to learn to write

Handwriting books not available

Lack of practical materials for Maths

Textbooks for teachers only

Most pupils are slow learners so have to keep repeating work

How to handle different levels/speeds of learning

Social Studies keeps changing – how to obtain latest info

Also need maps, globes etc

RE (Religious Education) – no Bibles for reference

**vi. Kakenzi**

Observed no formal classes as all pupils from P4 up were outside doing craft. Younger pupils had gone home.

Needs/weaknesses identified by teachers

Lack of writing materials

Lack of text books

Large classes

Posters, charts etc stolen from classroom walls at night

Currently absenteeism because parents working on New Build so children kept home to do chores

Lack of Maths resources

Lack of books for reading and writing

Lack of texts in local language for P1

Teacher has to use Luganda for P1 but has never learnt to read and write it and lacks refs to find out

**vii. Kasambya Das**

Classes observed

P6 Science

P1 Number

Needs/weaknesses identified by teachers

Large classes

Lack of writing materials

Hard for pupils to learn in English

Lack of textbooks

No lunch for pupils so are hungry

Many go home for lunch and do not return

Dusty classrooms

No peer mentoring across schools

Lack of parental support for education

High rate of drop outs

No shutters on classrooms so materials stolen

Government policy not to charge fees

Teachers don't respect each other so lack of cooperation

Lack of qualifications in special needs/lack of teachers

Lack of sports equipment

Sports policy limited to younger children

Lack of materials to help blind children

P1 teachers in class all the time

P1 curriculum overloaded – no time for marking

Need more teachers for P1

Pupils drop out during the term but return for the exams

Lack of fencing materials

Lack of skill in how to assess progress of blind children

Hard to manage cooperative learning with such large numbers

**viii. Maaya**

Observed no lessons as most teachers in a meeting with P7 parents

Needs/weaknesses identified by teachers

Lack of instructional materials for English

Pupils lack exercise books and pencils

Lack of knowledge of how to use local materials to produce teaching aids

Lack of reference books for teachers

Lack of understanding of how to write/use schemes of work for P1 (NB no teacher from this school went for thematic curriculum training)

How to work with slow learners

## 6. Schools visited in Gulu District

### **ix. Ajulu**

#### Classes observed

P6 Social Studies

P5 English

P3 English

#### Needs/weaknesses identified by teachers

Large classes

Lack of textbooks

P1 struggling with new curriculum

Lack of reading books

Need rooms to counsel returned abductees

Lack materials for performing arts eg musical instruments and art materials

Lack secure storage

Lack of staff housing

Need ways for girls to manage their periods while in school (latrines, STs)

Poor relationship with parents who don't want to help eg with digging latrines or keeping animals off school grounds

Staff can't afford to upgrade and no incentive to find own funds

CCT (Core Coordinating Tutor) has organised some guidance in counselling and refresher courses but is taken by the government to do any training needed in area, even for the Ministry of Health

Teachers need individual help and support

Lack training to teach disabled pupils (blind, deaf, lame, mentally retarded)

Lack knowledge in all subject areas

Lack sports equipment

Lack Bibles for RE

### **x. Koch Koo**

Few children around as food distribution taking place outside school.

#### Classes observed

Combined P6/P7 class Maths

P3 Science

#### Needs/weaknesses identified by teachers

(Only 2 teachers, Head and Chair of Management Committee present)

Lack text books

Lack teaching aids eg large Maths sets for teachers, 3-dimensional objects

Lack equipment for performing arts and PE

Lack game rules

Poor pupil attitude and lack of concentration – impact of war

CCT only does refresher courses if sponsored by NGO or similar

Lack of materials for Social Studies – maps, atlases etc

Can't afford to take pupils on trip to town to see weather station

Lack knowledge of how to counsel traumatised children  
Lack teaching skills  
Lack support to improve/upgrade

**xi. Reckiceke**

Classes observed

P4 Science

P1 Number

P7 RE (later discovered this lesson was in the displaced school)

Needs/weaknesses identified by teachers

Lack of textbooks

Lack of P1 materials

How to produce schemes of work and lesson plans

How to improve teaching methods

Lack of equipment for Music and RE

Need to promote girls education with better toilet facilities

Lack of sports equipment for girls activities

Lack of teaching aids for Social Studies

Lunch for teachers and pupils now reduced to porridge only (World Food Programme)

**xii. Keyo**

Classes observed

P5/P Choir – presented as Music lesson

P6 Social Studies

P3 Maths

Needs/weaknesses identified by teachers

Lack seating for all classes up to P5

Lack instructional materials

Large classes

Lack musical instruments

WFP feeding programme has stopped so pupils are hungry

Girls leave school early because of lack of STs

Teachers have long journeys to school

Lack of funds for upgrading qualifications

Lack of materials for P1

Lack of training in new curriculum

Children too keen on their rights and not their responsibilities

Lack opportunities to share with other teachers

No access to computers

Need more link schools so can better understand weather station projects

Returnee pupils are problem – dream, leave classroom, poor concentration

Change of life-style in camps – need to return to old ways

## **7. Some general observations**

### P1

I observed five P1 classes. Though the teachers were obviously struggling to handle the new curriculum, these classes far and away contained the best teaching and learning that I saw. Most of the teachers had been making the resources needed or were asking the pupils to bring in items such as sticks or bottle tops to use as counters, attempts had been made to decorate the classroom walls with numbers, letters, basic shapes and so on. Charts and posters had been created and were being used. The pupils were actively engaged in their own learning, and were excited to do so. There was much good interaction between the teacher and the pupils.

There were still problems, however. The large numbers in each class are difficult to handle. Many children were not paying attention – and I don't think it was my presence that caused this. Some charts were too small to be seen by the whole class. I saw no learning of reading or writing and many children, when told to copy from the board, were simply copying shapes with no understanding of their meaning. Teachers were not familiar with how to assess the progress of the pupils – and with such large classes to handle, continuous assessment (as recommended by the curriculum handbook) is difficult.

### P2 and P3

I observed seven P2 or P3 classes. These mostly employed the lecture style, followed by pupil repetition of phrases or sentences and then copying from the board. There was no evidence that the pupils understood what they were being taught and little sign that the teachers were aware of this. The children still seemed to be copying shapes from the board without understanding what they represented. The tendency was for the teacher to give very little explanation – and what was given was often muddled – and to ask questions only of those who put their hands up. This is certainly not the way to approach this stage of education and will no doubt begin to be addressed by the introduction of the thematic curriculum over the next two years.

### P4 and P5

I observed six P4 or P5 classes. The subject matter was mainly theoretical with little attempt to relate it to everyday life or to explain the underlying concepts clearly. The lecture style was in use here again but several of the teachers did not seem to be familiar with the subject matter and spent long minutes reading it up from a text book in front of the class before trying to teach it. This indicates lack of teacher preparation. A lot of time was also wasted because the teacher did not know how to communicate information clearly. There was a lot of dependence on whole class responses – with little evidence that the class understood what they were responding to as the style was that the teacher asked: 'Do you understand?' The pupils respond: 'Yes.' There was very little checking of what the children were doing during the 'copying from the board' time and some teachers did not seem to regard this as part of the lesson.

### P6 and P7

I observed seven P6 or P7 classes. These classes were also in the lecture style, but this can be more appropriate at this stage. However, the written work that was being set was often inappropriate or badly explained. The subject matter was again restricted to the theoretical without relating it to life. There was too much straight copying from the board rather than the answering of key questions in such a way that they require the presentation of the information just learnt. This again indicates lack of teacher preparation. There was evidence of a lack of pupil (and maybe teacher) understanding of key concepts. There was usually better interaction with the pupils, no doubt helped by the smaller class sizes at this level. Although more textbooks were used at this level, they were used poorly.

### At all levels

I was particularly concerned about the following:

- The poor quality of the English used by the teachers. I checked with the teacher trainers whether this was something I should be concerned about and received a resounding: ‘Yes.’
- The poor quality of communication between teacher and pupils, the teacher often not even knowing the names of the pupils.
- The lack of effective marking and recording of pupil work.
- The poor level of understanding of the function of schemes and lesson plans and thus the poor preparation of lessons.
- Huge amounts of time wasted by both teachers and pupils – no wonder they don’t manage to cover the syllabus. This again indicates poor teacher preparation.
- The poor handling of textbooks and resources which lead me to think that even with more of the resources requested, there would be little change to the quality of teaching.
- The poor understanding of the use of the board and the kind of work presented on it for copying into books. I think this is connected with the comment that was made to me several times that the lesson (ie the imparting knowledge part of it) was over, without a recognition that the written work is just as an important part of the lesson if not more so – in order to learn what the pupils have/have not understood.
- The lack of secure and careful storage of resources – and also the possibility that in some schools the resources they possess hardly ever leave storage.
- A general lack of creative thinking or ability to think outside or beyond the narrow confines of the highly prescribed syllabus.
- A false expectation that if the teacher has the resources, then the teaching will automatically be good.
- A tendency to place the failure to learn on others, such as pupils and parents, whereas it could well be the quality of teaching that is actually at fault.
- Although a few of the schools were concerned about slow learners and children with special needs (including trauma) there was little attempt elsewhere to deal with such children.

- The lack of realisation that the teacher is in charge of everything that happens in the classroom, so constantly needs to check on what each child is doing in lessons and the progress that is/is not being made.
- The persistent use of the lecture method which presupposes that the teacher is the holder of all knowledge and the pupil is an empty vessel into which this knowledge is to be poured. There are times when this is appropriate but there are more times when other methods are far more effective. This suggests a lack of understanding of how people learn.
- The lack of reading material for both pupils and teachers.

NB I do not blame the teachers for this situation. I recognise that their own learning so far has been somewhat limited and that they have had little opportunity to experience anything beyond this. As I said before I came, my concern is to find ways to support them and to help them to improve the quality of their teaching skills.

**8. Table showing needs identified by teachers in both districts****Schools**

<b>Identified needs</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>i</b>	<b>ii</b>	<b>iii</b>	<b>iv</b>	<b>v</b>	<b>vi</b>	<b>vii</b>	<b>viii</b>	<b>ix</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>xi</b>	<b>xii</b>
Lack of textbooks	11	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Lack of writing materials	5	*			*		*	*	*				
Large classes	9	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*			*
No lunch for pupils or teachers – poor concentration	6	*		*	*			*				*	*
Lack training, initially, for changes or as refresher	8	*	*	*	*			*		*	*	*	
Lack of teaching aids and skills to make them	7	*	*	*	*				*		*		*
Lack of teacher housing	4		*		*					*			*
Lack of sports equipment/rules	5				*			*		*	*	*	
Lack of musical instruments	5				*					*	*	*	*
Poor pupil attendance, come late and drop out	5	*		*		*	*	*					
Lack of appreciation of teachers by parents or politicians	1	*											
New policies handled poorly: no consultation or support	1	*											
Syllabus more academic than practical	1	*											
Poor toilet facilities, especially for girls	4		*							*		*	*
Poor water supply	1		*										
Little incentive or support for upgrading	4		*							*	*		*
Lack of fencing	2		*					*					
Poor classrooms	4		*	*		*		*					
Lack of desks	3			*		*							*
Courses take place during holidays	1	*											
Teacher transfer system	2	*		*									
Lack of school trips	2		*								*		
Too much to cover in curriculum	2			*				*					
Poor parent-teacher relationship	4	*		*				*		*			
No main hall	1			*									
Lack of secondary education	1			*									
Lack skills/materials for teaching P1	6				*			*	*	*		*	*
Lack skills for IPS	2				*	*							
Lack skills for 'free activity'	1				*								
Lack Science equipment (P6/7)	2				*	*							
Lack reading books	3				*		*			*			
Lack local language knowledge /materials	3				*	*	*						
Children have poor attitude	3				*						*		*
Poor English vocabulary	1					*							
Lack of handwriting books	2					*	*						
Lack Maths equipment	3					*	*				*		
Lack skills for different levels of learning/slow learners/special needs	2					*		*	*	*			
Lack access to knowledge of world events (for Social Studies)	1					*							
Lack maps, globes, atlases	3					*					*	*	
Lack Bibles for RE	3					*				*		*	
Lack of secure storage for materials	3						*	*		*			
Hard for pupils to learn in English	1							*					
Government policy not to charge fees	1							*					
Lack of respect between teachers	1							*					
Lack counselling rooms for returnees	1									*			
CCT taken to run all government training	2									*	*		
Lack counselling skills	2										*		*
Lack how to write schemes/lesson plans	1											*	
No opportunities to share with other teachers	1												*
No access to computers	1												*
Need more link schools	1												*

## **9. Total references in order of frequency**

- 11: lack textbooks
- 9: lack skills in handling large classes
- 8 (plus 14 more refs to lack of teaching skills):
  - lack training at every stage
- 7 (plus 37 refs to lack of equipment):
  - lack teaching aids and skills in how to make them
- 6: lack lunch for pupils/teachers
- 6: lack skills/materials for teaching P1 specifically
- 5 (plus 2 who lack handwriting books):
  - lack writing materials
- 5: lack sports equipment
- 5: lack musical instruments
- 5: have problems with pupil attendance
- 4: need better toilet facilities especially for girls
- 4: lack teacher housing (there would have been more but I tried to avoid this comment!)
- 4: have poor classrooms
- 4: experience poor parent-teacher relationships
- 4: Little incentive or support for upgrading qualifications
- 4: lack skills/equipment for teaching slow learners/special needs
- 3: experience poor pupil attitudes
- 3: lack desks
- 3: lack reading books
- 3: lack materials in the local language(s)
- 3: lack globes, atlases etc for Social Studies
- 3: lack Bibles for RE
- 3: lack Maths equipment
- 3: lack secure storage for materials
- 2: lack Science equipment
- 2: lack fencing
- 2: dislike the teacher transfer system
- 2: regret the lack of school trips
- 2: say the curriculum is too crowded
- 2: lack skills for teaching IPS
- 2: lack books for handwriting
- 2: lack counselling skills
- 2: regret the lack of access to the CCT

Items mentioned once only are not included in this list.

## **10. Mubende head teachers meeting**

Points made during a SWOT exercise – but we ran out of time to explore any ‘Threats’.

### Strengths

Able to give opportunity for education to many  
Able to empower parents – to take part in admin and to monitor  
Creating job opportunities for teachers  
Government has tried to raise teachers pay  
Government has tried to improve infrastructure of education  
Government has tried to provide some textbooks  
Government has introduced systems to monitor and advise on education  
Pay comes on time and regularly  
Many NGOs have come to support educational programmes  
Post-primary education exists in new areas ie plumbing, electricity, carpentry  
Teachers have the opportunity to upgrade  
Increased security in the country had led to greater freedom for life  
Education has gained greater respect  
More importance is being placed on girls education

### Weaknesses

Changes made to curriculum with insufficient training  
Inadequate funding from government  
Large numbers of pupils  
Inadequate buildings  
Inadequate ability for parents to provide materials – too poor  
Lack of local accommodation causes problems for teachers’ time management  
Need for school to provide lunch for teachers and pupils  
Can take up to two weeks at start of new term for pupils to register  
Children often taken off school on market days  
Children take care of the sick and of animals so are often absent  
Girls drop out between P3 and P7: become house girls, marry early, have difficulty with lack of school sanitary arrangements  
Schools are understaffed – not enough funding to cope with numbers of pupils  
Small gap between pay of teachers and of heads  
Heads underpaid compared with health and agriculture  
No change in salary when upgrade so little incentive to improve  
Teachers need close supervision from Heads so as to provide support and guidance  
Most schools are Grade 4 so have no Deputy Head. Assistant teachers not paid extra so little motivation

Opportunities

Refresher courses for teachers held in school clusters,  
either during holidays or on Saturdays for a period

Need cross-fertilisation with other schools

Chance to design and improve resources

Have books but need basic materials

Need Maths sets

Need felt pens, glue, paper

Need Science equipment

Need visual materials

Need to know how to produce resources from local materials

Need to learn to think creatively

Need school improvement plans

## **11. Comments from others**

District Education Officer (DEO) Benny N. Bugende explained the overall pattern of teacher training ie students leave after S4 and go to the local Primary Teachers College for a 2 year course. After a 2 year probationary period of teaching a student will be appointed permanently.

Core Coordinating Tutors (CCTs) are appointed by and linked to the local Primary Teachers College (PTCs) with responsibility for outreach programmes (continuing professional development). Each CCT has responsibility for a large number of schools, is based at one of them where it supposedly has a resource centre. The CCTs take programmes that are planned and dictated by the college and so are unable to be flexible in meeting specific local needs. I also learnt elsewhere that they are frequently taken by other Ministries (such as Health) to deliver their training.

There are also school inspectors but they struggle to meet all the teachers in a district.

A new ‘thematic curriculum’ is being devised and rolled out to schools. Currently it is for P1 only. Next year it will include P2 and so on. Earlier this year training courses of 7 days were offered to the Head and the P1 teacher in every school. Not all were able to take up the offer.

British Council had set up resource centres to help with Maths and Science in secondary schools. These contained books, readers and equipment. The coordinator was paid by the loan fees – but schools could not afford the fees nor the travel so the centres ceased to function. Most of the equipment is probably still locked away inside these former centres.

Rev. Ocheng Vincent Ocen, DEO Gulu explained some of the extra problems being faced by the Gulu teachers. Many of them have lost hope, their schools have been displaced, many pupils (and teachers) are traumatised by their experiences during the insurgency. Teacher housing is a key need – many have lost their homes. Many schools have been displaced or amalgamated with others to cope with the situation. The World Food Programme has been supplying meals but the week of my visit this was being replaced by porridge only.

The work of the teachers has not been recognised although schools and pupils have been praised. This now needs to include the efforts of teachers. Much work needs to be done to encourage them, funding will be needed to support their retraining and supervision and monitoring will be important.

### CPTC, Mityana

Deputy Principal Christine Onyok described how the core primary teachers course builds on the academic achievements of the students and prepares them for primary school teaching. Each student has 2 x 5 weeks of teaching practice. The college also runs a 3-year

in-service training programme to enable teachers to upgrade their qualifications. This takes place during the school holidays.

The courses include cooperative learning methods (group work): the college has trialled materials but the programme has not yet been rolled out.

The college ran the local 6 day training for the thematic curriculum. I have a copy of the work book that was used for this.

Christine explained the outreach programme with the CCTs. The college has 24 coordinating centres and tutors in the Mubende District. Each CCT relates to around 26 schools, both government and private. Every school is attached to a CCT who identifies their key problems and then organises appropriate courses to deal with these issues. They are also required to carry out programmes for the Ministry. Their work is coordinated by a District Coordinating Tutor.

### CPTC Gulu

The first year at this college is all theoretical. Students do their teaching practice in their second year for 4 weeks with 2 weeks preparation prior to this. Tutors visit them in school but there is not enough supervision. They can only be seen 4 times whereas previously it was 10 times during the practice.

Staffing levels are a real problem – because of lack of funding. There is currently no one for RE or Social Studies. And many students come with poor English and/or Science backgrounds. Gulu used to have a high academic standard but this is no longer the case.

The courses use participatory methods and the students learn practically by using group work and demonstration. However, this does not show itself in the school situation.

The students also have sessions in how to prepare instructional materials but lack the resources to do so. It is very expensive to train teachers so students are asked to provide some resources. They may train to use computers if they pay for themselves at 30,000/- (ie £10.0) per year. This may not seem much to UK readers but I think I was told that teachers are paid 6,000/- (ie £2.0) per month.

Teaching is a last resort career for many because the pay is so low: only about 30-50% of the students actually want to teach and of these, more are girls than boys. Most don't want to work in rural districts.

Last year 73.5% of the students passed their exams. They may retake if they pay for themselves but if they fail twice, that's it. Most of those on in-service courses passed. Maths is the most problematic subject for the students.

Each CCT here has 10 schools but transport and the insurgency situation have caused real problems. There used to be 19 centres but there are now only 10. The Inspectorate staff has also been cut. More are being recruited. All have been teacher trainers and have diplomas from Kyambogo University.

Christ the King CPTC, Gulu

This is a private church college that runs a 2 year course for women only which is examined by Kyambogo University. They are also a coordinating centre for the distance learning diploma course run from Kyambogo.

The course includes professional and educational studies, language education, social studies, science and health, maths and cultural education ie art and craft, RE, PE, Music. Teaching practice takes place during the second year and consists of two blocks of 6 weeks.

The course uses participatory methods but the tutors find this hard as they have never experienced it themselves. There is too much in the syllabus to be able to cover everything.

A few of the students are returned child soldiers and have a special counsellor to help them. All the staff wish they had special training in dealing with trauma. Initially all received training but many of them have now been transferred to other places and the training has not been repeated.

The staff expressed the following as the key needs:

Reinforcement of participatory learning methods

How to create learning materials

Reading books

Improvement in the quality of learning

Peace education, human rights and psycho-social skills

How to improve the lack of initiative in the teachers

Florence Ameri, Lecturer in Education, Kyambogo University explained that Kyambogo designs and controls the curriculum of the PTCs. They think in terms of a cascade that flows out from the university to the colleges and the teachers. A major problem is that teachers are not sufficiently valued by anyone, from the Headteachers up, so they are not involved in any of the decision-making and are underpaid. She said it would be wonderful to help support the teachers directly.

She thought that a refresher course should last for 5 or 6 days and should include both external and self-evaluation. Support supervision is also vital afterwards. Any course should contain handouts so that the students can refer to them later. Mrs Margaret Nsekereko, Assistant Commissioner of Teacher Education (Primary) at the Ministry of Education might be a useful person to involve in any future work. Possibly also Mrs Oken, the Commissioner.

I asked how teachers were taught to assess P1 pupils as this had been raised by P1 teachers. The reply was that it was by continuous assessment and ticking appropriate boxes in the forms provided in the curriculum handbook.

Students are also taught to take registers and keep records – another question I raised.

I also asked whether I should be concerned about the poor English that I had experienced in the classrooms. The reply was ‘Definitely. It is most important to learn correct English.’

Betty Jawolio, UPHOLD (Uganda Programme for Human and Holistic Development: a USAID-funded project which is just ending)

Betty has been a primary school teacher, a teacher trainer and an inspector. She now works as a freelance consultant.

She commented that the biggest need of the teachers is to get professional support and exposure to other experiences. Younger teachers tend to live in restricted boxes – particularly because everything is now done locally, so their experience of anything outside the local box is virtually non-existent. Teachers need their achievements to be reinforced, through objective and friendly performance appraisal. It is very important to affirm them in every way possible.

Formal refreshment is also important and it should be tailored to meet the particular needs of each teacher. Ministry policy says that teachers need to re-register if they have received no refresher training for 5 years. Teachers need to specialise – no one can do everything. CCTs are overworked, the inspectorates are under-funded and under-staffed. Everyone is coping with huge numbers of children.

UPHOLD says that the teacher is not alone – there is a whole community around the school. What are the parents, local politicians and others doing to support its work? What are the low-cost materials that can be contributed? UPHOLD is trying to move away from high-level bureaucracy to task-oriented meetings. Remember that external factors always affect children. Schools need management and leadership: headteachers need the relevant skills for this. How does the local community support the heads?

UPHOLD has been running a five-year teacher-effectiveness programme that ends in Dec 07. It is based on how to use the existing structures and systems to reach the teacher on a frequent basis. It has looked at the challenges presented by UPE, such as numbers, books, seating, and has identified a methodology. This has been shared at national level and is to be used in training at District level, initially for headteachers and then for other teachers. The main thrust is to promote cooperative learning ie group work. Academic skills are not enough – everyone needs social skills as well. Pupils learn in small groups of 10-12, taking different roles within the group. The project has shown that this kind of training, including support supervision and individual mentoring, lead to improvement in teacher effectiveness – but it takes time. UPHOLD has produced manuals and processes but the key is to work together in partnership so that all plan together, understanding where they are going and why. If there is a shared focus all can work together objectively and there is no finger-pointing of blame.

UPHOLD has done some work in Mubende since 2005 but found the area was slow to receive new ideas. It also gave some grants but it took the area a long time to use the funds and account for them.

UPHOLD has been a very ambitious programme; they are preparing the final report now and planning how to hand over the work. I asked if I could have a copy and left my email address, but Betty was not sure whether I would be allowed to see it.

Betty's recommendation was for a course in the holidays, held centrally. Then to work through the coordinating centres and with teachers directly in their schools. And not forget to work with the parents, also in the schools.

Angela Kyagaba, National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC)

Angela was very helpful. She not only explained how the thematic curriculum worked but also allowed me to buy a copy of the handbook and gave me some of the accompanying documentation.

It had become obvious that few pupils were learning to read and write fluently so a decision was taken to review the situation. Three UK consultants are working with the NCDC to help them.

It was decided to get rid of subjects at P1-P3 and to use everyday themes instead, focusing on literacy, numeracy, life skills and English. In P1 the local language should be the medium of instruction but this has proved difficult in areas where there are several languages. There is also often a lack of literature in the local language. Teachers should also prepare their schemes and lesson plans in the local language and are finding this hard as they often cannot write it.

This curriculum was piloted in 90 schools in over 15 districts and is now in operation. They are currently working on P2 for next year. P3 should have begun by now but is lagging behind a little. P4 will be a transitional year, using a language and subject-based approach. They would like to see it using more cooperative learning and more practical than it is now.

The Ministry is responsible for instructional materials but these have not yet appeared. The NCDC gives a description of what is required but has no control over the production. One day of the P1 training was given over to making materials.

The CPTC curriculum is also being reviewed in the light of the thematic curriculum. The hope is to have teachers trained in the new methods within 3 years.

Kyambogo insists that all its students have passed in English, Maths and Science and correct English is very important. The thematic curriculum uses a phonetic approach to learning English, but this is not yet used in the CPTCs.

There is no handwriting policy in Uganda but some schools have developed their own. NCDC has a pilot scheme in process on handwriting patterns, but what is important is to make it relevant to the vocabulary used in the curriculum (I have copies of the patterns).

There is a great lack of mentoring support in the schools; the attitude is always one of finding fault rather than affirming teachers.

Only 9 out of the 25 main Ugandan languages currently have orthographies. 15 more are ready to start. Government schools are given a percentage for materials in the local

language but it is not enough. Head teachers need to identify what is appropriate. Bi-lingual dictionaries are also important. Glossaries of local language words are given in the teacher's resource book.

There is a group going out to P2 clusters to collect titles of existing readers. Publishers have been asked to produce readers but many schools cannot afford them. The system in many schools is that if a child loses a book, the replacement cost has to be met by child and teacher together, so many schools are unwilling to use such books.

CCTs have been a disappointment and the fund-donors are likely to review the situation.

There is also a new pre-school curriculum – but this is mostly used only in Kampala.

Dr. Mary Ocheng, lecturer in the School of Education, Makerere University

Dr Ocheng has wide experience of academic work on educational matters. She raised a number of questions:

How can simple tools be designed and used to evaluate the quality of cooperative learning and teaching?

What are the teaching and learning indicators?

How can the child show what he/she has learnt?

How can parents become involved – and not simply be instructed to do certain things?

How can the school administration monitor and support the teachers?

Who is accountable for teacher effectiveness?

How can teachers better recognise the contribution of each child?

How can teachers be better role models for the children?

Assessment of the child's progress is important – how can this be done without exams?

How can teachers be better enabled to keep records?

How can their confidence be developed?

How can a teacher know when they have taught well?

How can a teacher's time be best used?

Who owns the whole process of learning?

How can teachers be persuaded to work collaboratively?

British Council representatives: Susan Luswata and Shiphrah Kiiza

This meeting had two purposes: to ascertain whether there was any chance of funding from the British Council and to inform them of what we were doing.

We learnt that they are part of the East Africa region and that all regional projects are devised in or by the UK and go first to Nairobi where Jane Henry is the leader.

Currently there are 3 educational projects:

- Connecting classrooms – a school linking programme which is cluster-based and involves 3 countries: 2 in Africa and 1 in the UK. They can be mixed clusters ie

both primary and secondary schools. This is an accredited project with Makerere and Cambridge universities.

- Global School Partnerships – a DfID funded programme managed by British Council. This aims to enable the introduction and development of global education in Ugandan primary schools.
- Dreams and teams – a sports leadership programme for secondary schools.

If funding is requested, the project proposal has to go to Jane Henry with a copy to British Council in Uganda.

I asked if there might be funding from other sources and was told there might be money in the NCDC, DfId, DANIDA, USAID and the Netherlands overseas aid programmes.

Christine Kiganda, formerly of NCDC and now a free lance consultant, was suggested as someone who might have ideas for funders. Mobile: 0772403535. I did not contact her as no decisions have yet been made about what we might be seeking funding for.

The Global Gateway web site (<http://www.globalgateway.org.uk/>) was also suggested as possibly helpful.

Susan offered to help with any training – even as a volunteer.

## **12. Recommendations**

There are so many issues and all are interconnected that it is hard to know where to begin.

a) The best way seems to be, if it is possible to do so, to run a **refresher course(s)** that covers the following:

- Basic teaching skills such as: use of voice, handling resources, organising group work (cooperative learning), managing a classroom, linking theory to life, devising appropriate written work, marking written work, motivating and involving pupils in their learning, managing time
- The preparation of effective schemes of work and lesson plans
- English pronunciation
- Managing continuous assessment and recording progress at every level
- Thinking creatively
- Making teaching aids from local resources
- Creating reading possibilities
- Working with slow learners and others with special needs
- Working together

Something of all these topics could be included in a week's programme. The best arrangement would seem to me to be:

- a residential course (to ensure attendance)
- operating in two sections: P1-P3 and P4-P7
- or possibly three – to include a section for head teachers on school improvement plans. This was not in my brief but the heads make many of the important decisions
- held towards the end of the long holiday (so that the teachers don't forget before the start of the new term)
- in a central location (so that teachers from each of the schools may attend and share their experiences)
- followed up by a period of support supervision once the term has begun (to ensure the methods have been understood and can be implemented)
- handouts/a manual should be prepared (so teachers have references and practical examples for the future)
- some time should be spent on how to handle special needs, including slow learners
- a certificate of completion and practice should be awarded to those who satisfactorily do so
- possible numbers would be four teachers from each school (two at each level) who return to the school entrusted with the task of training those who were unable to attend
- serious funding would be needed for this to happen – is it possible to obtain it?
- suitable trainers would need to be found
- who would need a time together beforehand to prepare the course

I have not spent time on planning the details of such a course as I need to hear from all the key players whether they agree with me or even think such a course is possible. Costing such an activity would be an important part of the planning.

As part of the process, I would also like to:

- join in at least part of the proposed DEO visit to Devon County Education Authority
- meet with teachers from the UK schools to ascertain what part they might play in training and support as an alternative proposal might be for these teachers to spend time in their link school with the particular responsibility to support the teaching. However, I fear that many younger UK teachers would find this hard as they may lack the experience and skills to offer appropriate support. This could possibly be assisted by some kind of course for them in the UK before they visit Uganda.

b) A second recommendation is the urgent need to identify ways to **improve pupil access to reading materials**. My initial suggestion is to invite pupils from both the UK and the Uganda schools to write stories – about their lives or from their imaginations – and to submit them in a competition. The best ones are selected, typed up, illustrated as much as possible (by pupils or others), photocopied and put into laminated covers. This will produce books cheaply in large quantities which can be read by many children without fear of being asked to pay for lost or spoiled copies. This pattern can be followed for a range of different class levels, age groups and subject areas.

There are other needs that affect the quality of teaching but concern physical conditions. I would like to recommend that those responsible should try to find solutions to these particularly for:

- Staff housing
- Lunch for pupils and teachers
- Better sanitary arrangements for girls
- Secure storage for resources

This concludes my suggestions for the immediate future.

**13. About myself – Jean Harrison, MA, B.Ed.**

I am a qualified teacher with 16 years classroom experience. This includes a period with VSO at a primary teacher training college in northern Nigeria and three years at Namasagali College, Kamuli, Uganda in the mid-70s.

Then I moved into curriculum development and resource production with Christian Aid, a major UK-based international aid agency. I wrote many teaching resources for primary and secondary schools in the UK/Ireland and commissioned others. I would begin by identifying what would be most appropriate both in content and in approach, bringing together the needs of the school curriculum, the NGO and the teacher. I was also involved in the training of teachers, both pre-service and in their continuing professional development, as well as lobbying the various government bodies concerning the ongoing changes to the school syllabi in the various countries of the UK and Ireland.

For the last six years I have been writing and editing a range of educational material which has included a text book with an accompanying teacher's handbook for use with P7 RE in Uganda. This involved working with a group of Ugandan teachers and was published by Macmillan Publishing.