

CREATING CHANGE



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Global Issues in ELT in Africa



IATEFL Global Issues SIG (GISIG)

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Introduction by Linda Ruas, Publications Coordinator IATEFL GISIG

Take a quick look down the list of topics in the articles in this publication and you will get an idea about how inspiring it has been for me to work with all the authors on their articles. It has been such a privilege to chat with teachers from 17 different countries, about their teaching context and local issues they care about and want to change.

Some of the authors had never written an article before, and some are published authors. Some are presidents of their teaching association, some are university professors, but most are secondary school teachers. Some have been passionate about bringing global and social issues into ELT classes for many years, and some have only recently begun.

Most of the authors were part of the Hornby Regional Workshops in 2019, where the idea for this publication originated. Teachers were divided up into three sections – reflected in the sections in this publication: Pretoria for those from southern Africa, Dakar for those from West Africa, and Addis Ababa for those from Eastern and central Africa.

A few of the authors were not part of these regional workshops, but have become friends of GISIG through other activities in Africa, for example, the pre-conference event at the AfricaTESOL conference in Abuja in 2019.

As you will see, the activities in the articles are of three different types:

- a. Practical tasks for English classes that develop specific language or skills in English
- b. Project work for classes or English clubs, usually integrating skills and language work
- c. Awareness-raising or training by English teaching associations

All of the contributors share an amazing level of commitment to creating change.

Please share this publication widely. Teachers in many countries have a difficult life, but teachers in many African countries have more difficulties than most. If these teachers can create this amount of change, what can the rest of us do?

Linda Ruas,
IATEFL GISIG Publications Coordinator

Foreword by Richard Kiely, A.S. Hornby Educational Trust

It is a pleasure and an honour to be invited to write a foreword for this collection of papers. I participated as a Trustee of the A. S. Hornby Educational Trust (ASHET) in the Regional Workshops for teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa which were the contexts where Linda (Ruas, Editor) discussed many of the articles with the authors. The collection of papers makes a contribution to the development of ELT in three ways.

First, it shows that global issues are at their heart local issues. The papers illustrate the ways these issues impact lives, and can transform communication in classrooms and other spaces where teachers and students interact. The issues relate to gender, particularly aspects of women's and girls' lives, healthcare, the environment, and socio-economic development. They are issues which are current or problematic in communities, which are meaningful for students, and which have the potential for horizon-shifting education as well as narrowly-constructed language instruction.

Second, these papers have ideas and activities for the English classroom. In the best tradition of Communicative Language Teaching, they combine what is meaningful, with activities to develop skills of comprehension, expression and articulation. The ideas in this collection have the potential to not only challenge the thinking on current and difficult issues, but also to transform the pedagogy, to change the classroom into a safe space for exploring concerns, fears and difficult experiences.

Third, the writers of these papers are not just teachers: they are also Teacher Association (TA) activists. They are members of collectives of teachers who work together and with others to address local issues (which are also global issues), to act for the professional development of all teachers, and to support and guide novice teachers. These papers illustrate how teachers as part of TAs can be agents, and not just recipients of training and professional development.

This is a collection of papers to make us think. And then, to reflect on our practice as teachers, and on the potential of classrooms as spaces for engagement with the issues which really matter.

Richard Kiely,
A.S. Hornby Educational Trust

Foreword by Harry Kuchah Kuchah, President of IATEFL

I am very honoured to be able to write a few words about this collection which is the first of its kind, to bring together accounts by English language professionals from 17 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa sharing their experiences, perspectives and practices around global issues within their local contexts.

The articles in this collection have developed from encounters with African ELT professionals at Hornby regional workshops around the continent as well as at an Africa TESOL Pre-conference event in Abuja, Nigeria in August 2019. As a member of the Hornby family, an active member of Africa TESOL and current President of IATEFL, I have had the honour of working with Linda Ruas, the editor of this collection, over the last three years. This collection is testament to her ongoing commitment to supporting English language education in sub-Saharan Africa and her unfaltering belief in the inner potentials of African ELT professionals to effect positive change in their communities.

The different contributions to this collection address a range of local issues which resonate with youth and communities across the globe. These include topics such as sexual health education and teen pregnancy, gender equality and equity, drug abuse and youth suicide, child abuse, environmental care and sanitation, disability and inclusivity as well as climate change. The uniqueness of these contributions is that they approach these topics from a variety of angles including classroom practice and school-community mobilisations. More importantly, they show that African teachers and their students are capable of working together with their local communities to solve common problems with very few resources at their disposal.

As Africa continues to grapple with the challenges of globalisation, there is a growing need to support teachers to become part of the global solution to emerging challenges. The Global Issues Special Interest Group of IATEFL, through its partnership with Africa TESOL, has been encouraging and supporting teachers in Africa since 2018. *Creating Change: Global Issues in ELT in Africa* is a reminder that global ELT organisations such as IATEFL can benefit from developing more sustainable relationships with teachers and teacher associations in the Global South.

Harry Kuchah Kuchah,
IATEFL President

How to use this publication:

With other teachers:

- each choose one article to read before a teachers meeting and make notes about the key points of interest. At the meeting, share your learning with your colleagues
- in a training/teacher development session, list some of the global issues from the articles and get teachers, in groups, to discuss how English teachers can help with them, then have them read about what teachers in Africa are doing to create change
- to raise awareness about English teaching in Africa, distribute to English teaching colleagues
- decide on one issue you or your school would like to work on, or a topic you are already working on, and contact the author of the article (via the editor: lindaruas@hotmail.com) to see how you could work together on a project, materials, or simply sharing ideas

With English learners (intermediate and above):

- in class, elicit and discuss some of the many big global issues around the world and predict how English teachers can help with them
- do a jigsaw reading: divide students into eg. 5 groups and give each group 4 of the articles; they read one each and discuss the global issues and what is being done; then re-mix the groups with one from each of the original 5 groups and they each report on the 4 articles they've discussed
- select some of the photos that accompany the articles and hand out or project on a screen for students to look at – in pairs, students predict what is happening and why, then check with the relevant article
- ask students to skim through the whole publication to find an issue that is really important for them, and plan a project they could do to help

For more resources, publications and events, see the IATEFL Global Issues SIG website: <https://gisig.iatefl.org/> and consider joining IATEFL GISIG if you are not already a member.



Global Issues SIG

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The Plight of an African girl

by Benuyenah Patricia Akosua Rejoice, GATE, Ghana

I was born a twin, with a twin brother
Not by desire, but by supreme design
That fateful day dozens of people trooped to my father's house
Many held my twin brother's wrist and said to my father,
Congratulations!!! "Wodzi ame na wo" "Woanya nipa"
Simply put, 'You've gotten a human being'
But they turned and peeped at me in apprehension
And I heard their giggles and whispers saying,
'It is a girl'
My brother and I suckled from the same mother's breasts
We played and fought as kids as we were
I grew up with my brother in the hut of straws
We hurt ourselves, each other and got hurt by others
To express our pain and anguish in emotions we resorted to crying
But my brother was told again and again, "Nutsu mefana avi o" "Burima nso"
"Men don't cry"
I was rather encouraged to weep my heart out as a weaker cell
For, I am a girl!
Then the bell of going to school started tolling
My brother and I jumped up high with zeal and said,
'Father and Mother, 'we want to go to school'
Though first to say, 'We'll go to school' was last to step my feet in there.
I was sacrificed for my brother due to my feminine status
My mother tried to speak for me, but was muzzled because she is a woman
And I am made-up to stay at home with her to do the chores
While my brother geared up for school to learn
Just because I am a girl!

Then, I found myself in school, trailing behind my twin brother, two years later
In class I shone and glowed my intellect among my peers as the FIRST
I played the football, hockey, rugby and... all the "rough games" with boys
I championed the course of success and victory as I led my groups
Yet, my peers would constantly say, "She is still a girl"
I wanted to be a calculator, a moving calculator
But even my teachers turned to damp my dreams
They deliberately poured cold water on my shoulders.
They chorused to me, teasingly "but you are a girl"
Yet, the old rugged cloth, my mother!
Yes, she cushioned me with the CAN DO SPIRIT.
Who never dampened my dreams.
I will achieve my goals!!!

In town, both the young and old gaze at me
As new shepherd at the chief's palace
They giggle sarcastically at each of my steps
But I walk with the brisk and smartest move
As I move with gallantry and the gorgeousness naturally abounds in me
They murmur among themselves
And continue to remind me of my feminine status
"Look you're still a girl"
Damn it!!!!
Excuse me.
I don't need such reminders please.

In church some unscrupulous opportunists want to lure me
They tried to seal me up with cash and car
The worse of it is this: even the women push me to engage in such filthy acts
With the so called 'eyes' of the church

Tangled in the thorn of men and women with frail conscience
I ran to the Bishop ..Prophet ..Pastor Man of God help
But. I went from the frying pan into fire
The pastor used me as prey
Just because I'm a girl

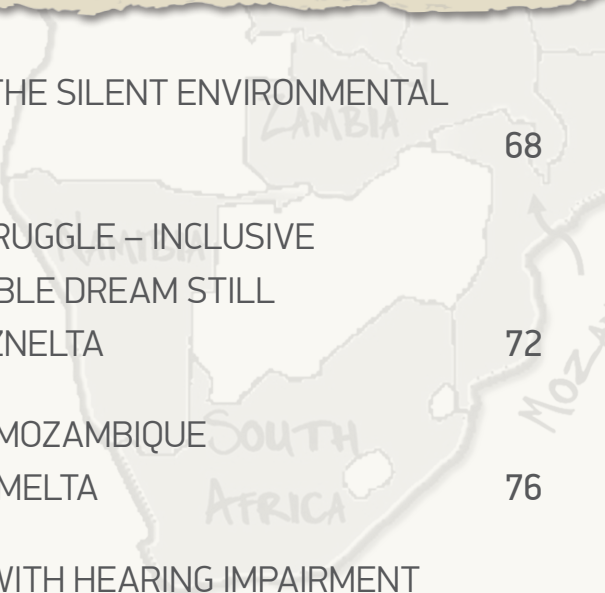
I dreamt of driving and flying a plane, but I was not allowed to ride a bike.
I am told by all, "You are a girl"
Through the beads and turns, the threats, pains that rolled down my tears,
The trying moments, unintended, purposeless fasting and soap-less baths
I got my academic certificate out of conscious effort and sleepless nights
The job I applied for was mine because I was placed second to none
But for that unscrupulous boss, I was denied.
Just because I failed to exchange my womanhood, my virtue, my pride for a job
Yet, I don't have the voice to shout it out
When I complained, I'm told, "But you're a girl"
Now I see the silenced voice of girls and women slapping me all around.
Hunting me in my dreams like the cheetah and the tiger chasing the poor helpless rat.
At home, school, church, work, in marriage, policy and politics.
In professional and vocational endeavours.
Even in decisions that affect them directly.
Their voices are MISSING... as they cannot speak nor write right.
That VOICE needn't be missing!

The silence must be broken!!!


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How can your English lessons help prevent teen pregnancy in your school?

by Celita Soares, CVELTA, Cape Verde

Our English lessons can change our students' lives!

As teachers, we can be a great instrument in changing our students' lives, by bringing the main social issues of our community to our lessons.

Teen pregnancy is now a big challenge in our country. Cape Verde is a small country composed of ten islands. The country has faced and is still dealing with some social challenges like poverty, unemployment, HIV, drugs, specially youth alcohol abuse and so on. But one of the major social problems faced is teen pregnancy.

In the past huge campaigns were supported by the government to promote the use of contraceptives among teenagers but they were unsuccessful. The rate of teenage pregnancy has been increasing in Cape Verde, according to data from the Ministry of Health and Social Security. In 2000 this rate was 11.4% and in 2015 it increased to 19%. The percentage of teenage pregnancies almost doubled between 2000 and 2011, reaching around 20%. This is one in five pregnant women under the age of 19 (WHO, Regional Office for Africa).

More worryingly, there were 13 cases of pregnancies in 2014 among teenagers aged 10 to 13 years old, and 16 cases in 2015, according to national statistics. This situation should further challenge the issue of child protection (WHO, Regional Office for Africa).

At my school in São Filipe, Fogo Island, a rural island, the number of teen pregnancies has also increased. In the past, students had a subject at school that used to talk about issues like sex, birth control and so on. But, they weren't effective for many reasons: teenagers feel shy to go to the hospital to find out about birth control, it is still taboo to use and talk about birth control, and parents don't talk with their children about sex and birth control. It also seems that having specialists going to the classrooms and talking about it doesn't engage students and doesn't work at all. Now, the government and the Ministry of Education are trying to do many campaigns promoting abstinence. And I believe that this is the best way. We should teach our teenagers that there is a time for everything in life and when they are teenagers, education is the biggest priority. The majority of teenagers who got pregnant didn't go back to school, and the ones who went back couldn't finish high school. And this situation leads to other social problems in the community.

This school year we have some 12th grade students that are pregnant. And I was thinking how I can work with my students to prevent this happening. Going to the classroom and simply giving them advice may not be that effective.

One day, I went to my classroom and the girls were debating about how boyfriends just want to have sex and the boys were complaining that they don't understand girls. And they wanted me to talk about it. But I had a lesson about comparative adjectives to teach.



I had this brilliant idea: I told them to divide into two groups, girls and boys. Then, I told them to write as many sentences they can about the differences between boys and girls using comparatives. When they finished writing the sentences, they should use them to list some ways in which those differences will help them to have a healthy relationship with their

boyfriend/girlfriend and enjoy their teenage life without having sex and becoming pregnant. For those who have already started their sexual life, they should provide appropriate advice.

When they finished their task. I divided the board in two parts and I wrote 'girls' on one side, and 'boys' on the other side. Then, I told the students to give me one sentence at a time from each side.

It was amazing! Students had written fantastic comparative sentences and some were explaining the reason for those sentences.



This activity gave the students the opportunity to work in a cooperative way, get completely involved in the activity, be creative, use grammar in context, practise the language and build their own knowledge.

At the end of the class they were happy because they had the opportunity to discuss something important for them. I was happy too because I achieved the class main goal.

After this lesson with this particular class, other students from my other classes came to me and said that they heard about that amazing lesson and they wanted it also. And I said of course, all my classes will be included. When a lesson has a positive impact on a student's life, he or she is the one sharing with other colleagues and friends about it and even with their parents when they get home. Some parents came to school to talk to me about the lesson and they said that I have their support to keep working. Parents also felt the impact of that lesson and they now see teachers as partners.

I shared this idea with other English teachers at my school and they intend to do the same thing. Other teachers want also to include social issues in their lessons to help the students.

The new English teachers' association in Cape Verde, CVELTA, wants to share this idea with all teachers in the country, so that every student can be reached, in the classroom and through English clubs. The association will first give training to teachers on how to include social issues in their English lessons, support them with resources and encourage them to do similar activities with students in schools and communities. Teachers have such an important role in this, since they have the opportunity to spend time with the students every day.

So, as English teachers we can transform our students' lives and improve their English at the same time, by using topics of their interest with our lesson goals. Let's keep trying because we won't regret it when we see the impact of our hard work on our students' lives. Changing a life is changing the world.

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Celita Soares is an English teacher at Teixeira de Sousa High School, in Fogo Island, Cape Verde. Besides teaching she is also helping to reorganize the English teachers' association in Cape Verde. She is very passionate about teaching and changing young people's lives. As English teachers we can help make the world a better place.

The environment in Guinea Bissau

by Ali Djau, ELTA-GB, Guinea Bissau

In Guinea Bissau, teachers earn so little - about £170 per month, when the government pays them. For many months of 2019, due to political instability, teachers received no salary at all. So most teachers need at least one other job, especially if they want to support a family.

My passion, great interest and a lot of my experience in the past – for example with various NGOs and Foundations eg. Slow Food – and my other job, is related to the environment. I am about to finish a degree in environmental management that I have been studying in the evenings for some years.

There are many serious environmental problems in Guinea Bissau, for example, the effects of climate change (sea level rise and coastal erosion is worse around the corner of West Africa, Senegal and Guinea Bissau, than many other areas of the world) unsustainable traditional practices eg. fishing with nets with too small holes, and destroying bees when gathering wild honey; and the effects of the man-made environment on people's health eg. diseases like malaria, Ebola, AIDS, and rubbish disposal. I feel very strongly that we English teachers should take responsibility for helping with at least some of these problems that affect our lives.

As teachers, we can make a difference. One of my favourite quotations is from Nelson Mandela: 'Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world'.

Teachers in Guinea Bissau generally have a good social conscience. This might be from the political party PAIGC that has ruled our country from fighting for independence to very recently. When fighting for independence from the Portuguese colonisers in the 1970s, they put a lot of emphasis on literacy, gender balance and solving other social problems. So English teachers are interested in linking global issues with teaching English and want to know more about how to do this.



This poster, mostly in the national language Creole, shows where pregnant women and children can get free health care



*This photo shows a banner in the street in Portuguese. The translation is:
With every tree that is cut down, man is crucifying his own existence.*

We have very traditional teacher training in our country, and most teachers relied on reading aloud, copying, and explaining grammar for most lessons until recently. In the last few years we have been working with IATEFL Global Issues SIG and we have learnt how we can create our own lessons about social issues. We discuss the issues that we want to teach about in our WhatsApp group, then we write a short text and plan a simple lesson to get learners interested in the topic.

For example, we created a lesson about cashew nuts – the biggest export of Guinea Bissau. Many students miss class during the cashew harvest time, and many people are involved in selling or preparing cashews. Here are photos of the cashew fruits and children removing the nut after burning them on a charcoal fire:

Our lesson about cashew nuts started with a text that one of the teachers found online. We adapted and simplified the text. We then discussed in the WhatsApp group and came up with some tasks to get learners interested, teach vocabulary, read the text, and then make lists of what they could make from cashews.



Another topic we discussed is health and the environment, and I wrote this short text:

How can we control disease?

Some years ago in Guinea Bissau, there were many health diseases in many regions, including Bissau city. The most common disease was cholera. Many people died of it, so doctors started to think about what caused it.

They came to the conclusion that it was dirt.

They looked for families where no-one had died from cholera, and asked them what they did to prevent disease. The families explained that they cleaned all around the house and separated all the rubbish into four categories: metal, plastic, biodegradable food waste, paper and recyclable materials (which they re-used).

The journalists shared this information in the media and the doctors did sensitisation activities in different towns. People started to clean and separate their rubbish in the same way, and so the disease finished across the whole country. Now most people have better health and our towns and cities are cleaner.e.

Then we discussed what sort of tasks we could use in class and we created this lesson plan:

1/ E - Engage 10 mins	Teacher asks students, in groups of three, to list all illnesses and diseases they know and put them in order of seriousness. Groups take turns to say an illness / disease and the teacher writes it on the board in English. Brief class discussion on which illnesses / diseases are most serious.
2/ S - Study 10 mins	<p>a. Teach vocabulary items: to cause, dirt, rubbish, biodegradable, sensitisation, to separate</p> <p>b. Write the title of the text: 'How can we control disease?' on the board, and pairs tell each other what they expect to read. Brief feedback – teacher writes 3 class ideas on the board</p>
5 mins	c. Hand out text and set 1-minute skimming task: can you find anything about the 3 predictions in the text?
5-10 mins	d. Students now read the text in detail to find out how people controlled cholera in Guinea Bissau
3/ A - Activate 5-10 mins	<p>In groups of 3, make a plan to control one or more of the other diseases/ illnesses from the first stage of the lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What will you do? When? How? With who? Why? - Selected groups briefly present their plan to the class and others comment and ask questions

Also, our English teaching association, ELTA-GB, has created links with several environmental organisations that I am a member of, and we have been working together over the past few years to educate English teachers about these issues. The teachers will then be able to explain to students about the topics, or create short texts about them to use in class.



This photo shows people from ECOWAS Peacebuilding Youth Platform giving a talk at our National Conference 2019 about peace and conflict-management



This photo shows the new organisation COTEDAE set up by Environmental Science graduates to try to improve the environment. It was represented by Issa Balde & N`dei Tchuda, who came to the National Convention 2019 to talk about the problems of rubbish in the environment.

According to COTEDAE, Bissau is not able to deal with the garbage effectively. The capital city Bissau produces 45 tons of garbage per day and only 40 to 45% can be removed by our national authority. So 55% of the garbage produced stays in our homes or is taken to dump in ditches and drains. This is not allowed because it creates many problems in the future. All the garbage in the ditches and drains eventually ends up in the sea, and this has bad consequences for our fish and the sea life.

Finally, ELTA-GB wants to encourage students to appreciate and love their environment, so we organised a tree-planting day, with students, teachers, and others from the community. We taught everyone how to plant and look after trees and everyone really enjoyed it and agreed to all plant a lot more trees and look after them. Also, people from different groups in the community worked together, which is also important.



We teachers need to learn as much as possible about as many other areas as we can, and pass on this knowledge to students. We English teachers can do so much, both inside class and outside class, to make students think more about the environment and how we can look after it better. We need to start working on this now before it is too late.



Ali Djau has been teaching English at Rui Barbosa secondary school in Bissau, Guinea Bissau, for several years. He founded ELTA-GB and is the General Secretary and is also very involved with many environmental and social groups.

Can we make women equal to men in Guinea Bissau?

by Braima Embaló, ELTA-GB, Guinea Bissau

First read this short story:

There was once a man called Abdulai who lived in Binar with his wife and daughter. They were taking care of his niece Binta because her parents had passed away. Binta was a student at primary school and was twelve.

One day, Abdulai talked to one of his relatives and asked him to marry Binta. Binta was not happy because she felt too young to get married and wanted to stay at school. But she had no choice. She obeyed her uncle and married the much older man.

This is a common reality in Guinea Bissau, and many other countries in Africa. In our English teachers' WhatsApp group, one of our teachers, Mariza Mendes Cabral, started our weekly discussion with this story, and we discussed the various options that Binta and Abdulai, and the community has. It's a very difficult situation, and without the help of some charities or religious groups, Binta has no choices and may end up with serious health problems, or even dead, from giving birth at a very young age.

After discussing the situation, we also discussed what English teachers can do to help reduce the number of child marriages. Stories are powerful, and we talked about bringing this same story into class to get students to read it and discuss. The more people talk about these problematic issues openly, the more solutions we will be able to find.

Another of our teachers in ELTA-GB has been making materials of his own and sharing them in our WhatsApp group. Venancio Vaz lives in Gabu, 4 hours from the capital Bissau. He feels it is important to address sensitive issues in English class, especially those that affect girls more. One of his lessons is about giving advice, and, after teaching some functional language, this is the practice task:

SITUATION CARDS:

- ▶ Your boyfriend refuses to use a condom.
- ▶ You have a difficult exam tomorrow.
- ▶ Your sister is still at school and she is pregnant.
- ▶ You lost your English notebook.
- ▶ Your best friend has a sexually transmitted disease.
- ▶ You need to see a doctor but you don't have any money.
- ▶ Your aunt doesn't want to have any more children.
- ▶ Your girlfriend is pregnant.
- ▶ You think you have AIDS.

He also includes texts about various other sensitive issues that often affect our girl students, for example this text:

Dear Aissatu,

How are you and your family? I am doing okay but I am sick a lot in the mornings. I think I am pregnant. You see last month I went to a new year's party with a boy named Amadu. He said he loved me and he wanted to make love with me. I told him we should use a condom but he said he didn't have any. He told me not to worry because he would be careful. I always use a condom with my boyfriend Gustavo but Amadu didn't have one.

Oh Aissatu, what will I do if I am pregnant? What about school? I am only 15 years old. I don't have a job, and Amadu doesn't have a job. My parents will be angry. What will they say? What will my friends think about me? Oh my God, and what about Gustavo? What will he do? Aissatu, I'm in trouble and I don't know what I should do. I really need some advice. Please write me back soon.

Your friend,
Kadi

In our WhatsApp group, we decided on tasks to get students interested, and tasks for silent reading and discussion based on this short text.

In Guinea Bissau, there are two main narratives about the status of females: religious and secular/liberal. The religious narrative (just over half the population of Guinea Bissau are Muslim, around a third are Christian, and the others follow the indigenous animist religion) claims to have given women equal but not similar rights, given the nature and physique of women. The secular/liberal narrative, says that the status of women in society must be raised to be equal to that of man. This is where feminism comes in.

I believe the status of women in our society must be uplifted, whether they wish to marry or not, whether to conceive a child or not, what sort of job they do ... it should entirely be her choice.

Once women have education and a job, they cannot be subjected to injustice.

In Guinea Bissau, though women make up 51.6% of the population, they have little weight in decision-making centers (13 MPs out of 100 in the National People's Congress).

The number of boys and girls in the education system is unequal, with fewer females and, in terms of school dropout; the rate is higher for girls (32%) than for boys (21%).

Discrimination is a reality in families, schools and society in general and results from habits, conventions and needs resulting from the social and traditional organization of the country.

Girls provide care for the home, work in the countryside, and even work in small family businesses where this is possible. More than 27% marry before the age of 18 and start a new cycle with family responsibilities.

In addition, a considerable number of girls between the ages of 6 and 14 drop out of school to deal with traditional rites and excision ceremonies cultivated by traditional communities. FGM is still a reality in our country, even though it is now illegal and many groups and projects are working to end it. Gender inequality thus persists at various levels, including acts of violence and genital mutilation in a country where, according to 2006 data, 44.5% of women were excised.

Education is the key to correcting inequalities. The Guinean Government, in collaboration with various NGOs, has sought to create conditions for girls to gain access to education, including measures such as the unification of the system and the creation of schools in rural areas, addressing the problem of long journeys. UNICEF, WFP and other global organizations have also developed initiatives in various parts of the country to improve women's access to education.

In 2000, the Institute for Women and Children was created to coordinate policies to promote the rights of women and children. At the same time, the Ministry of Education launched a campaign to raise awareness among families about the problem of education and equal opportunities for boys and girls.

A partner-supported compensation strategy was launched for families to enrol girls in school. Reducing illiteracy rates among the adult population, especially females, is one of the requirements for equality and its implementation can be achieved through initiatives with NGOs.

The creation of employment conditions for women can be facilitated with access to micro-credit solutions specially designed for the female population, who mostly depend on the informal economy. Training initiatives to create the conditions for integrating women into the economy and politics are equally crucial for gender equality. At the level of society, there is work to be carried out on the communication of women's rights, especially with religious leaders and their communities.

Our English teaching association – ELTA-GB – believes very strongly that we need to play a big role in making girls and women more equal in our country. Several of our members belong to various women's groups and work to raise awareness around the country.

One area we have had an impact on is encouraging more girls and women to become English teachers. Traditionally this has been a job for men, and very few women were interested in studying to teach English. We decided we needed to run an ELTA bootcamp to help prepare girls to be able to pass the entrance test at the Tchico-Té college to be able to do the training course. We had found out that, of the 256 English teachers in the country, only 29 were women, and knew we needed to encourage many more women. This was a great success. Beforehand, there were only 2 or 3 girls in each class in the college, but after the bootcamp, 14 girls passed the entrance test. Next summer, we are going to do the bootcamp again and hope for the same success.



This photo shows the participants and teachers at our bootcamp

We also feel it is our responsibility as a teaching association to train English teachers in the various issues that affect women, girls and equality. At all our National Conferences, we include sessions about gender equity. For example, at our National Convention in July 2019, the women's group did a training session, talking about various gender issues, and the students did a short play to show how girls and boys are treated differently.



This photo shows the women presenting about gender equity at our National Convention



Braima Embaló – English Teacher & English Language Coordinator at Háfia High School, Member of ELTA-GB, Admin of the WhatsApp Group Discussion, Group Leader of the New Curriculum Discussion.

The importance of early information about the menstrual cycle

by Fatoumata DEMBELE, MATE, Mali

A young girl of 12 years old comes back from school and starts crying in the toilet. Her mom knocks at the door and asks her: "What's happened? Who beat you? Did you get bad grades?"

The girl opens the door and shakes her head. She shows the blood to her mom in her underwear and on the ground: "Mom, I'm dying. The blood is coming out of me" and she continues to cry.

The mother goes out and comes back with a piece of cloth and whispers in her ear: "Take a bath and wear this, you are a woman now".

The following day the girl meets her friends and discusses it with them. Only one was informed by her mom about the menstrual cycle.

In Mali, people don't talk about menstruation. Only women discuss it among themselves if someone brings up the subject. During that period, people know why if you are not praying otherwise women don't mention it. In Islam, during menstruation, in Mali, the person is unclean and must not pray or touch the Koran.

In my opinion, it is very important to inform the girls about menstruation earlier. As a teacher and mother, I would like to help my students and children. It is for that reason that I started researching to know what different groups think about it. First I got together a group of women, then a group of girls:

Women's opinion about informing girls earlier:



The majority of women were not informed about the menstrual cycle before their menstruation started. That day was a day of fear for them. Only two women said that they discussed it with their moms and sisters earlier.

Women are now aware of the importance of discussing about the topic earlier. For them it is better that mothers inform their daughters in advance so that they can have an idea about the different changes that will happen to their body.

Girls' opinion about knowing menstrual cycle earlier:



Girls' menstrual cycle starts at eleven, twelve, thirteen, or anything up to seventeen. The first time is a shock for them because they are not prepared for it. Some are informed by their friends or teachers. In the syllabus, they discuss it with the biology teacher in form nine. For me it would be more suitable to introduce it in form seven.

MATE (Malian Association of Teachers of English) can play an important role in helping women and young girls. We can give training sessions to teachers, create materials to share, go round schools, or train English Clubs to talk to students.

Also poetry can be very powerful in expressing complex ideas, and dealing with taboo topics. We had a meeting with a group of women teachers and decided to write poems to express how we feel. This is the poem I wrote:

LETTER TO OUR MOTHERS

Mothers,
 Pregnant we were,
 Pregnant we are,
 We are pregnant,
 Pregnant because our stomach is full of messages
 Messages about sexuality, menstrual cycle, excision
 We want to learn them from you
 If you don't play your role,
 Radio, television, internet, and friends will do it
 Pregnant we were,
 Pregnant we are,
 Mothers, help us to entertain our pregnancy,
 Help us to stay healthy during our pregnancy
 Help us to deliver safely,
 Deliver a child called
COMMUNICATION

This poem could inspire your students to write their own poem. You could write some phrases on the board like: **deliver a child, healthy pregnancy, menstrual cycle, I'm afraid, it's taboo**, and get students, in pairs, to create a short poem.

Getting students to relate to taboo topics through reading poetry, and maybe even writing their own, helps them to start to think about it. We could also use the short story at the beginning of this article in class, to raise awareness and start discussions.



Fatoumata Dembele graduated as teacher of English in high school, taught in a mixed school (L.M.Sarr) from 2000 to 2016, and is currently teaching in an all-girls high school (LBAD). She worked at Peace Corps Mali as LCF (Language and Cross Culture Facilitator) from 2002 to 2009 and is a board member of MATE (Malian Association of Teachers of English).

Equipping senior high school girls with language production skills to avoid sexual harassment

by Benueyenh Patricia Akosua Rejoice, GATE, Ghana

For several decades, international organizations and government initiatives have attempted to provide tools that promote development in order to make women more equal to their male counterparts. Several programmes in the past, in their attempt to empower women, especially young women, have targeted factors other than language production (LP).

However, language production (speaking and writing skills) is a potentially powerful empowering tool that can have enormous benefits if combined with other factors. In Sub-Saharan Africa, especially Ghana, lack of confidence, diffidence, shyness and several other social factors can inhibit the female's ability to advance in a highly male-chauvinistic society. As a result, women have fewer options than men in several things including academic achievements, job choices, vying for positions, contributing to community development, choice of sexual partner, pregnancy related choices and even wealth acquisition.

Equipping senior high school girls with language production to break the silence on sexual harassment will enable girls in my school district to talk about issues affecting them.

Project Statement

The issue of sexual harassment is a major concern in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly Ghana. Norman (2013) published in Ghana medical journal that women were 61% more likely to be sexually abused than men. Similarly, Abradu (2013) revealed that, in Ghana common acts of sexual harassment on the Senior High School (SHS) campuses include sexual demands for academic favour, humour and jokes about sex, rape and attempted rape, pulling down of clothing, sexual insults and touching, pinching and patting. However, most victims of sexual harassment fail to report due to fear of victimization by perpetrators and mockery from friends. Research reveals that face-saving, lack of confidence, diffidence and inability to say no has also created a hay day for sexual harassers. The negative effect of sexual harassment is so alarming. Abradu (2013) again revealed that 83.75% of her respondents attested sexual harassment has a negative effect on academic performance. It is time a grassroots approach is resorted to in order to mitigate this social insecurity; sexual harassment can be addressed using common sense and targeted skills rather than by fashionable rhetoric and legal threats. If perpetrators are aware of exposure, the menace of this act will be reduced.

With the BSA (Break the Silence Africa) projects, the girls will:

- ▶ Develop confidence and courage to say no to any act of sexual harassment
- ▶ Report acts of sexual harassment as well as the perpetrators for redress.
- ▶ Avoid the short and long-term effects of sexual harassment on their lives.

The project goal

The project goal is to empower girls through effective language production to enable them to have knowledge, confidence, courage, and a sense of responsibility in issues affecting them.

To achieve this goal the project will:

- ▶ Educate students on what constitutes sexual harassment,
- ▶ Educate students on causes of sexual harassment
- ▶ Sensitize students on the importance of reporting different forms of sexual harassment
- ▶ Educate students on effects of sexual harassment
- ▶ Create awareness among stakeholders on the need to intensify control of sexual harassment.

Objectives:

At the end of my project, participants will be able to:

- ▶ Interpret any harassment they experience and report to a trusted person/organization
- ▶ Demonstrate the ability to talk about issues affecting them without fear or intimidation.
- ▶ Come up with strategies for dealing with sexual harassers

Project activity and timeline

Project Activities
July 2020: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project committee meeting • Inform the district director and school authorities about the project and its implementation • Meet project assistants • Identify and secure workshop facilities and equipment
August 2020: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration of participants • Make arrangements for food (arrange with local restaurant and approach local bottled water company to sponsor water)
September 2020: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare workshop materials • Conduct workshop I (Sept 8 – equipping senior high school girls with language production skills to break the silence on sexual harassment at the Fanteakwa South District, Zone ‘A’) • Workshop 1 evaluation (survey to participants) • Analyze the survey with collaborators
October 2020: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration of participants for workshop 2 • Arrange food and materials
November 2020: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct workshop II – Fanteakwa South Zone ‘B’ • Evaluation of workshop 2 and of whole project • Submit project report to sponsors and District Director of Education

Targeted beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries of this project are:

Two hundred girls from Fanteakwa South school districts.

District secondary education coordinator and three school-based guidance and counselling coordinators.

Indirect beneficiaries

All other students in Fanteakwa and school districts

Parents/guardians of the beneficiary students

Primary Applicant

- ▶ Organize the training logistics
- ▶ Manage and administrate the grant finances
- ▶ Co-develop the training materials
- ▶ Facilitate the training session
- ▶ Carry out overall project evaluation
- ▶ Write the final report to be submitted to sponsors and the District Director of Education
- ▶ Make a follow up visit to the beneficiary schools

Collaborator

- ▶ Co-develop training materials for workshop
- ▶ Facilitate the training session on project baseline
- ▶ Write collaborators' report to be submitted to IREX

Project Assistants (School based guidance and counselling coordinators)

- ▶ Help in the registration of students from the three beneficiary senior high schools
- ▶ Organize and bring students to the workshop center
- ▶ Co-ordinate to form the “BSA Club” in schools

Monitoring and Evaluation

During the project period, I will interview participants to find out how they are being informed about sexual harassment. At the end of the workshop, I will distribute a survey to participants on the usefulness of the workshop. After the workshop is complete, I will visit and interview students to find out if they have observed any sexual harassment and the action taken. I will also find out from the school based girl child education facilitators and guidance and counselling coordinators if the girls are able to identify and report cases of sexual harassment. I will also have focus group discussions with the students to find out the improvement in their speaking and writing skills.

In the interview and focus group discussion, I will seek answers to the following questions:

- ▶ Can participants identify what constitutes sexual harassment?
- ▶ Are participants reporting cases of sexual harassment to the people they confide in?
- ▶ How is the knowledge acquired impacting on life of the participants?

During and after the project, I will take photos, audio and video records of activities and experiences shared by participants.

Sample Sustainability Plan

To strengthen the participants and ensure the continuity of the project, the following design will be adhered to:

BSA Club: The guidance and counselling coordinators will be asked to form a “BSA” club in their schools or merge the objectives of the project into that of an existing club.

Decentralization of mentoring: The guidance and counselling coordinators will be asked to collaborate with school authorities and give mentor teachers to all students.

Sponsorship: Sponsorship will be sought from government and non-governmental organizations as well as individuals for at least three projects on empowering girls through language production.

Follow-up Visits: I will plan with my collaborator to have periodic visits to the participating schools to figure out the progress of the project so as to address the challenges if any.

References:

Abradu, Anna Otubea, 2013, *The Impact of Sexual Harassment on Female Students in Senior High Schools in the Akuapem-North Municipality* <http://hdl.handle.net/123456789/2619>



Benuyenah Patricia Akosua Rejoice is an English teacher, now Head of Language Department, and is Treasurer of Ghana Association of Teachers of English (GATE). She is also a published writer and poet

Meeting the challenges of global warming through English teaching

by Dalok Parsongue Natanoumane, TETO, Togo

The issue of global warming is becoming more and more important all over the world. Togo, a tiny country in West Africa has not escaped this global problem. Thus, we planned our project with TETO, the Togo English Teachers' Organization: Meeting the Challenges of Global Warming through English Teaching.

Global warming seems to bring in my context a problem of sensitization, increasing the interest and shifting the behavioral psychology of the population which is at the center of the deterioration of the environment. We need education to help with this – we can say: education is light, illiteracy is darkness. How can someone understand that he or she is the cause of all the troubles affecting their own lives and continue to behave as before. When people understand what they are doing wrong, they will surely change their behaviour.



Here is the example situation of a school - the picture shows tons of plastic at the main entrance

Rubbish management in streets, homes and schools in our context here is mainly related to the lack of understanding that it is urgent for us to change. People are used to throwing rubbish on the ground and have never been taught to use bins instead. The best people to change the world are the educators, and we can be inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, who said 'be the change you wish to see'. We feel our TA, Togolese English Teachers' Organization can play a big role here in raising awareness. Teachers can bring change in the world through education.

People in Togo do not know enough about mother earth. In the past, people used to take material bags when they went shopping. Now, only one person in ten takes a bag with them. Why? Simply because the factory producing plastic bags has addicted people. And to make matters worse, the vendors wrap up goods in more plastic and plastic bags. People think the goods are more protected and are happy with this.

As wood is more difficult to find now, and to save money, many people use plastic to fuel their charcoal stove, even though this can cause skin cancer, pneumonia and lung disease.

The southern part of my country used to have two rainy seasons, which allowed farmers to grow lots of crops and harvest a great deal, but partly due to the burning of plastic, the climate has changed and farmers can only earn their living from farming once a year. This causes the prices of basic foodstuffs to increase, but the farmers do not understand that it is linked to burning plastic.

To meet the challenge, TETA, Togo English Teachers' Association has chosen the approach which consists of educating the Togolese when they are very young. Many conferences have been organized to train the trainers. When the English teachers return to their remote areas, they set up environmental sections, and the schools are already equipped with English speaking clubs, which they make use of too, for example getting the students to agree on promises they can make to protect the environment.

The strategic plan for durable solutions

The TA has done a lot of networking with the Ministry of Education to update and include environmental issues in the national curriculum across the country. With the new curriculum, students are taught the necessary vocabulary, expressions and tips to speak English and to talk about the preservation of the environment as well. We believe this quotation : "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (King Solomon: Prov. 22:6).

Here are some examples from our curriculum:

Grade 7 students' Lesson 9A: Man and his environment

Learning situation : When discussing with your classmate on the school compound, you notice that he has difficulties to recognize words related to environment. From the following list of words help your mate find out those related to environment. Do the work in pairs.

forest, soil, animals, houses, cars, water, food, climate, book

This lesson will both reinforce the English vocabulary and help the students be aware of environmental issues.

Lesson 9 B

Learning situation : During a lesson in your class, the teacher asked Celestin to build sentences with : **must, should, mustn't, shouldn't** to express what students like him must do or must not do in order to protect the environment. He writes sentences which are incorrect grammatically. Based on the following scrambled sentences help him make correct sentences.

Do the work in groups of 5:

- you / cut / trees / shouldn't
- we / avoid / should / deforestation
- farmers / bush fire / practice / shouldn't
- you / plant / trees / must
- we / throw / everywhere / mustn't / rubbish

While learning the use of must and should which express the moral and external obligation, kids also get accustomed to their obligations in terms of global issues.

Lesson 10 Grade 8

Study this learning situation : During breakfast, one of your classmates drinks pure water and throws the plastic sachet on the ground. You see her and would like to advise her and also sensitize the other students in your school on the pollution of the environment but you lack words and expressions. Use the following tips to make yourself understood.

- I would advise you to
- It is advisable to
- I would advise you not to
- It is not advisable to

Do the work in pairs.

After these few lessons and many others, Togolese English Teachers' Organization launched various competitions to motivate, encourage, raise awareness and value multiple intelligences. One example is a drawing competition which is organized every March in the context of the celebration of International Earth Day. Students of middle high and senior high schools are required to produce a drawing showing any action made by a person that affects the environment in a negative way; students from other grades produce a poster illustrating any action of environment preservation.

In the competitions, there is a jury to grade and select the top three best in each category. A ceremony is organized, posters are exhibited, parents, teachers and other students visit and affix grades which determine the winners, who will be awarded prizes.

This is a golden occasion for students to use what they have learnt and explain their different drawings or posters.



Picture: two kids are being trained for a radio broadcast

Another approach or strategic plan is to take students to the national radio station, choose a topic of environmental or global issues, prepare them first and organize a round table discussion during which student listeners will call the radio and talk on air.

It very common in our context to organize a skit during the break time or at times during our cultural activities to highlight the strategies to put in place to help the children to think of environmental issues.

We also plant trees in schools, for example in the Master Club Life English clubs.

‘Reduce, reuse and recycle’ is a growing principle in countries like the US. Here, in our Togolese context, we encourage the younger generation to contribute usefully by : walking, ‘going green’, and reducing their material possessions and consumption. This will help them learn how to preserve what nature has provided for them in order to live a better life in future, and protect our country and planet.

Conclusion

The most useful way to end this article is an appeal to all english teachers across the globe to include global issues in their teaching to raise more awareness of young people who need mother earth more than they do. Our motto in **Master Club Life** is «protect the Earth, save lives» because if nothing is done till 2050, according to some researchers, life will be jeopardized on the planet.



***Dalok Parsongue M A**, is an educational consultant, teacher and teacher trainer, translator and interpreter, school counselor, National Coordinator of English Clubs, National President of TETO, and has studied in the US as a SUSI scholar.*

Vegetarianism: the debate

By Desiree Christel Zinsouvi, BNTEA, Benin

Benin is a French-speaking West African country where vegetarianism as an alternative lifestyle is still unknown and where saying “I’m vegetarian” sounds strange. It is therefore, challenging to discuss it in classroom settings because the school curriculum doesn’t take it into account. Even though ‘food and health’ is part of the curriculum, no mention is made of vegetarianism/veganism. The latter is considered an incomplete, unhealthy or dangerous diet. In Benin, most people tell me that it’s a foolish decision of mine to be a vegetarian! Clearly, there is a mental blockage that needs be tackled tactfully when addressing such topics in classroom settings and English Clubs. The role of a teacher in a learner-centred approach to language is to guide learners, possibly out of their comfort zone to sustainable integrated language skills development, to be able to use language that is relevant to real-life issues. So I decided to plan a lesson for my students and document what happened.



The main objective of my lesson was to raise awareness of the real advantages of vegetarianism and thereby correct the misconceptions and the lies that have been spread and accepted by many for decades.

1. The learners should become familiar with the topic. For this purpose, the topic and the objective of the debate need to be shared beforehand for the students to carry out their own investigations and research. The various aspects of vegetarianism and veganism related to religion, health, economy, culture, cuisine, ethics, global issue, etc. can be explored.
2. The for group, the against group and the judges group need to be formed and responsibilities related to each position defined.

Objectives - integrated language skills

1. critical thinking (all along the whole process),
2. reading (research),
3. writing (building argument and note taking for classroom debate),
4. speaking and listening in the debate.

Students intermediate/advanced (3 groups of 7 students):

There will be a 'for' group, an 'against' group and a group of judges. There must be the same number of individuals in the 'for' and the 'against' group.

Support:

1. Research (each group is required to research vegetarianism or veganism to support their position. Each group addresses aspects of the issue related to health, culture, religion, and environment and finds arguments according to their position.)
2. Stop watch to keep time.

Stage 1: Presentation 15 minutes

First, the for group presents, then the against group presents. Each group gets approximately 8 minutes to present their side resulting in: 1min introduction + 1min x 5 arguments + 1min conclusion and overall summary of the position.

Stage 2: The debate 3 minutes x 4 (2 rebuttals per team) = 12 minutes

The against group will raise questions about the for group's position and provide convincing information against the position. Then each group has a chance for a first and second rebuttal (use a stop watch and allow 2-3 minutes for each rebuttal).

Rules:

Listen carefully, be respectful and supportive, speak only when it's one's turn, speak loudly and clearly, never get angry, and most importantly have fun!

Assessment: the judge's group. (5 – 10 minutes)

Assess the ability of each group to justify, reason and defend the positions appropriately. Rationale and evidence are more important than opinions. Debating provides students with a structured way to argue. It doesn't necessarily matter which team wins.

The Grid: 20 points (4 x 5 items)

Items	1	2	3	4
1. Presentation				
2. Arguments (relevance, rational and evidence)				
3. Rebuttals (relevance, listening and replying)				
4. Behaviour (respect, kindness, fairness)				
5. Timing (remove 1 point for each extra minute per section)				

1 poor, 2 fair, 3 good, 4 excellent



The debate

The debate took place in Terminal G2 in Lycee Technique Professionnel de Porto-Novo where learners study business English. The topic is not part of the formal curriculum but is relevant to Production and Commerce in the first learning situation when aspects of economics are focused on.

The first sentences revealed the stress related to speaking in public which progressively vanished and the students gradually revealed their innate passion, enthusiasm and confidence. Learners reacted positively along the whole process. The for group were not very comfortable at the start, because they were supposed to defend a position they do not share in real life. As the against group stepped in and presented their arguments, mainly in questions, the whole debate took an unexpected turn, and veganism / vegetarianism was defended with convincing arguments.

At the end of the session, the for team won according to the 'judges' evaluation. Every single student stood up and clapped because, as they said, they 'rediscovered themselves' by discussing vegetarianism and veganism, even though 'they are not going to become vegan only from that debate'.

Findings

Learners discovered that:

- ▶ Due to economic factors in Benin, there are many involuntary vegetarians and lots of people who eat meat cautiously, both in terms of the amount of meat in a given dish, or the number of meals in a week or month that have meat in them (holy days, Sundays, celebrations, etc.)
- ▶ Meat production leads to famine and poverty and endangers the planet so veganism is a global responsibility

- ▶ Agriculture generates more profit and feeds more people
- ▶ Veganism and vegetarianism are worthy alternative healthy lifestyles
- ▶ Africans have always been vegan - more than half of everyday dishes in our diet are vegan
- ▶ It is very easy for Beninese to be vegan or vegetarian
- ▶ Killing animals negatively affects human beings as we belong to the same ecosystem
- ▶ There is a global health lie related to how much protein and nutritious substances we all need
- ▶ Colonization changed eating habits in Benin and other colonies to a meat-eating, yet unhealthy, diet because of the economic benefit
- ▶ There are some religious impediments to veganism
- ▶ People are still meat eaters because it is difficult to change eating habits
- ▶ Veganism is a global responsibility

This same debate process may be replicated, improved and adapted to any audience and topic, especially topics that impact on the students' lives and topics of interest in Benin and the wider world. The material can be shared in our teaching association, BNTEA.



Desire Christel Zinsouvi is an EFL/ESP teacher studying English language didactics at University of Abomey Calavi in Benin. Christel is the coordinator of BNTEA, Porto Novo branch, where he teaches business at the Lycee Technique Professionnel. He is vegetarian and cares about global issues.

Empowering English clubs on climate change

by Dorothée Tchada, BNTEA, Benin

Climate change, in this day and age, has become a global issue. In other words, it is on the menu of a myriad international discussions around the globe. Unsurprisingly, though they are not the actual cause of the phenomenon, it turns out that West African countries, including Benin, are not spared the havoc. They are bearing somehow the brunt of the environmental calamity. Amid the threat that climate change poses, Benin National Teachers of English Association, though the association has no real decision-making power, has decided to empower English clubs through the BECS Competition, whereby some English clubs discuss climate change through public speaking and drama performances with a view to raising awareness.

In Benin, one of the most remarkable cases of climate change is the erosion of the country's coasts, which ranges from Akpakpa in Cotonou to Grand-Popo. Coastal erosion is the wearing away of an area's coasts by the action of water and wind. Put differently, erosion occurs when the land beside the sea is swallowed by the sea itself (See pictures 1,2 & 3 of coastal erosion in Benin).



Two major causes are behind this. On the one hand, climate change, which results in the melting of ice, causing the sea level to rise. On the other hand, human activities have also contributed to the damage. To take an example, in Benin, the sea port infrastructure has scaled up the problem because building such an infrastructure requires the use of part of the sea, which has ended up creating a serious environmental issue.

The devastation of Benin's shorelines is affecting the environment, society and the economy. In terms of the environment, the country is losing some parts of its territory to the sea. Besides, some plants and animal species are becoming extinct. When it comes to the social aspect of the problem, some people have already lost their houses and villages because the erosion has worn everything away. And it goes without saying that the economy is impacted as well. For instance, years ago, people went about their businesses - tourism and beach-related activities- in those areas. Unfortunately, these activities have closed as a result of the erosion.

Beyond this specific example of climate change in Benin, the Winners' English Club in Atlantique region and one of the English clubs taking part in the finals of the BECS Competition in Dassa-Zoumé approaches the issue of climate change in a broader view through the speaker-Féridia Akindélé.



Féridia Akindélé



Winners' English Club

Good morning, everybody! My name's Féridia Akindélé. It is an honor to be here today and to talk about a threatening issue that poses a grave and growing danger to the people around the world. That problem is climate change.

Without looking up the phrase in an encyclopedia, in basic terms, climate change is a change in the world's climate. In other words, climate change occurs when changes in Earth's climate system result in new weather patterns that remain in place for an extended period of time. One can also say that climate change has to do with global

warming which results from the emissions of greenhouse gases which, once displayed in the atmosphere, destroy the ozone layer which helps cool the planet.

In Benin as well as in many other parts of the world, climate change can be noticed through weather events rainy and dry seasons, among other things. What generally happens is that sometimes rainy seasons are longer or shorter than dry seasons or vice versa. This weather can result in drought, flood, high temperature. And the price to pay is generally related to hunger, displacement, which, more often than not, comes along with diseases such as malaria, cholera, etc. And at this point, only awareness campaigns, with students invested in the sensitization, could bear fruit and help alleviate a lot of suffering. And doing things such as avoiding deforestation and promoting the use of green energy could be helpful.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your rapt attention.

Aside from these approaches to tackling climate change, Benin's government has come up with a project to address the concern of coastal erosion. The construction of riprap seems to be the appropriate solution according to state authorities. And the riprap is meant to prevent the sea from pouring its anger onto the coasts, thereby endangering thousands of lives alongside the coasts. The good news now is that the project is complete and a lot of smiles can be now seen on the beneficiaries' faces.



Construction of riprap

In terms of awareness on the ground, a lot more needs to be done. The issue of climate change is not yet discussed in all English clubs, although twelve clubs from a department apiece had the opportunity to follow talks and sketches in Dassa-Zoumé on 26-28 February at the BECS 2020 (Benin English Clubs Summit); that's why BNTEA still has to work on many levels. And the handiest one is to make use of its branches to take the word to schools across the country. At present, BNTEA can rely on five functioning branches—BNTEA Branch Cotonou, BNTEA Branch Houéyogbé, BNTEA Branch Ouidah, BNTEA Branch Parakou and BNTEA Branch Porto-Novo. The task of these branches, in between their planned activities consisted in preparing a public speaking talk or drama performance on climate change, which was presented or performed during their visits to schools. What is more interesting in this project is that, be it a talk or drama, it is student-centered and the student speakers or actors can infect those who are not engaged in such activities yet and other English teachers could take a leaf from their colleagues' book and then start raising awareness as well.

It appears that climate change is not a hoax as the world's most powerful country's president thought a few years ago. In Benin for example, the blazing signs of this planetary problem is felt through coastal erosion, drought, floods, and high temperatures, to name but a few. And beyond the effort that the government is making to contain the situation, English clubs have also taken up the challenge by raising awareness through public speaking talks and drama performances. One key way to go around the concern is to equip the youngest generation with the right knowledge since they are future leaders, and letting them realize the seriousness of the matter at an early or young age could help reverse the trend.

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Teach English, save the earth

by Tim Hyua, ELTAN, Nigeria

This article considers the incorporation of environmental concerns as one way ELT practitioners are lending a hand to the fight in preserving the earth while teaching English.

To do this, attention is directed at three areas of particular interest to practitioners in the ELT classroom: themes (global issues), skills (language), and methods (lessons, role play, simulation, projects/research etc).

For example, we can set up role-plays between Greta Thunberg, the teenage climate activist, and Donald Trump, President of the US. It really brings situations alive in class to get students to really feel part of the situation.

I would like to present the case for ELT practice which focuses on environmental pollution within the learners' immediate environment or community.

Nigeria is one of the most polluted countries in the world. Air pollution in Nigeria is caused mainly by exhaust from cars, resuspended dust, rubbish fires, diesel generators, industry, and smoke from solid fuels paired with kerosene for cooking. The cities are the worst, and there is very little measuring and monitoring of air quality. Many premature deaths have been caused because of this pollution and bad air quality.

There are terrible stories about Nigeria becoming the dumpsite of the developed world, that Europe and the US are sending all their e-waste (electrical and electronic waste such as computers, phones, printers, televisions and refrigerators), often inside used cars.

Olusosun in the centre of Lagos is the biggest dumpsite in Africa. Many people work as scavengers, taking apart the e-waste to sell and recycle it. But this is very dangerous work. When you take the equipment apart, it releases harmful metals like lead and mercury. These go into the people, and into the soil and water around the dump. The garbage sites are often burned, with fires often continuing for weeks, and toxic fumes are released into the air.

Another related pollution issue in Nigeria is the pollution from oil. Ogoniland, around the Niger Delta, was one of the most polluted areas on earth, from all the oil extraction and leaks. Luckily, now, after over 50 years of environmental catastrophes, the area is now getting some cleaner water. Activists sued the big oil companies and a clean-up operation has started. Maybe soon, the local people will be able to fish again.

All this explains a little about the background, but it is also very good to bring into class to help students learn English, and care more about big issues like this.

One piece of material I found was a lesson about oil, especially in Ogoniland, on the New Internationalist Easier English wiki:

[https://eewiki.newint.org/index.php?title=READY_LESSON \(for Intermediate learners\) : OIL](https://eewiki.newint.org/index.php?title=READY_LESSON_(for_Intermediate_learners)_:_OIL)

Here is a writing and research lesson I have used on the theme of environmental pollution:

The learners involved were pre-university students of Advanced Subsidiary level English Language. The aspect of the syllabus being implemented was ‘imaginative writing’ during which the learners were required, in one of their tasks, to write a piece called Little Garden conveying a sense decay and desolation. As the question had already dictated the theme of their essay, the students had then to figure out how best to make their essays come alive using appropriate ingredients of content (and style).

After a period of plenary deliberation, they resolved, with the help of their teacher, to actually visit nearby locations (gardens or parks), especially those that had fallen out of favour with the care and love of people within the community. They looked specifically for neglected areas with trees pulled down savagely, or those which had become covered in plastic or other waste materials like bottles and metal scraps. This then birthed a mini research project.

On the field, the students were focused on learning precisely what a neglected or desolate location would look and feel like. To enrich their knowledge, they were encouraged to also visit locations they considered natural or untouched; those that were not used as waste dump areas or where trees had not been cut down. In the process, they investigated the causes and effects of the negligence they saw and how the adverse impact might be corrected. They also made and compared notes, without necessarily changing any information they got.

Armed with the information and experience of the research, the students were equipped with the content with which to write responses on the given topic. This seemingly simple research turned out to be of incredibly huge benefit to the students in two key ways. First, it enhanced their (research and) writing skills, by getting them much more involved in the writing topic. Second, it helped them gain awareness about the risks human activities pose to the environment and the need for a change of attitude.

This short report indicates that with conscious and careful planning, ELT practices do not only ensure students are advancing their English Language skills, but that they are also getting involved in the conversation surrounding global concerns and fostering, in the process, a positive change of attitude towards harmful practices, like destruction of nature, in communities and societies.

Of course, this awareness-raising is only the start. It's great to change attitudes, but what we really need is action. If we share lessons and projects like this with our English-teaching colleagues, and through teaching associations and groups, more students will want to do something about it. I have a dream that I can get enough people together to be able to set up voluntary weekend litter-clearing days, fence-building projects around natural unspoilt areas, and run surveys and questionnaires in the community to raise awareness of litter disposal. 'I have a dream' is where real action and change begins.



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Human rights and punishment: English teachers can help

by Catherine Moto Zeh, CAMELTA, Cameroon

Cameroon is a country in central Africa, a former German colony that, after World War II, was put under the protection of both Britain and France. After its independence in 1960, Cameroon adopted English and French as its two official languages of equal value, spoken by its populations split into ten administrative regions. Cameroon thus inherited two cultural influences making it a bilingual country with eight French speaking regions known as Francophone and two English speaking regions, the South West and North West, known as Anglophone. It also inherited two educational systems in which English and French are compulsory subjects being either the first language or the second language according to one's background or origin.

In Cameroon, there are more female English language teachers than male teachers in both primary and secondary education. In schools found in large cities like Yaoundé, in the Centre region where I am based, Douala in the Littoral and Bafoussam in the West, teachers deal with many challenges most of which are managing overcrowded classrooms and dealing with youngsters whose attitude towards learning is not always the best. They also have to manage discipline. Although UNESCO prescribed a maximum of 60 students per extra-large class, most teachers run classrooms of 90 to 150 students because of government policies that favor inclusion and give opportunities to more families that cannot afford to pay for private education.

English language teachers are trained in higher teacher training colleges. Because of a dire shortage of trained teachers around the country, many university graduates are recruited and sent to classrooms without being trained as first or second language teachers. In-service training is not always offered by the state as there are not enough pedagogic advisers to cover the needs of all English language teachers in the field, especially in remote rural areas. This is where Cameroon English Language and Literature Teachers' Association (CAMELTA) comes in. CAMELTA provides in-service training for teachers by working hand in hand with the government in the ten regions of Cameroon through its regional chapters. It also promotes quality English nationwide, as its motto states, giving teachers opportunities for personal growth and professional empowerment and development through seminars and workshops where old hand teachers share their long experience and best practice with younger ones.

Within the partnership CAMELTA/Public Affairs Office of the US Embassy in Cameroon, we offered two workshops for 25 English language teachers each, in Yaoundé and in Ebolowa in the South region, on the theme 'Teaching English and promoting Human rights'. In discussions with teachers on what their classroom looked like, and if it was a place where they felt safe, the workshop started buzzing and everyone started talking hotly. Most teachers described their classroom as hell in school, a place they wanted to run away from, a community of learners that created

more fear, more tears than smiles. Their reaction to this is, most of the time, shouting at them, scolding, punishing, and dismissing students from their class. On the question of learning more about the teacher-student relationship, it seems more vertical than horizontal, where the teacher remains the master and the student the follower. When I wanted to know how they dealt with their children and whether it was a different situation at home, most opinions revealed the situation was quite similar.

From these challenges, I suggested a few activities within the workshop that aimed at showing the teachers that it was important to use a rights-based approach to their teaching. It was important for teachers to understand that Human Rights were not an abstract and far-fetched concept both at home and in a classroom. As mothers and teachers they should know that a classroom, like a home, is a community in which both the teacher and the learners are all members. If the teacher does not feel like a member of that teaching and learning community, then it will be difficult for her to make herself accepted by the other members of the community who are the students of her class. This will also make it difficult for learning to be effective in that class. Therefore the teacher needs to be accepted first as a human being and second as their teacher.

For a community to run smoothly, its members should get to know one another and set up rules that will ease the organization and the running of that community. It is also necessary to instill respect among the members of this learning community, build up self-confidence, raise self-awareness, use and enhance everyone's talents and capacities and encourage everyone's participation.

Some of the exercises I proposed to them deal with the following issues.

- a. Getting to know one another (greetings and introductions in pairs);
- b. Building up a sense of togetherness and common responsibilities;
- c. Learning self-respect and respect for others;
- d. Exercising rights and obligations and fairness in the classroom;

Since we believe that it is easy to learn by doing, the workshop opens on an activity where each participant has to move to someone he does not know, greet and introduce himself. They both talk to one another and try to know more about one another. At the end each one briefly introduces the new person he has met. Though it's an icebreaker that leads to a more conducive and friendly atmosphere, participants find it easier to talk about their counterpart than themselves in a plenary session. In an English language class the activity can focus on listening and speaking, expressions used to introduce oneself and others, accepted attitudes in respecting privacy and relevant gestures to pay attention to when giving personal information.



Getting to know one another and breaking the ice.

In the next activity, teachers are divided up into three groups to reflect together. Each group has to imagine they are a group of people who found themselves in a no man's land where they had to settle and live as a community. Each group should write down a list of ten rules to be followed by all ten rights that they, as the inhabitants of this new world, have to obey and benefit from. The three groups sort out a group of 30 rules and 30 rights they now have to compare with the articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Findings reveal that all human beings wherever they find themselves, all have basic needs that consist of a set of freedoms and inalienable rights such as the rights to life, to shelter, to protection, to education, to participation etc... In the exercise participants should show how every right is associated to a given obligation and how members of a given community share common responsibilities in protecting and preserving each one's rights.



Teachers' discussion of 'rules'.

As a follow up to that first exercise on “**creating a new world**” , we set a bridge to rules and regulations. The idea is to make teachers understand that, as in any community, the home or the classroom is a community where the teacher and her learners should set up rules and abide by them for life to run smoothly. As the international community sets rules through treaties, covenants for countries to follow, countries vote in laws and regulations for their citizens to obey. Schools, also at their level, set rules and regulations. The teachers and their students should work together to draw up some rules that will ease work and life in the class community, focusing more on what each party should do. Rules should be clearly written out, signed by all the members of the class because is an individual commitment and pasted on a wall or where they can be read by all. The rules listed should be agreed upon by both the teacher and the students and each person must respect them. As an example, if the rule states that everyone should be on time, the teacher must make sure she also abides by the rule. A teacher cannot come to class late and prevent a student that comes after her from entering the classroom. Her decision will therefore be unfair.

This work on class rules fits perfectly into the English language class as we can focus on spelling, punctuation, pronunciation and grammar (the use of modals should/must to express obligation, the imperative form, and prepositions). The teacher should encourage learners to express the rules in a positive form rather than using imperatives that are more authoritative. We know youngsters tend to challenge authority. As an example for class rules it is better to write on the board of rules ‘We must get to school on time; we should not interrupt the teacher’ instead of ‘Don’t come late. Don’t interrupt the teacher.’ We can have an error correction stage where everyone learns about proof-reading and correcting each others’ errors before producing the final version.

An issue that derives directly from applying rules and regulations is punishment. What should be done if one does not respect rules we have commonly agreed on? Generally a list of rules finishes up with punishment: “**If you don’t come to class on time you will be punished**”. The questions we ask teachers from this automatic answer are the following:

- ▶ Should punishment be the first or last solution?
- ▶ When you punish a student what type of punishment do you choose?
- ▶ Are you being fair in your punishment?

Most teachers aim at effective punishment and not fair punishment. They think a child that does not obey rules deserves punishment that is hard enough to make sure they won’t do it again. In a rights- based approach or perspective, we strongly believe things should be done differently. A child or a learner who does not respect the common rules should be called to order first by the teacher and reminded of his commitment to the board of rules. If this does not work, the classmates or the class prefect also should intervene and talk to him/her to improve his/her behavior, because obeying the rules, apart from being a personal responsibility, is also a common

responsibility. A learner that disturbs the teacher also prevents other students from following their lessons and acquiring knowledge. If the teacher gets angry or abandons the class (which is never advisable), all the students are penalized.

What type of punishment to apply? From a case study where a student disturbed the lesson and the teacher decided to remove 5 marks from the student evaluation mark, discussions with teachers were hot. Teachers argue that allocation of marks is the best tool they have at hand to make their students improve and change their behavior. Since they don't want to fail, they will be scared of losing marks and stay cool. But the question of the teacher being fair comes up in terms of **what do you punish? The student's attitude or behavior, or the student's academic output?** How will the fact of losing marks help improve indiscipline and bad behavior? It will instead frustrate the learner and worsen the student/teacher relationship.

A second case described another mode of punishment of a teacher who asked a student to lay flat on the dusty floor outside the classroom. Though this is not officially acceptable, some teachers still apply this type of punishment. Does the teacher have the right to use this type of punishment that is considered inhumane and degrading? The teacher should know it touches the dignity of the child who is also considered as a full human being, no matter some traditional beliefs that may think the contrary. In some tribes children are considered as the sole property of their parents who decide on their fate, and nobody else. A child will never look at his parents in the eyes, he will never reply to any elder who is angry with him; he will never protest even if he is wrongly accused. How would you want an adult who has never been given the opportunity to protest as a child and who has been traumatized all his life to know he has rights and that he can fight for or protect them? One way of ending the activity is by opening a debate on the topic: **What should we teach: tolerance or protest?**



Catherine and other teachers at her Human Rights workshop

That is food for thought for us teachers. The language class is definitely a place where other human rights issues can be discussed such as gender equality, equity and participation, exercising democracy etc. It provides interesting grounds for learning quality English and improving learners' abilities. Many other examples can be given to draw the teachers' attention to personal attitudes that may lead to unjust and unfair treatment when they are not aware of respecting individuals' rights. They need to be trained to using rights-based approaches that instill a shift in the way they think and in the way they handle human beings.



English teachers looking for human rights topics in their students' textbooks.



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Learn English and reduce common illnesses?: Students' commitment in English classes in Cameroon

by Eric Enongene Ekembe, CAMELTA, Cameroon

Global issues have neither received any serious attention in the Cameroonian educational culture nor has the approach to them been able to establish an idea of urgency in the learners - something they MUST learn. That is when learning is understood to cause behavior change. The situation is complicated by the structural syllabus and teacher preparation that orientates teachers to see learning as mastery of the grammar of a language. This has rendered the English language abstract to students who refer to it as a 'God given' language that can never be learned. As part of my work in the CAMELTA Research Group to support teachers to change from traditional practice to learner-centered pedagogies (Ekembe and Fonjong, 2018), I have been working with several other teachers across Africa who are passionate about bringing global issues into English classes, leading on from the pre-conference event at the Africa TESOL conference in Nigeria, August 2019. This write up is a narrative of the project experience in a Cameroonian public secondary school in a typical rural community in the Centre Region - Lycee d'Ekekom - involving learners of age ranging from 14 to 17 years.

Phase One: Planning and generating knowledge with the learners

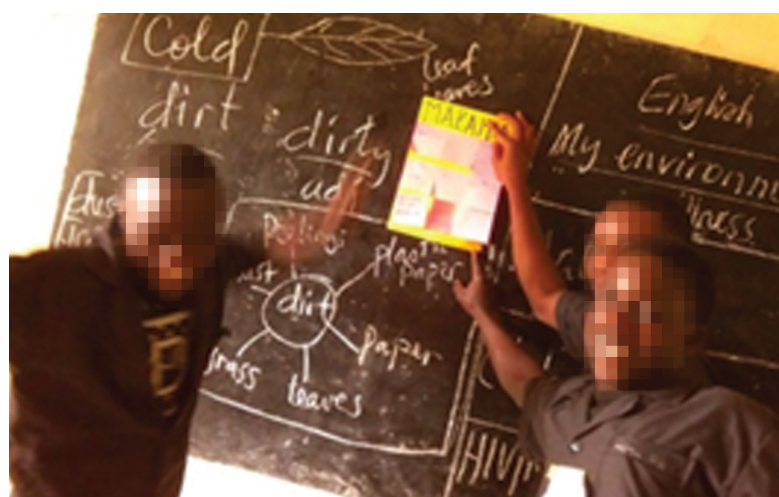
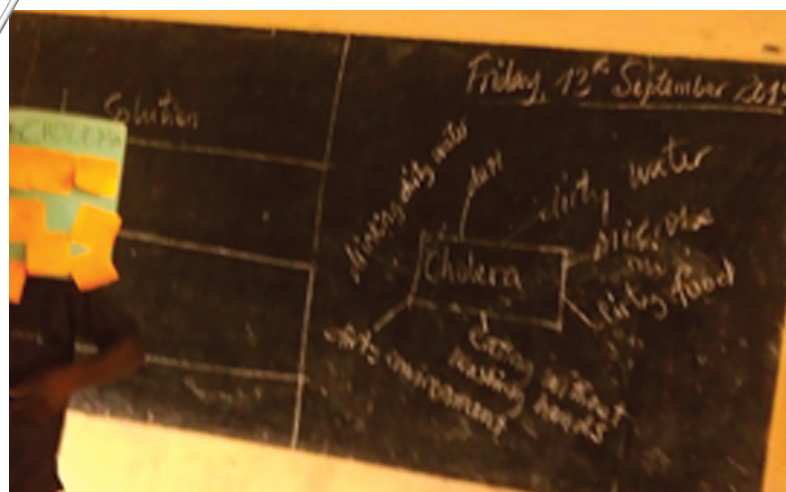
At the beginning of the school year, we had a brainstorming meeting with students during which we agreed we were going to brainstorm and come up with solutions to some of the issues that mostly affected their lives as humans - not as students. This was part of the first contact meeting with the students. The discussion did not appear to present anything related to English language learning despite the fact that our interaction was mainly in English. The organic nature of the discussion cultivated a lot of interest from most of the students as what seemed to be an 'Anglais' class was becoming more related to their concerns. We all agreed to start the project the next lesson with a key assignment for students to go home at the end of the day, study their environment, and bring back to class the most serious environmental and health hazards or anything that posed a crucial challenge to them in their neighbourhoods. In the next lesson, they raised hunger, diseases, poverty, and climate change as major concerns in their neighbourhoods. Faced with the need to be realistic, we agreed we could not handle all of these in five weeks and they voted and settled on the most common diseases that affected them. These included malaria, cholera, and HIV/AIDS.

Identifying the causes of illnesses and learning English elsewhere

The next stage of Phase One was for learners to examine the causes of the illnesses. The majority of them chose to focus on the causes of malaria and cholera while a few worked on AIDS. They were allowed time to brainstorm individually and while they were working, they occasionally beckoned to me to come close to them and tell them the English expressions of words they only

knew in French. I checked with them if they thought it could be a good idea to step outside and see if some of the things they held to be the causes of the illness could be found outside their classrooms and they unanimously agreed. We looked around the classroom block to identify anything that could be the cause of the illnesses they had identified to be common in their environment. The idea here was to gradually let them see how their own actions towards the environment could be the cause of their (health) problems. The agreement was to find anything that could be associated with the illnesses. This far, it was not English; it was content. They identified litter around the school – used and poorly disposed of paper, plastic cartons, bottles, dead leaves from trees around, food remains etc. The greatest challenge they had to deal with was finding the English terms for the waste items they had identified. I had sought consent from a few colleagues and members of staff, including three Vice Principals whose level of English was considered helpful and they assured me they would be supportive. The students were asked to walk up to any of the colleagues and ask for the English expression for the different waste items they had identified. Upon return to the classroom, I asked them to give me the English expressions for what they had found. They gave the words which I wrote on the board around the hyponym ‘dirt’ and provided any English equivalents needed. While I was eliciting information, I noticed they were happy explaining the English expressions they had learnt from their interaction with my colleagues in school to their mates.

Organising learners' vocabulary



Organising learners' vocabulary

Bringing language into content

The waste items written on the board were provided by the students. To make sure they learned the words, I asked them to work individually first to classify the vocabulary items into the causes of different illness before putting them together to work in groups. In groups they assembled the knowledge under the causes of different illnesses. Each group had to work only on one type of illness. See group work in the pictures on Page 54.



Students working in groups

They were provided with sticky notes to write the items on and then paste them on old calendars and cardboard, which I had found lying in the Discipline Master and Vice Principal's offices. They later made oral presentations on what they had done in groups with every group member trying to say a word. For the first time with the students, I discovered they could willingly and fearlessly speak English with no promise of reward or incentives. They shared their experiences about the causes of malaria, HIV/AIDS, cholera and answered questions from their classmates.



Students' group presentations

Immediately after group presentations, I asked them to individually write a minimum of five new expressions they had learnt from the activity and check with their classmates if there was any difference in their lists of newly learnt vocabulary.

Phase Two: Formalising knowledge

It is important to recall that the activities in Phase One of the project were intended to get learners to acquire useful expressions for subsequent activities and equally to reduce tension arising from the 'fear of the God-given' language. I then gave them the text below to read and discuss their talking points. My students generally demonstrate a lot of enthusiasm reading a text aloud. Each time I do reading with them, I make sure they read it aloud in relay before doing silent reading. They replicated the procedure, taking note of points they would want to share with their friends. See text below.

Waste Disposal

Lack of proper solid waste disposal systems has remained a serious problem in many African countries. Disposal in most major cities is usually a matter of transporting the collected waste to the nearest open space and dumping it. In some situations, solid waste disposal like animal waste is ploughed into soil, burnt in the open space, dumped into water or wetlands. Given that poor waste disposal deteriorates land and pollutes the environment (air and water) inhabited by man, people tend to be exposed to many health hazards of different nature, including air and waterborne disease. Not only are human beings exposed to diseases of all sorts, but the community is also likely to suffer the effect of poor waste disposal. For example, when solid waste is dumped carelessly, running water collects it into gutters meant to facilitate drainage. The gutters get blocked and water circulation becomes a problem, sometimes leading to flooding. When the flooded area is cleared of water, the debris becomes a breeding ground for flies, mosquitoes, and rats. These pests transport illnesses of all types from one person to another. Institutional and financial constraints are one of the major reasons for inadequate waste disposal. Most poor households or neighborhoods rely on the private sector for waste collection, which ends up being costly at times. The poorest neighborhoods suffer a lot from this because they are inaccessible to garbage collection services. The consequence is that people have no option but to dump their waste into pits around the house, in nearby streams, or by the roadside.

One of the striking issues that arose from the talking point was the students admitting that the road from their village to school was bad because of waste disposed on the road. When I asked them who was responsible for such acts, they all admitted that they, and their parents, were responsible. I further asked them what they thought could be done to denounce such poor behavior. They suggested it was good to sensitize villagers on the potential dangers of their action. I further inquired how realistic they thought that could be and they said they could talk to village

chiefs (leaders) to send a warning message in village meetings and their parish pastors to give them space to discuss the issue during church services. I asked them about their school and they admitted the waste they had identified in previous lessons attracted the mosquitoes found in their classrooms during the current lesson.

I inquired from them if they were interested in reading any further materials about waste and they all agreed. I asked them to suggest what they think could be the contents of the next text and got the following answers:

- ▶ Effects of waste around
- ▶ Consequence of waste in the classroom
- ▶ Punition to people who are put waste at the house

I taught them selected words from the text (Aspirin, bottles, around, fever, biting, chills, mosquitoes, health worker, unhappy, traditional healer, clinic, water, malaria, prevent, died, headache) after which they were given a cloze text to read and fill in the appropriate word in the spaces. I gave them the complete text extracted from one of the local course materials in use and told them that I had not read it and would like them to read (see text below) and share major points with their bench mates; agree on what to tell me was its contents.

Read the passage and exchange major ideas from the text with your bench mate:

There was a woman called Aissata Ndiaye who sold cans and bottles. All around her yard were cans and bottles with water in them. Aissata Ndiaye's young son was always getting a fever. One day the boy had a terrible headache and a high fever with chills. Aissata Ndiaye went to the store and bought aspirin for the boy, but it did not bring the fever down. So she took him to the traditional healer. Soon after, the boy died. Aissata Ndiaye was unhappy for a long time. She could not understand why the boy had had so much malaria. She thought perhaps the boy was not meant to live. One day she heard about a health worker close to her village. She went and told him about her son's death. So the health worker went with Aissata Ndiaye to her house. When they arrived, mosquitoes were buzzing everywhere because it was late afternoon. The health worker saw the cans and bottles lying around with water in them. And he found little 'summersaulters' (baby mosquitoes) in the water. He showed these to Aissata Ndiaye and told her that mosquitoes biting her son had caused him to get malaria and die. Together they cleaned up her yard. Then he told her she should bring her other children to the clinic every month so they could receive medicine pills to prevent malaria. They became healthier and all were happier.

I had initially prepared guiding questions for this text, but spontaneously decided to allow them to select what constituted major talking points. It took them between seven and ten minutes to start discussing. I let them exchange ideas for some seven minutes before eliciting details to check their comprehension of the text and picked out the following (written exactly the way they said):

- ▶ Illnesses
- ▶ Aissata child die
- ▶ Dirty water of bottles
- ▶ Mosquitoes in Assiata environment
- ▶ Hospital
- ▶ Medication and traditional healer

I let them share their ideas and realized that the questions, which initially had been intended to be guiding comprehension questions, had been discussed naturally in our interaction.

Phase Three: Tasting the potential benefits of the project

In an attempt to check what had been learnt from the project, I asked the students to put away the texts and say any word they remembered from the whole project. They gave me the words, which I wrote on the board and later asked them to classify into categories. I was amazed with the following classifications they made independently.

Vocabulary: Malaria and Health

Healthy	Prevention	Cavosed
Aspirin, Clinic, unhappy	prevent	headache, chills
g. hypoten traditional	health worker	died, mosquitoes
healer, traditional	biting	
healer		

vocabulary

illness	Causes	solution
headache	around	clinic
mosquitoes	chills	aspirin
biting	died	water
fever		bottles
health		traditional
		healer
		prevent

Organising learnt knowledge

I refused to be judgmental and asked them to share their ideas with their mates before letting them independently write what they had learnt from the whole exercise. Below are a few instances of feedback I got from their writing materials:

what I have learned

I learned in the text: The malaria is a very dangerous. It is caused by the mosquito. For any person have malaria go in the clinic.

My I have learned the text is different manifested the malaria of a population. Recently the malaria is a medical environment.

Feedback from engagement

Conclusion

The interest in this narrative has been to give an account of a project that was meant to run for five weeks. The stages reported here covered half of the time and the next phase was intended to be the action plan. A clinical observation in the process was the learners' engagement and commitment in the process. Not only was motivation high but the whole process was fun as can be judged from the pictures below.

These are students who (apart from the school playground) go for five years without getting a word in English and all the English teachers who taught in the school for the past decade got more demoralised than the learners with total blame slammed on learners for their negative attitudes towards English. The same learners commonly noted to show disdain for English were able to express themselves in just seven hours of contact class time with smiles on their faces. This is sufficient justification that the highly structural syllabus and traditional grammar instructions practised across the years is the major cause of learners' negative attitudes towards English. This shows how bringing important local, social and global issues into class can both cause productive learning and responsible behavior in the learners' worlds.



Fun on the job

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Weeding out the weed: How the English language lesson can become a clarion call against drugs in the school milieu

by Fadidac Jules, ATA, Cameroon

Substance abuse in the general population and secondary school students continues to be a matter of concern. Recent happenings in Cameroon secondary schools sent shock waves through the education community. A 14-year-old student stabbed his teacher to death. The next day, a student cut off the finger of his classmate. In 2019, it was a student that stabbed another to death while another died from a drug overdose. In the weeks following these acts, many school authorities embarked on a routine search of students' school bags before letting them into schools. The findings were shocking: all types of abusive substances, knives, blades, sharp objects. These gruesome incidents, which are the consequences of drug abuse in the school milieu, are not only characteristics of Cameroonian schools. The phenomenon has become a global issue. Almost every city in the world has horrible stories of drug abuse and its nefarious consequences on youth at school age. **The Report on Drug Use in the Americas 2019** reveals that "in the general population, cannabis use is increasing in most countries that have trend data, and about half the countries show increases in cocaine use. In the secondary school population, most countries with trend data available are showing increases in cannabis use". According to the **World Drug Report 2017**, there is a minimum of 190,000 drug related deaths caused mostly by overdose and opioids. Following the events in Cameroon, education stakeholders, especially teachers, reacted differently as to the causes of this problem, the people responsible for this situation, and the relevance of educational policies. In the heat of the debate that followed these events, very little was said about how these issues could be tackled by stakeholders who are not directly involved in matters related to students' behaviour and social development. Poor home upbringing, the ineffectiveness of the discipline departments of these schools, school counsellors and administrators were under the spotlight.

A cheater, not a teacher

As I listened to the unfolding debate and the finger pointing between various stakeholders, I pondered over my role as an English language teacher in tackling this issue. How do I lend my voice to that of the entire education community to help learners navigate through the dangers of drug abuse in society? Is it really my business? Why should I care? Shouldn't it be the responsibility of parents to teach their children about drugs?

Integrating global issues in the creative English language classroom: With reference to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, (British Council, 2017, p. 4), clearly captures the paradox of the English language teacher and English language teaching. In a brief but instructive conversation between a teacher and an anonymous speaker about what the role of the language teacher should be, here is what both have to say about the content of English language classes:

Anonymous speaker: “Maybe you should stick to language, forget about anguish.
You can’t change the world.

English teacher: “But if I did that, I’d be a cheater, not a teacher.”

The opinion of the anonymous person about what the role of the language teacher should be brings to the limelight the paradox of language teaching - traditionally understood to be the teaching of rules and norms. Should the language teacher just mind his/her business of teaching the rules and norms of a language?

The English language classroom is a key medium to integrate cross-disciplinary content. Unlike other school subjects that are content-specific and strictly defined, teaching English provides more flexibility to teachers and learners to explore diverse issues and realities. This is where it becomes more interesting and very practical to integrate debates and discussions on drug consumption and its adverse effects on the population in general and youths in particular.

As Wilga Rivers (1976) points out “As language teachers we are the most fortunate of teachers - all subjects are ours. Whatever (the students) want to communicate about, whatever they want to read about, is our subject matter.” This is where the much talked about communicative approach to language teaching can exploit theme-based instruction in order to make the teaching and learning of English an enjoyable and rewarding experience. Students’ experiences and stories about drug consumption and its consequences provide a wealth of information to make up the content and themes through which learning can be organized. This will result in learners learning the language and at the same time using the language to advocate for a drug-free school and community.

Prevention is better than cure

According to the “Report on Drug Use in the Americas 2019”, the “Use of any psychoactive substance - including alcohol and tobacco - among secondary school students should be a matter of concern for any country and **underscores the need for preventive interventions beginning in early childhood**”. That underscores the need to make hay while the sun shines. The heart-breaking stories about people losing their lives to drugs could be prevented if more awareness is created, even in the English classroom too!

A lesson on the negative form can result into the production of “No” slogans against the proliferation of drugs in the school milieu and in the society. It can lead to a wake-up call for students to watch out against drug consumption. For example, I had a reading session with Première (11th Grade) students of Government Bilingual High School Down Town, Bamenda-Cameroon. We did some revision on the negative and form and I asked the students to do the following activity:.

Step 5: Walking the talk!

(This is the last step of a reading lesson on drugs in the school milieu which included the revision of the negative form).

The class was organized in 3 groups of 7 students each.

- Work together and come up with slogans against substance abuse and its effects on students using the negative form as much as possible.
- Make a poster/posters with your slogans.
- The poster(s) with the most creative ideas and presentation will be pasted in the class.

The results were amazing. This was a great opportunity to integrate listening, speaking and writing skills. The activity gave them room to voice their opinions and to come up with some great slogans against drug consumption. I was amazed by what they know about this topic and their various experiences. The image below is the production of a group of students.



A lesson on types of sentences with focus on the declarative type can provide the learners with the opportunity to learn not only the grammatical aspect of the sentence, but its functional aspect as well. They may be asked to come up with some strong declarations or commitment that will create awareness about the dangers of drugs. This is the time to state facts and opinions about the nature of the problem and its devastating effects on youth and the general population.

For example: I used an extract from the following text “Cancer Drug Manifesto of the Institute of Cancer Research” taken from <http://www.icr.ac.uk/about-us/policy-and-engagement/cancer-drug-manifesto> to teach declarative sentences. After moving from meaning, pronunciation and form, I gave this activity to the learners as a home project.

The final Manifesto produced by the students with some input on style from me.

Activity: Practice Makes Perfect

Think about the current events making headlines in our schools across the country. A student died from drug overdose. Another student, under the influence of drugs stabbed the teacher to death.

- ❖ Discuss how you reacted to these events and come up with resolutions that will guide your attitude towards drugs on campus.
- ❖ Use declarative sentences to write a manifesto.
- ❖ Discuss your ideas as a class and decide on the final manifesto

ANTI-DRUG MANIFESTO

- ❖ We, the students of Premiere in Government Bilingual High School Down Town, Bamenda, express our concern regarding the dangerous presence of drugs in the school milieu and its toll on students.
- ❖ We are aware that the problem is real.
- ❖ We are conscious of our responsibility in fighting against it.
- ❖ We pledge to be part of the solution and not part of the problem.
- ❖ We pledge to avoid peer pressure in all its forms.
- ❖ We pledge to encourage and not to shame our friends suffering from drug addiction.
- ❖ We pledge to report all drug dealers in school to school authorities.
- ❖ We proclaim a drug-free G.B.H.S Down Town

The interrogative sentence can lend its voice to evaluation and reflective thinking. This is the right moment for learners to ask about the why, the when and the how of drug consumption. A learning activity based on the interrogative form can become an eye opener to learners about their individual responsibility in stamping substance abuse out of the school milieu and in the society.

For example, I used the situational approach to teach the interrogative form. The real-life situation was the killing of a teacher by a student who acted under the influence of drugs. Questions needed to be asked about the possible motives and reasons for taking drugs. The interrogative form provided the forum for learners to probe deeper into the issue and to ask tough and intriguing questions about the present state of affairs.

In order to push the discussion further while keeping my role as the English Language teacher, I gave them the following activity:

Activity: Playing the detective

Work in two groups: A and B

- Group A: you represent education stakeholders (government, teachers, parents, and the society). Brainstorm questions about substance abuse that you will ask members of Group B. Think about questions that may be asked by Group B and look for possible answers.
- Group B: you represent education students (those affected by the decisions of members of Group A). Brainstorm questions about the role of Group A in the fight against drug consumption. Think about questions that may be asked by Group A about your reasons for consuming drugs and look for possible answers.

In conclusion, without expression, action is dead. Action can only be alive if expressed. It can only be expressed if given the appropriate language. The English classroom is that appropriate place to provide the language needed to voice our concerns about issues affecting today's learners both on the local and the global stage. It is possible to blend the teaching of language rules and the experiences of the learners. They are more interested when language is given flesh with topics that affect their local context and the world at large.

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Rural women learn about sustainable development from learners of English

by Justine Okomo Allogo, GATE, Gabon

Gabon is a central African country astride the equator. Its hot and humid climate strongly influences all human activities. French is the official language, and English is taught as a foreign language in secondary education. Gabon also has more than 40 local languages among a population of 1.8 million inhabitants on about 268,000 square kilometres.

Gabon is covered by a green, thick forest, probably its most valuable asset. The western part is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean and there are several large rivers running through the forest to the ocean. There is rich flora and fauna and abundant species that must be protected for the survival of future generations, for example the sun-tailed monkey that only lives here. We need to protect all this, as stated in the UN Sustainable Development Goals 14 and 15 ('life below water' and 'life on land'). One thing the government has done is create thirteen national parks to look after various species and stop them going extinct.



However, what is striking and alarming is that a large percentage of the population seem unaware of the vital importance of managing the ecosystem well. We thought we could do something about that through English teaching.

Language teachers and biology teachers have been working together to help protect the environment. This is so important for our people, and for the future. We have had training sessions, run by experts, sponsored by the government and supported by our English Teachers' Association GATE, including brainstorming activities, looking at relevant vocabulary to describe the problems and solutions, debates, and practice at problem-solving.

I was lucky to be one of those English teachers involved, and learnt a great deal at these training sessions. The trainers were ELT managers in some high schools in Libreville and in a few others in the hinterland.

Afterwards, all the teachers took these ideas into class and used the same methods: brainstorming, vocabulary teaching, debates and problem-solving, to help the students to become more aware of the problems and solutions. This brings a lot of creative ideas into the English language classes.

Some schools have English clubs, for example in Bessieux, Djoue, Dabany, Indjendjet, Ngondjou and Léon Mba, where students design small projects in order to sensitize parents and other residents about dangers, risks and even legal proceedings related to the destruction of the biodiversity. They make posters and sometimes questionnaires to see how much people know. The students then go and talk to as many people as possible: their families, neighbours, and people in the community, about the danger of fire, poaching, destroying the mangroves, cutting trees and leaving plastic and other rubbish around. They come back to the English clubs and discuss what they have found out.

Here are a couple of examples of topics we have covered, part of the learners' campaign in rural areas.

- a. This is the mangrove, and a story from the newspaper about how companies have been cutting it for wood and people have been cutting the mangroves for charcoal:



The mangrove is very important, as the roots are very dense, and it protects the coastline and makes it more stable, and stops erosion. There are also many fish and small animals that live in the mangroves. It is an ecosystem, and if we destroy it, there will be a lot of problems for the people and the environment. The news story is about a company, ANUTTC that is trying to stop people destroying the mangrove.

b. Fishing: too many of the fish have been poisoned or killed in other ways, so they have introduced a ban on fishing. We discussed with the students what happens when companies, or individuals, take too many fish at once, or when fish die from chemicals in the water. We need to protect our biodiversity, or we will not have food in the future.



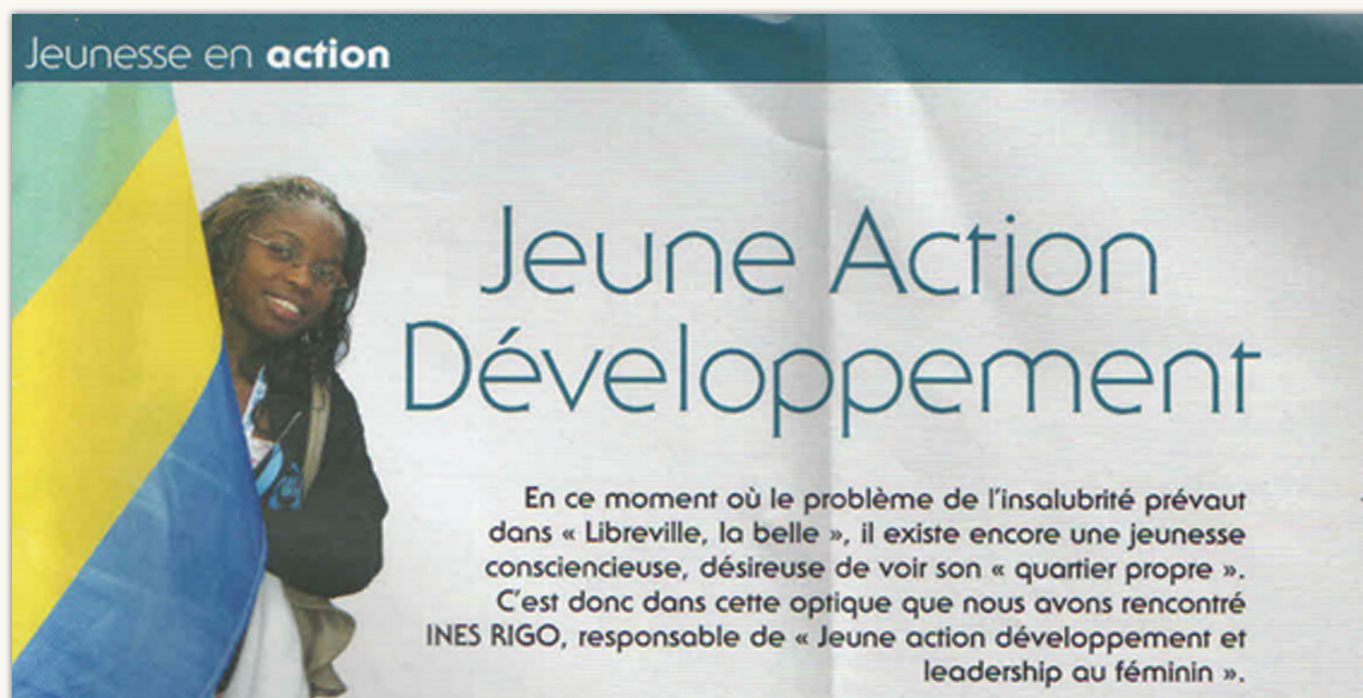
Through working with these important issues, we have seen people's awareness grow and their critical thinking develop. We have been able to introduce the concept of sustainability, specifically to rural women in Gabon, through working with these topics with their children.

Especially in rural areas, people have been living in the same way for many years. They have been cutting the mangrove, killing a lot of fish and other animals, and poaching. The people do not really want to change, mostly because they are not aware of the consequences of what they are doing. When few people used to do these things in the past, it wasn't so bad. But now, with more and more people destroying the environment, we need to protect it. But it is difficult to get rid of age-old habits and routines the tribes have carried out for a long time.

However, thanks to these campaigns on the importance of the biodiversity and sustainable development, rural women with low literacy levels can now understand the long-term problems and consequences of these actions. Once they understand, they change, and we notice their pride in learning from their own children. Young learners, from our English and biology classes, are bringing a change in their social areas and are building a true citizenship in the country.

This is a good example of successful continuing professional development for teachers with a clear outcome. Teachers now understand that English can be a tool to carry out the objectives set by Gabon authorities. The language is one of our human abilities that we use to communicate with others and understand each other in society. We must take advantage of this when teaching English, and work towards important goals for our country.

Here is a third example of a project that we have worked on with English classes: how rubbish can make people unhealthy. This is one of the campaigns that worked to make young people aware of the problems, and it was specifically working with young female leaders to make whole communities aware, and change their habits with rubbish and cleaning up the local areas.



As Franklin D. Roosevelt said: 'We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.'

To summarise, I feel that it can be very fruitful for everyone to teach global issues in our English classes, fruitful for the students, the parents, the teachers and the communities. We need more training in our teaching associations to build the confidence of teachers and show them more practical ways in class that they can discuss these topics with the students and do project work to spread the ideas.

If we do this, we will be doing two very important things: teaching the English language, and also protecting the biodiversity of Gabon and our future.



Justine Okomo Allogo, GATE member, ELT trainer in Gabon, has participated at Hornby Regional Schools (Gabon and Ethiopia) and has been a presenter at the AfricaTesol conference in Abuja, Nigeria. She also represented Gabon in Japan in the Jica friendship meeting.

Silent thoughts about litter - the silent environmental killer

by Heziwell Mhunduru, NETA, Namibia

It is just a piece of paper. Trash. It is just rubbish. I do not need it and I guess nobody else will need it. It has outlived its usefulness for me hence it does not belong anywhere else. It belongs either nowhere or in the trash can and it will be thrown away and life goes on....or so I think. For how long will life go on after I have thrown away the litter? Is litter **disposal** - an issue to think about? How often do we stop and think before or after throwing away litter in its various forms? What are its various forms? How can litter possibly affect us in towns, at the farm, in the villages or in school? How can litter possibly affect animals, both wild and domestic? How can it affect flora and fauna? Aquatic life? How does litter thrown away a decade ago affect me today and how can the litter I throw away today possibly affect anyone a decade from today? Namibian litter for Namibians.

Now I am getting a bit curious? We have **bio-degradable** material, oils and plastic. What **constitutes** bio-degradable waste and what constitutes oils and plastic? How do companies dispose of these and where? So is litter an issue for the individual, family, community, industry and commerce? Does my municipality, district or county say anything about litter? Does litter in any way concern my religious community? We have so many gatherings within a year and now, come to think of it - where do we put all the left-overs? The plastic plates, spoons and knives that we use? The grocery shops are quite decent and they will not allow us to hold our groceries item by item. They always **insist on** safely and properly packaging everything in as many plastic bags as possible. Indeed it is **decent**. Nevertheless, how can something so right be so wrong? But they differ though. Some pack and charge for the plastic bags. Are they simply **miserly** and business-minded or do they have **ulterior motives**?



The other day at Swakopmund beach, there were so many items floating and being washed ashore. There were even plastic bags and cutlery **strewn all over** the beach from the previous night's **simultaneously** held Independence Day parties. Lucky me, I even picked up a camera washed ashore and it only needed some washing to remove the **slimy** feel - otherwise, I'd found a good toy. The rotten stuff in some of the plastic bottles gave off a **pungent** smell and we had to quickly change base. Did the floating stuff accidentally fall into the sea? I am sure nobody would just throw away such beautiful gadgets with little sign of aging. The sea. The ocean. If it had a **discernible** language, what would it be saying to us? I am sure human activity, in one way or the other is suffocating it. Suffocating? Does the sea breathe? Oil spills, gun battles and industrial garbage. I wish the sea could talk.

Litter. So what do we do with the stuff that we no longer need? Should we be forced to keep it? What disposal methods can we use? But wait - is litter really an issue? Doesn't the earth **ingest** and digest litter? What becomes of the earth after those processes? Is there legitimate littering and illegitimate? The refuse site; refuse dump. Site sounds more respectful but why the fuss about names? Mere **euphemism**. Whether legal or illegal, of what **consequence** is that to the earth, flora and fauna? Human interference; or is it **intervention**? When is it interference and when is it intervention? For humans or for the **eco-sphere**?

Reduce, re-use, recycle. It must not just be an **adage**. Remember, whatever we do to the web of life we do to ourselves.



We English teachers are not and should not be slaves to the textbook. We have numerous texts at our disposal where contemporary topics are discussed hence we have a huge opportunity to raise awareness about the topic of litter, and many other important topics, by bringing them into class. In NETA (The Namibian English Teachers' Association), we all agree that we are very well placed to do this, and we try to share teaching materials and ideas. Below are some of the ideas I have come up with for using and exploiting the text above about litter:

1. Use it as a simple reading and vocabulary task:

Before reading the article below, just look at the **title** and see if you can **predict** what the article is about.

Skim through the text to establish the **gist** of the article.

Scan the text for unfamiliar words and look them up in the dictionary.

Which of the words in bold are you familiar with? Do they carry the same meaning in the text? Try to work out the meanings of all the words in bold by studying the context in which they have been used. Afterwards, look them up in the dictionary.

2. Use it as a speaking task to discuss the photos and use the vocabulary:

Study the pictures and pick out words from the text that describe them.

3. Use the text and photos to discuss topics of local, social or global importance

In Namibia, the prisoners or inmates at correctional centres are, at times, told to pick litter up as community service, a form of punishment. Even at most schools, litter picking is reserved for the offenders. (Is it the same at your school?) What message do you think that sends to the child observing this? What is the general perception about garbage collectors?

4. Integrate video, listening and creative speaking tasks related to the text - you could get students in pairs to imagine they are the ocean, imagine the ocean could talk, and prepare a short talk. Students could perform their versions of the ocean talking, then watch this short video by Conservation International:

www.conservation.org/nature-is-speaking/harrison-ford-is-the-ocean

They will probably love the video and want to watch some of the others about other aspects of nature: www.conservation.org/nature-is-speaking

5. Use it to develop skills work in the context of raising awareness about the topic:

Discuss these questions in small groups, then write the summary and essay:

1. How is Namibian (or any other country's) litter NOT necessarily for Namibians only?
2. In the article it is written: "Some pack and charge for the plastic bags. Are they simply **miserly**, business-minded or do they have **ulterior motives**?" What then, could be their ulterior motive?
3. Explain the personification in 'the sea suffocating.'
4. Read the passage again and write a summary about some forms of litter, some sources of litter and litter disposal methods as reflected in the article. Your summary should not be more than 150 words in length.

5. Write an informative essay entitled **The pros and cons of litter disposal methods**. Your essay, which should be between 350-500 words, should have a clear introduction, body and conclusion. The paragraphs should have clear topic sentences, developing/supporting sentences and concluding sentences.

Some comments about how my students have reacted to some of these tasks

For my students, litter awareness was a revelation. That litter makes the floor dirty was a given but the other far-reaching consequences of litter gave them a reality shock. The importance of careful consideration when it comes to litter disposal became an important issue to the majority of them. They then suggested what they called a “Cleaning Campaign” to be conducted monthly. The nearby municipal trash bins have clear labels eg glass, plastic, and litter is separated into categories. For my students, it was amazing to discover that paper juice containers are considered plastic because of the thin veil of plastic coating! They were incentivized to research more about litter. I am sure that the Conservation International videos where the ocean etc are personified will concretize some of the perceptions they now have on the environment already. I strongly suspect that with the interest this topic has aroused in them, their careers are already determined.

I am studying for a PhD, with a thesis on ecocriticism, so it is very rewarding to be able to share my passion, interests and knowledge with students, and with teachers via our English teaching association, NETA. I hope to produce and share many more similar lesson ideas!



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Trapped in a silent world of struggle: inclusive education in South Africa – a noble dream still unfulfilled

by Nelda Opperman KZNELTA (KwaZulu-Natal English Language Teaching Association),
South Africa (Edited by Thuli Mbanjwa Chairperson, KZNELTA)

According to Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education (2014), no learner may be excluded based on limited cognitive or physical disability from any classroom at any full-service school. Struggling learners, whether the struggle is due to cognitive or physical barriers, must become part of an inclusive educational system i.e. the general classroom in which the ideal is that they will be equipped to negotiate their problem(s) successfully. Teachers are expected to develop fully functional, independent human beings that could contribute economically and socially to their immediate society. Teachers are also required to apply and accommodate curriculum differentiation in a sensitive way in order to respond to the needs of these learners without sacrificing the opportunities for learners with no barriers to excel. It requires that teachers modify, change, adapt and extend teaching methodologies, assessment practices and create an all-inclusive learning environment. (SIAS 2014:8). From experience, I must admit that the reality in the classroom is unfortunately very different from what this policy suggests.



The Land Service Movement of Richards Bay High- they did an outreach for learners of the Madiba Disabled Centre and supplied them with basic resources. This stands under the leadership of Miss Annelie Craig.

By definition of the Screening, Assessment and Support (hereafter SIAS) document of the Department of Basic Education (hereafter DoBE), 2014, the school where I teach is regarded as a full-service school, i.e. a school that is equipped to accommodate all learners despite diverse, often problematic backgrounds, cultures or disabilities. The main task is to promote participation in all aspects of the normal educational process. Policies and practices should be set in such a way that learners with barriers as well as

learners without barriers could develop to their fullest potential within the limits of their own abilities. Yes, it all sounds very formal and “not so difficult, right?” however, dealing with classes of 38-42 learners, learners with barriers are falling through the cracks and we are losing generations of special people with so many talents due to lack of time and content-loaded curriculum. Added to that is the negative labelling attached to so many of our learners that really struggle, and they

become trapped in a world of silent suffering and loss. Many lash out because they are trapped in a situation where they need to escape from the demands that are made. As teachers we ask the question why school violence is spinning out of control and we do not see the brokenness in front of us. The picture is bleak indeed, but I want to share with you a story that shows anything is possible if you are a dedicated teacher who is not only doing a job, but also following what you feel is a calling. **For the purposes of privacy, the name of the real individual I had the honour and privilege to work with, has been changed.**

Three years ago, I taught a special young man with the name of Carel. He has Spina Bifida Myelomeningocele, a genetic birth abnormality with devastating results in Carel's case. In Grade 8, he still had, with the help of strenuous walking aids, a way of moving from point A to B. Although our school is classified as a full-service school, it consists of three buildings, each 3 storeys high. However, it was the only school available to this young man. It was amazing, how the



This was taken by a drone camera and gives an aerial view of our school.

other students, many of whom had disabilities or learning difficulties themselves, came to Carel's aid. They carried his bag, and made sure his notes were organised if he missed school during times of severe illness.

In Grade 10, his condition worsened so badly, that in Grade 12, he was dependent on a wheelchair and a catheter. He lost complete control of his bladder and bowel movements. Once again, it was the other students with difficulties, the so-called non popular, often bullied children, who never hesitated for one moment to come to his aid and save him from the ridicule and prejudice of the "popular kids" at our school. They continuously carried the wheelchair and Carel, (always laughing out loud) to the third floor. No effort was too much. Some days one could see the severe exhaustion and pain in his face, but when we asked him how he was, there was always a mischievous smile and not once any complaint.

As a teacher, I realised, we are not in the class to teach only the bright ones. They are more than able to do it for themselves. We are there for children like Carel. That is what really makes it a "calling" and not just a day job. Carel suffered from chronic infections, his eyesight worsened during

the last year and we had to enlarge the print of his exam papers. It was a bureaucratic nightmare to get all his paperwork in so that the department could allow him to write a special exam, get extra time and that his catheter could be changed during the exam, but yes - it was a team-effort of all the role players, and despite the fact that there was no support from the DoE, Carel passed Grade 12 well. Unfortunately, in South-Africa at present, the corporate environment often condemns these learners, that conquered many Everest peaks, to be incompetent beings, and few people or organisations are willing to offer a job opportunity to such a learner.

In my humble opinion, it should be one of the focus areas of the language teachers' associations to help teachers (and the world outside) to understand the important role of honouring diversity in all aspects and that special needs children are often the ones that could really be a pillar of strength to fellow classmates and in bigger companies. The question might be, but how?

Because Carel could not participate in any sport, he loved to do drama and even offered one time to be a court jester. He excelled because he could really identify the prejudice of people towards him and convert all that negative energy into something positive. Many people (even the bullies) quickly changed their opinion about the courage of this young man. Yes, Carel stood out in every way.



The whole land service movement pledging to serve all learners in need.

However - this is not where the story ends. What about those learners that struggle with less severe problems, like speech defects or basic language barriers because the system of an additional language, which is mainly English, was not successful while they were at primary school, especially in previously disadvantaged communities in South

Africa? Current language policies promote Home Language Education from Grades 1-3 and teachers should gradually introduce these young learners to the language of learning and teaching, which is often English, in most schools.

Do we as teachers even realise that some learners sit in front of us with serious deficits in this area? Some teachers who don't understand learning difficulties and have no training even call the students names like dumb or plain stupid. The faster peers laugh at them and don't understand

the difficulties, and in the end, many learners end up in the high school, enormously frustrated, angry and at a loss for words.

On the other hand, in defence of teachers, their morale is at an all-time low; they feel despondent and struggle with excessive workloads, ill-disciplined learners and hostile parents.

KZNELTA is new. We have just launched our association recently, but one of the focus points will be to cross these barriers and equip our learners and teachers to excel and to be confident in English. Therefore, Inclusive Education is one of the main points on our agenda and the improvement of communicative English an ideal.



Our hands together, create unity and strength.

Alice Wellington Rollins, an American author said that, "...the test of a good teacher is not how many questions or what he can ask his pupils that they will answer readily, but how many questions he inspires them to ask that he finds hard to answer."

This could be the ideal of every English Language Teachers' Association, to inspire the right questions, to love our children not because of what they are, but what we become because of them. Let us always remember; the end goal is to open the silent rooms of their minds, to equip, to empower and to give their tongues English wings to conquer the world.

(For reasons of confidentiality, names have been changed).



Nelda Opperman is treasurer of KZNELTA and has been a teacher of dramatic arts, music and English for 34 years. She is now acting Head of Department at Richards Bay High School. She has many qualifications in teaching, social work and psychology and is passionate about learners with special needs and the therapeutic value of music.

Girls dropping out of school in Mozambique

by Praxedes Rosina Padina da Costa, MELTA

At the beginning of the year there are often 50 students in a class, half girls. At the end of the year, more than half the girls might have dropped out.

This number of girl drop-outs is a very big problem in Mozambique mainly in the central and northern part of the country and more in the rural areas.

Why do many girls drop out of school? The high number of teenage girls (10 to 15 years old) in the communities who are not in school, married, or mothers of children, has led many different public and private organisations like the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Community Development Foundation (CDF), Learning Centre and Civil Society Capacity Building (CESC) to carry out surveys to find out what is behind the drop-outs and how this problem can be minimised or eliminated.

Most of the reported results state that many drop-outs are caused by or related to:

a. Poverty vs domestic labour Many girls drop out of school because of poverty, hunger etc. They are likely to be exposed to hard work or work as domestic servants in order to help feed themselves and their families. Girls often stay home to take care of younger siblings and bear the main burden of housework. While educating a boy is considered a sound investment, it is sometimes considered to be a waste of time for girls.

b. Child marriage and early pregnancies Getting married earlier is seen as a higher priority than education. The low value attached to girls' education means few other options are available to them. Most girls get married before the age of 18. After getting married they leave the education system and in this marriage they get pregnant.

Many don't return after giving birth due to school rules. All those who become pregnant have to go to night school. This is to discourage early pregnancies and encourage them to concentrate on school. Other reasons for not continuing at school are: stigma, fees, lack of child care and the unavailability of flexible school programmes. In some areas Mozambique lacks schools. The few schools available are located at a distance and sometimes at a centre of the community to be accessible to everyone.

c. Social norms/ culture and beliefs/gender roles Extended family members may influence parents on the value of educating girls, not always with positive outcomes. Schooling decisions may also depend on household composition and the activities of other children. Being the first daughter lessens a girl's chances of going to school as they are expected to help their mother at home during the day (washing dishes, fetching firewood in the bush, pounding, looking after the young ones, helping in the field, because most families depend on subsistence farming). Often, girls are marginalized and are out of school simply because they are girls and it is a cultural norm.

Their chances of getting quality education are even smaller if they come from a poor family, live in a rural area or have a disability.

Girls are four times more likely to be out of school than boys because parents have in mind that a girl will get married and the husband will look after her. A boy has to fight to look after the family, so, priority is given to him. There are often legal, religious and traditional practices that discriminate against girls having the chance to get an education.

For example, in Mozambique, girls more often than boys are responsible for gathering water and helping their mothers with household chores; which means that they can spend most of their time every day collecting water. Sometimes they walk distances of six to ten kilometres hunting for water and sometimes fetch water that can risk their health. Since many people fetch water in the same area, the queue is long. So they have to wait their turn. By the time they return, it's almost time to go to school. If they arrive late, they can't go to school. The more often they miss lessons, the bigger the chance they will drop out. This far too often means that they are forced to drop out of school because they can't get these chores done and attend classes. In some cases, when they are able to complete their chores and still get to school, they are tired and focusing on school work is an even bigger challenge.



Coming from a distant area to fetch water.



Fetching water that is unsuitable for consumption.

d. Poor learning outcomes, failure at examinations and school fees Generally, most schools in rural areas are very poor in quality and lack teaching and learning resources. This situation leads to poor quality of education. Most children complete primary education without learning to read and write well. Despite these schools not charging fees, most of the parents in the communities complain about the high cost of uniforms, transport, lunches etc. Most parents in the communities don't have regular monthly paid jobs and because of the high costs of school fees in some schools and enrolment fees, too many girls are left behind because funding is targeted to boys' education. Education for girls is the lowest budget priority in many African countries.

Girls are perceived to be less valuable once educated and less likely to abide by the will of father, brother or husband (as a norm in Africa a women should be submissive to the man so men think that once the woman is educated, she will stop respecting the man). Often male siblings will be given the chance to attend school instead so as to safeguard the cultural norms and customs. People in the rural areas due to lack of education (the majority are illiterate) don't know that, by educating girls and young women to the same level as boys, they are increasing productivity and contributing to economic growth of the country. It a very big challenge for the country to educate the members of the community about the importance of sending girls to school.

Poor learning outcomes influence their performance in the examinations. Once they fail the end of year examination in the last class, in this case grade seven, twice in primary school, they are not allowed to repeat the class again. So they lose interest in studying because they are not productive. They drop out and choose marriage rather than school.

e. Distance from and to school and availability of secondary schools Most schools in rural areas are located very far from the communities and in some areas there are no secondary schools at all. Due to this situation, most parents are unwilling to allow their daughters to walk long distances of three hours to school or take routes that could be dangerous to their lives including sexual abuse.

Actions being taken by the government of Mozambique to reduce the number of girls dropping out of school:

- a. In 2018 the Mozambique government introduced the New National Education System of nine years of basic education, no school, exam or enrolment fees and they will give textbooks for free. Before these reforms, most families had priority for boys to go to secondary education. But now, the 1st cycle of 3 classes (grade 7 to 9) in secondary education is free;
- b. Promoting community involvement in school through debates with the participation of parents to ensure access to education for all girls and to keep them at school;
- c. Through trained agencies (teachers and teacher training trainers, technicians from the Ministry of Education), disseminate information about the risks behind child pregnancy and marriages in order to ensure that child rights, sexual and reproductive rights are respected;
- d. Increase the number of teachers in primary and secondary schools who can work in the communities bringing positive models of girls as a way of eliminating early marriages; these teachers, mostly female, can easily communicate with girls and are known in community and school for their good behaviour. Through them girls can be persuaded to continue at school.

- e. Provide information for the school councils about school management, children rights, protection and participation to ensure a safe and protected school environment so that they can work with girls and ensure their hygiene and avoid drop outs, pregnancies and marriages, because the people who encourage young girls to lose interest in school come from the community and they are known by the community. Working with them will be one of the solutions.
- f. Improve the quality of education through ensuring good education professionals, good teacher training facilities, student-centred learning especially about gender issues.
- g. As Mozambique is a poor country, most families live three hours from school making it difficult to keep students at school until the last subject or minute of class. So the government has introduced school lunch in some schools with the help of some private organisations and is encouraging school administrators to practise school agriculture to ensure sustainability of the lunch programme. Most children leave school early because of hunger. If volunteers from the community do the cooking, this lunch will not cost anything.



Pictures showing school lunch at a primary school in the province of Sofala the central part of Mozambique. Carried out by PRONAE (National Programme of School Lunch) together with WFP (World Food Programme).

Mozambique English Language Teachers Association (MELTA) is a new association. It was registered in October 2019 and has already agreed to started working on the issue of stopping girls dropping out of school. This year, in March 2020, the association is holding a general assembly where many actions will be discussed.

We plan to support the government initiatives above, especially c, e and f. We can prepare simple English texts about many of the subjects and get students to read them in class and discuss the ideas. They can then discuss them with their families. We can also prepare bilingual (Portuguese and English) fact sheets on various important topics to distribute to schools for students and their parents. Finally, we can organise training sessions for English teachers, for example as part of our annual national conference, on what we can do to stop girls dropping out of school. Hopefully, with all our efforts, we can help reduce this.



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Challenges faced by students with hearing impairment in regular schools of Mozambique

by Derreck Mafelanjala, MELTA, Mozambique

This article focuses on the challenges faced by students with hearing impairment in regular schools of Mozambique. It presents different practices that facilitate the inclusion of hearing-impaired students in regular schools and the contribution of the Mozambican English Teachers Association (MELTA) in the inclusion of students with hearing impairment. Mozambique has about 300,000 deaf people, but as the country is still recovering from a civil war, there are not enough support structures. There are only three schools in the whole country that are dedicated to teaching deaf children and all the others are in regular schools.



Hearing impairment (HI)

In this article, hearing impairment is defined as a condition where an individual is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing. This condition is referred to as a hidden disability because it is not visible unlike other types of disabilities such as visual impairments or physical impairment which are clearly identifiable (IDEA, 2004). In addition, the severity of a hearing impairment is measured by the amount of sound that can be heard using one's better ear and this is measured using decibels (dB). It is categorized into four types: mild hearing impairment where the minimum sound that can be heard is between 25 and 40 dB, moderate hearing impairment where the minimum sound that can be heard is between 40 and 70 dB, severe hearing impairment where the minimum sound that can be heard is between 70 and 95 dB and profound hearing impairment where the minimum sound heard is 95 dB and over (WHO, 2012). Furthermore, hearing loss can be caused by a number of factors including; heredity (genetics), aging, loud sound exposure, diseases and infections, trauma (accidents), or ototoxic drugs (drugs and chemicals that are poisonous to auditory structures) (Van and Dobie, 2004).

Above all, the characteristics exhibited by students with hearing impairments depend on the degree of hearing loss and the onset of that loss (Hardman et al, 2005). According to Chimedza and Petersen (2003) the earlier the hearing loss manifests itself in a child, the more difficulty he or she will have in developing the spoken language.

More specifically, the author of this paper agrees that deafness does not only involve the loss or impairment of hearing, but the loss or limitation of the ability to acquire language and speech naturally or spontaneously. Thus, total lack of language has serious implications for the child's development.

It is particularly difficult to learn a language, i.e. English, with a hearing impairment, as so much of the language relies on hearing the words, listening to the accent, and responding in oral communication. If we have hearing impaired students in class, we need to differentiate our instruction to ensure that they can access as much learning as possible. What I have done is, for example, print out copies of what I plan to say in advance for a hearing impaired student. It takes a teacher a long time to assess the needs of students with hearing impairment, and even more time to help with their individual needs.

It is worth noting that the characteristics of a child with mild hearing loss are in many ways more similar to a hearing child's than to a deaf child's characteristics. It causes a number of other serious problems that are linked to the inability to receive or express messages and thoughts (Adoyo, 2008). However, a deaf child's socialisation is deficient because the inability to hear deprives the child of the most meaningful guidelines, for moulding of behavior (Stinson & Whitmire, 2000). Because of the inability to communicate freely and understand language properly, the child is largely isolated from his or her hearing contemporaries.

In Mozambique, deafness is often mistakenly associated with helplessness and the need for protection, hence the greatest obstacle facing the hearing disabled child or adolescent is not the hearing disability, but the failure of parents, professionals and the general public to understand and accept the person with this disability (Adoyo, 2008). Andrews and Lupart, (2000) found out that students with hearing impairment may be more fatigued than classmates due to the listening effort needed, may have immature behaviour, build barriers with negative impact on self-esteem as the child is accused of hearing when he or she wants to, day dreaming, or not paying attention. The child loses the ability for selective hearing and has increased difficulty suppressing background noise, which makes the learning environment stressful. Communication is significantly affected, and socialisation with peers with normal hearing becomes increasingly difficult. With full time use of hearing aids/ FM System the child may be judged as a less competent learner, resulting in poorer self-concept, social immaturity and sense of rejection. The child may appear inattentive and frustrated. It appears deafness is a fundamental educational handicap because it interferes with normal linguistic and intellectual development. For with proper support, most hearing impaired children can and do succeed in school, by so doing demystifying labels or stereotypes associated with hearing impairment.

On the whole, the author believes that students with hearing impairment face many difficulties regarding mode of instruction used by the teachers in class; lack of sign language interpreters, and teachers' inability to use sign language during instruction. Hearing impaired students find difficulty socializing with their hearing counterparts. Ideally, their problems can be reduced by making appropriate arrangements to meet their needs in inclusive classrooms. In practice, this rarely happens. I and my colleagues have had several hearing impaired students in our classes over the years, and we have needed to give extra individual help to them, with extra pronunciation practice, extra copies of all the oral English, and adapted tests, as they cannot do the listening part of the test.

The contribution of MELTA in the inclusion of children with hearing impairment in regular schools of Mozambique

The concept of inclusion implies a sense of belonging and acceptance (Chakuchichi, Chimedza, Chiinze & Kaputa, 2003). Therefore, inclusive environments that promote educational success for all students should be developed (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009). A key factor in the inclusion of hearing impaired students in regular schools is resource mobilization (Chimedza & Peters, 2001). In this spirit, the Mozambican English Teachers Association (MELTA) can help in resource mobilization to ensure that adequate resources are made available because many students with hearing impairment are still excluded from education for reasons based on lack of resources. Apart from the availability of resources, MELTA can also suggest some profound changes in the curriculum, methodology and organization of the schools in order to accommodate the needs of all learners.

Curriculum includes structures, practices and organization within schools and the social relationships which students foster and sustain as well as what is taught, the way teaching takes place and the way in which pupils are organised for learning (Adoyo, 2008). The curriculum needs to be inclusive. Although hearing impaired students follow the same curricula as their hearing counterparts, there are extra subjects they do in order to help them access the co-curricula. The resource needs of hearing impaired students who wear hearing aids and those who have a profound hearing loss need backup support and special teachers should be available in inclusive settings. The problem here in Mozambique is lack of funding for this.

I am of the belief that the physical environment of regular schools is critical to the inclusion of students with hearing impairment. Thus, the need for modifications in resource rooms and ordinary classrooms cannot be overemphasised. Ideally, the rooms would be acoustically treated with carpets, double glazed windows and sound proofed doors so as to minimise reverberations. There is need for speech rooms, auditory training centres and testing rooms where audiometric tests are carried out.

Apart from that, MELTA can help change societal attitudes towards inclusion as negative attitudes are detrimental to the teaching and learning of students with hearing impairment. Both teachers and parents should have an attitude of acceptance, respect and valuation of the individual differences of students with hearing impairment in regular schools (Chimedza & Peterson, 2003), so MELTA could put on awareness-raising talks. Parents and teachers need to acknowledge that all students can learn and they all need support (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009). Inclusion of students with hearing impairment is about enabling education structures, systems and the learning methodologies to meet their needs (Chakuchichi et al, 2003). Specific policies for special education play a valuable role in schools in providing guidelines for actions and procedures. The Association can also help in order to have a specific inclusion policy for hearing impaired students in regular schools to secure inclusion within the schools' developmental plans and ensure the implementation of inclusive practices. An inclusive policy will help address issues like discrimination, harassment, negative attitudes and issues of access and the physical environment of the school (Corbett, 2001).

All in all, in order to avoid harm to the academic education of students with hearing impairment in regular schools, a full panoply of services and resources is required. These include adequate support and services for the student, well designed educational programmes, professional development for all teachers, general and special educators alike and reduced class size based on the severity of the students' needs. In addition, there is need for professional skill development in the area of cooperative learning, peer tutoring and adaptive curriculum, collaboration between parents, teachers and administrators (Chimedza and Peterson, 2001). There is need to provide sufficient funding so that schools would be able to develop programmes for students based on student needs instead of the availability of funding (Chakuchichi et al, 2003).

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Derreck Romão Mafelanjala, has a BA in English Language Teaching and is currently doing a Masters in Special Education. He is driven by the following motto: *Disability is a Social Construct. and aspires to make people understand that it is the society and its institutions that have the power to construct disability around the social expectations of health.*

Child abuse and neglect – what can we do?

by Ezeliya Martha Phiri, LATAZ, Zambia

Child abuse or child maltreatment is physical, sexual and/or psychological maltreatment or neglect of a child or children, especially by a parent or a caregiver.

Child abuse is still a very real and pervasive part of life in rural and urban schools and communities in Zambia. Types of child abuse include child labor, physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse and many others. Neglect, inattention or ignorance about emotional consequences of the way abuse cases are commonly settled can also compound the impact on the child.

Abuse stems from a constellation of factors related to longstanding traditional practices like sexual initiation and child marriage; children's role in the household economy; patriarchal values; poverty; and uneven power and economic relationships at home and school - factors that seem to impact on orphans and children from more impoverished families more profoundly.

Types of abuse occurring in Zambia

Child Labor

Child labor is integrally linked to poverty and affects poorer households and vulnerable children more acutely. In rural settings, the fine line between learning key survival skills and exploitation may be difficult to draw, particularly for families in poverty. Children who are living with relatives or friends are more likely to be exploited for labor. Child labor is also noticed in schools when teachers require learners to perform menial tasks in the classroom or their residence, and work in community fields such as fund-raising ventures for the school.



Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is an impulsive reaction to environmental stressors in which the perpetrator causes physical injury to a child including anything from bruises and fractures to brain damage.

Sexual Abuse

Power, patriarchy, and economics drive sexual abuse in schools, communities and families. In high schools here in Zambia, it is reported that teachers entice girls to have sex with them in order to be given better grades and get a small sum of money. Sexual abuse is also found to be linked with traditional practices. The type of family-based abuse most often cited was between a male relative and a girl child living in the family, especially a transaction of sex in exchange for accommodation and sustenance. This mainly happens to girls under the age of 18.

Sexual abuse can be identified as any form of sexual contact or attempted contact between a child and a caregiver or any adult for the purposes of the adult's sexual gratification or financial benefit, including any injuries related to the sexual activity. Usually, the perpetrator is male, but females also sexually abuse children both with and without coercion by their partner. Indecent exposure of the genitals to a child is sexual abuse. Other types are contact with child's genitals or pornography.

Psychological Abuse

This is a 'non-accidental' verbal or symbolic act by child's parent or caregiver that results or has reasonable potential to result, in significant psychological harm to a child. Psychological maltreatment is the most challenging and prevalent form of child abuse and neglect.

This may include any act or failure to act by a parent or a caregiver that results in actual or potential harm to the child and can occur in the child's home, school or community the child interacts with.

The behaviors related to this type of abuse can be yelling, shouting, coarse and rude attitude, inattention, harsh criticism and denigration of the child's personality. Other examples include name-calling, ridicule, degradation, destruction of personal belongings, withholding communication and routine labeling or humiliation.

Neglect

Abuse may refer to acts of commission while neglect refers to act of omission. It has been noted that a child who is abused or neglected at home and school or community will end up being an abuser too. Child neglect is the failure of a parent or other persons with responsibility for a child to provide necessities. These can be food, shelter, medical care or supervision to the degree that the child's health, safety or well-being may be threatened with harm. Neglect is also a lack of attention from the people surrounding the child and the non-provision of relevant and adequate

necessities for the child's survival, which would be a lack of attention, love and nurturing.

Some causes of child abuse or neglect may be lack of parental warmth, traditional beliefs or sometimes, social beliefs.

Lack of parental warmth

The warmth of the relationship of men with their children appears greater when they have good relationships with their mothers, when the home is 'well-organized' and when the family engages in regular, shared activities.

In most homes, parents tend to use aggressive measures to discipline their children when they do wrong things. They punish their children by beating, hitting, scalding, burning, poisoning, suffocating and many others. These actions place children at risk of injuries or death. This can also affect the child's development, physically, mentally, emotionally as well socially.

Rough treatment may cause physical injuries such as, bruises, scratches, broken bones, lacerations and repeated 'mishaps'. This physical abuse can lead to physical and mental difficulties in future, which includes re-victimization, personality disorders, dissociative disorders, depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, eating disorders, substance abuse and aggression.

Traditional beliefs

In some families, parents have too much control over their children. This is known as authoritative parental control. Most traditional practices are enablers of child abuse. These include early marriages and initiation ceremonies. Although they seem to be less common in urban areas now, some districts in the most remote areas of Zambia are still practising them.

Some traditions are harsh, especially to a girl child. Girl children in most African homes are made to do more chores than boys. Girls will wake up in the morning, draw water, fetch fire wood, cook and at the same time work in the field, while a boy child may only have to do some work in the field.

Corporal Punishment at home and school

Although the use of physical penalties in childrearing have been common in many countries in Africa, more enlightened recent laws have considerably restricted the extent to which corporal punishment can be used for discipline in schools, although some stakeholders, teachers and parents feel it is better to institute corporal punishment suggesting that young people would improve their behavior if this is an option. This points to lack of understanding of the damaging impacts of physical violence on a child's emotional and physical development. Many young ones now have become uncontrollable in day-to-day life. They are misbehaving, knowing that there are rules and laws which protect them, especially the Human Rights Regulations. In Zambia, it is worse in that when a parent beats a child as a form of punishment, if that child reports it to the police, the parent is arrested for assault and charged.

When it comes to corporal punishment, there many different factors that play into whether people support it or are against it. One of the largest of these is culture and the beliefs that surround particular groups. Corporal punishment, defined as discipline that intentionally causes physical pain, has been used on children. This includes beating, hitting, scolding, burning, poisoning, suffocating and many others, inflicted to punish the child.

In many cultural groups, the mothers usually take the role of the day-to-day parenting and the father is often regarded as the one that disciplines the most. The mother often will not inflict the punishment on the child herself, but will inform the father of the reasons why she wishes to punish the child. Things are not the same in all families, however, and many mothers are not afraid to take the punishment into their hands just as the father would.

Many countries use forms of corporal punishment to discipline their children. An example of where I come from here in Zambia, the Chewa tribe in particular, have harsh ways of disciplining a child



who is considered disobedient, disrespectful, or not completing chores given by parents. They use all sorts of ways like those mentioned before, beating, hitting, scolding or even burning their children. For example, when a child steals relish from a pot, the parent will burn the fingers of that child so that the next time that child will never ever wish to steal again. Many cases of that nature have been reported. Such children will remain with the effect of that punishment, physically, emotionally, mentally as well as psychologically. In the first place, the child will be disabled, the child will hate the parent forever, and the child may learn to be harsh to others.

Each year, hundreds of thousands of learners are a subjected to corporal punishment in schools. Despite the many problems associated with



hitting or paddling of learners, corporal punishment is a legal form of school discipline in most countries in Africa. In Zambia now, corporal punishment has been abolished due to its negative consequences. For example, children become depressed, or feel fear and anger. They tend to feel afraid of anything, even people of the same gender. They would be in their own thoughts when in class and be surprised if asked a question. The children may withdraw from school activities and disengage academically. The victims of corporal punishment often develop deteriorating peer relationships, difficulty with concentration, lower school achievement, anti-social behaviors, intense dislike of authority, somatic complaints, a tendency for school avoidance and school drop-out. They would rarely speak in class and others show evidence of negative high-risk adolescent behavior.

Prevention of abuse

We as English teachers can play a role in this, to help raise awareness and protect the children, and to help everyone involved understand more about abuse. Here are some ideas of what we teachers can do:

- ▶ Increase awareness through role-playing in school, drama, newspapers, magazines and other forums.
- ▶ Establish committees in schools to be in charge of these discussions on how to protect a vulnerable child.
- ▶ Improve school facilities to promote a more conducive learning environment.
- ▶ Include lessons on child abuse during learning time, especially when teaching English as a subject.
- ▶ Learners should be involved in creating awareness messages through drawing of posters, pictures and many others. Children should be aware of how to review some cases and how to report these cases.

Some examples: words in some pictures may include direct interventions of child abuse like:

**WHAT IF YOU ARE IN THE RESTROOM
AND SOMEONE TRIES TO TOUCH YOU.
WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?**

Say No, Get Away And Tell A Safe Adult!!!

Learners should also learn the 'underwear' rule:

Privates are privates

Always remember your body belongs to you.

No means No.

Talk about secrets that upset you.

Speak up, Someone can Help You

(The sentences above will end making the word: **PANTS**).

- ▶ Learners can come up with drawings or sketches in different colors showing pants to make others interested in reading the message.
- ▶ Make as many as you can and make them colorful to attract learners to read and pass the message to other pupils and parents or caregivers. Posters to be written or drawn should carry strong messages to stop child abuse.

A school should be a place where children are safe from harm and abuse, a place for them to learn and develop in a safe environment. A school should be a place where maltreated children rebuild their self-esteem, assert themselves and set themselves up as successful. Learners should also learn how to report cases of abuse to relevant authorities. Teachers should help build a sense of control in a positive manner. Teachers should give accurate information on how to report certain cases and build trust. It is important to set reasonable goals and to provide the support needed for the child to feel confident in his/her abilities. This will help maltreated children to remain in school.

More awareness of nuances of child protection has led some schools to fix some school structures, such as washrooms for girls, piped water, well-built classrooms, library facilities, computer labs and so on, so that the environment is more beneficial to learning and children have fewer chances to be exposed to damaging effects. We need to provide vulnerable children with a package of support. Bursaries for vulnerable children have helped them to provide girls with viable alternatives to engaging in sex for money in order to buy basic items. A good example is that we have an NGO here in Zambia called FAWEZA which has stood firm in supporting the girl child with sponsorship and basic needs.

Leadership should take roles to protect vulnerable children from abuse. The Parent-Teachers Association, which is a link between school and parent, should also come on board in discussing issues that will help protect a vulnerable child in school. We teachers can suggest and encourage these initiatives in the schools we work in.

Teacher Associations, like our LATAZ here in Zambia, should also include topics on how to handle maltreated children when they meet. This will help other teachers to be aware of what they are supposed to do when they meet maltreated children or how to include lessons on child abuse. Sometimes, it is important to invite experts to our meetings or conferences to help give presentations on child abuse. Some of the people to be involved are psychologists, neuropsychologists and community social welfare workers. This will give some insights on how to avoid child abuse, whether at home, at school or in the community.

Traditional leaders should also be against early marriage and any other forms of child abuse and support the child's future in education, because if they support these things, people often follow their lead and support them too.

We need well-wishers to come on board to support vulnerable children with financial and moral support. Thanks to UNICEF, Save the Children, Childhelp and other NGOs in Zambia, there are groups helping with such issues. This should not only be in Zambia but should be everywhere where a vulnerable child exists.

Finally, policy makers should also come up with stiff measures to punish perpetrators of any form of abuse.



***Martha Phiri** has been teaching English for 20 years and is now Headteacher at a large secondary school. She loves writing and is really keen to help vulnerable children.*

Menstruation and English teaching in Kilimanjaro

by Catherine Njau, TELTA, Tanzania

I live in the Kilimanjaro region, in Tanzania. Mount Kilimanjaro is the highest mountain in Africa. It's near the border with Kenya and is 5,895m high. It's famous for having snow at the top, even though it is very near the equator. The climb up to the top passes through so many different types of land, from the hot plains up to the volcanic peak.

I have discovered a really big problem here that affects many of the girls in my country. Many girls here don't understand about menstruation and have no chance to speak about it. Parents and teachers never speak about it as it is a taboo topic. This makes the girls use unhealthy, unclean products such as rags, toilet paper, mattresses and the bark of trees.

The idea of teaching this started with the KULEANA group, an organisation which I founded to connect with the English language. Kuleana collaborated with the Kilimanjaro chapter of TELTA (Tanzania English Language Teaching Association) to work on a project of youth empowerment. We all really believe that we can help change a lot of social problems and difficulties that many people have in our country. I am now starting to work on more research into child protection in some parts of Kilimanjaro District.

When I worked with Huru International, an organization in Nairobi, Kenya, I became aware about how to teach girls and speak with them about this issue. The Peace Corps volunteer, Riah Werner, connected me with the organization. Through them, I realized that many girls are afraid to touch their body parts and know very little about reproductive organs and sexual anatomy.

This is where I can create change. I have been speaking to different groups, boys and girls and their parents too. When teaching them I use pictures, stories and songs and most of this is in English. Sometimes we need to translate to check they understand. Tanzania has 120 tribes which all communicate in their own language at home. This is the first language a child speaks. When they start primary school, they learn Kiswahili, which is the language used in schools for the first seven years. English is taught as a subject, but the medium of instruction for all other subjects is Kiswahili. When children go to secondary school, the language changes to English, the medium of instruction for the next four years and for further study.

I teach them about body changes, when and how a girl can get pregnant and the boy's role in the pregnancy. We also talk about menstruation and life skills education. This covers many areas such as helping them know what to do in the case of rape or sexual harassment. We discuss lots of topics, like understanding peer pressure, and making important decisions in the right way. One popular phrase the girls like is: MY BODY, MY CHOICE.

Through these words, women, girls and boys now are ready to say NO and decide for themselves when they plan to have sex, which was not a normal situation in our societies. For the parents, we include a lot more advice, such as family planning and how to be protected from HIV/AIDS and STDs. Seven percent of Tanzanian adults age 15-49 are affected by HIV; prevalence among women is higher – 8 percent – than among men where the prevalence is 6 percent.

Young people engaging in risky sexual behavior such as not using condoms, having multiple sexual partners and having sex before the age of 15 remain significant challenges in the country. Less than half of young people in the country have adequate knowledge about HIV/ AIDS and STDs. Those who have been told about them are usually told they are not allowed to have sex while still at school – this is prohibited by the community and seen as bad behaviour. If girls get pregnant, the government does not allow them to continue their studies after having the baby.

During my teaching experience of life skills and menstruation education since 2011, I have met with many girls and boys.



In 2019, for example, I was able to teach 11,400 teenagers and 700 parents. I have been providing them with WARIDI re-usable sanitary pads. Waridi pads are re-usable sanitary pads made of clothes fabric and cotton. They contain three parts: a top layer of smooth cotton cloth, a middle layer of white towel and under that is water proof cloth which does not allow leakage of blood. I make them by sewing together these layers and putting them in packets of eight pads, one bar of soap, three pants, a cloth bag for storing the used pads, an instruction manual and a kit bag for carrying all of them together. Each kit bag cost \$15 which is equal to 30000/=Tsh and it lasts for five years.

These really help disadvantaged girls who cannot afford to buy disposable pads. This has had a very good effect on local girls, as now many more girls are able to attend school when they have a period, and the rate of absenteeism is lower.

After this menstruation education, girls in different secondary schools, have established clubs, for example Mboni Secondary School, Lyakrimu Secondary School, Sakayo Mosha Secondary School, Mamba Day Secondary School and Darajani Secondary School. My plan this year is to add more schools so I can reach them to teach life skill and menstruation education. A recently started club is at Boma Ng'ombe Secondary School in Hai district. The clubs have been running since 2011. They started as English clubs and now we are doing different projects too. The girls call the clubs 'MAUA MAZURI', which means 'beautiful flowers'. The aim of these clubs is for them to continue to educate themselves and spread awareness about menstruation education. Also, they spend some time making their own soap which helps them with hygiene at school and at home.



In their clubs they practise the English language and develop different activities. One day in 2019, I went to one club in a school where the members were acting out a short play about different taboos that oppress women during their menstruation. One girl was being chased away by her mother when she wanted to serve food to the elders. Her mother told her that it is very bad to serve food to the family during her menstruation. She asked her mother why, but the mother just slapped her face. She cried and didn't understand anything. This play was from a story they had read in class called 'UNANSWERED CRIES'.

I wanted to find out as much as possible about difficulties with menstruation in different areas of Tanzania. So during one of my holidays, I was able to interview one of the parents in the Mara region in Musoma, Kinesi district. I learnt that there are harmful taboos there about when a girl is

in menstruation, for example, the Kurya tribe, which is one of the tribes that still practise polygamy and female circumcision for girls. Men are allowed to have as many wives as they want, or can afford. Each wife costs around ten cows.

Women are not allowed to inherit anything from the family and this means that if her husband dies and she has no son, she has no rights to keep the house and land where she lives. Many of the women have now started to get round this law by marrying another, often younger, woman. They live together as a family, but do not have a sexual relationship, so it's not gay marriage. The younger woman often gets pregnant by a man of her choice, and the two women raise the children together. This practice is not normal in other tribes, and many men do not like it. Also sometimes girls are made to marry by force. Men in this tribe often beat women.

Many Kurya people believe that when a girl menstruates, she cannot be allowed to cook or serve food to the elders or fetch water in the river or Lake Victoria. Also, the girls are not allowed to go to the place for making sacrifices, or to cut firewood. These are taboos which have been used to stigmatize girls and women in the societies.

It is good to be able to help girls from disadvantaged societies by providing them with re-usable sanitary pads. This reduces the stigmatization of girls in their community.

I did a case study about life skills courses. When I distributed the pads, I got the girls to fill in a questionnaire asking about whether anyone in their family can afford to buy a single packet of pads. The questionnaire asked about lots of related topics: if they have sex, if they have had an early pregnancy, what they know about STDs and HIV/AIDS, and how to protect themselves from these. The girls also listed what they used during their period, for example the unclean pieces of mattresses, which can be very unhealthy and uncomfortable. From these questionnaires, I found out the real picture about the need for re-usable sanitary pads.

YEAR		NUMBER OF GIRLS AND BOYS WHO RECEIVED LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION	NUMBER OF SANITARY KITS GIVEN OUT
1	2011	301	301
2	2013-2016	3,000	1,100
3	2017-2019	12,100	1,000
4	JAN 2020	80	50

The great achievement here was that early pregnancy was reduced through this awareness. Many more girls are now attending school all the time. Their results have been improving because of being able to go to school a lot more.

When I teach in secondary schools I mostly use the English language. The main reason is that they don't feel shy about speaking and pronouncing the words for their sexual organs. They feel a bit more distant when using English, and the topic is not so taboo, so we can talk about everything. I also use songs and stories, for example this one about parts of the body, similar to 'head, shoulders, knees and toes':

1. This is my private part
Private part, private part
This is my private part don't touch them.
2. This is my private part
Private part, private part
This is my private part, don't look at them.
3. This is my private part
Private part, private part
This is my private part don't taste them.

Many secondary schools in Tanzania need to develop the teaching of the English language, and this topic of menstrual hygiene is very interesting for adolescents. By using English, students are able to improve their vocabulary and become a lot more confident talking about their body changes. Their speaking and listening skills improve too.



Catherine James Njau is an English teacher in Tanzania government school where she facilitates different activities and teacher training. She also coordinates different English clubs for life skills and menstrual hygiene education. Currently she is a regional coordinator of Tanzania English Language Association which is an affiliate of TESOL. She is founder of the Kuleana organization, and a student at the Open University of Tanzania, where she studies linguistics and literature.

Stop Ebola by English clubs in Goma, DRC

by KALEBA Walingene Joseph and John UWEZO Nkuba, CLASS, DRC

The Democratic Republic of the Congo, DRC, has been victim of many disasters during the last decade. In 2002, for instance, there was a volcanic eruption in Goma: the Nyiragongo volcano erupted and its lava destroyed buildings, killed people and animals and gardens near houses were spoiled. There have also been massive killings during repeated wars all over the country, the eastern part being the worst affected. All these together with others have perturbed Congolese lives for ages. The most devastating problem among these has been the Ebola epidemic that has touched a great part of the Eastern DRC, causing the death of nearly two thousand Congolese, including many women and children. In the face of such a disaster, teachers of English have used the opportunity that the English language offers to help fight the disease. This article deals with the role an English club played in the process of fighting Ebola in Eastern DRC.

Background

Ebola is one of the most dangerous viruses of which the DRC has been a victim. Although the disease was discovered in DRC, it has been identified in many countries across Africa and has been the cause of death of more than five thousand people. In DRC, the disaster has generally affected the eastern part. The disease of Ebola is generally caused by a virus that remains difficult to explain. What is common knowledge is that Ebola is a contagious disease. And thus, in the process of fighting against Ebola, the most difficult step has been that of communication. Seeing the number of people and the speed at which the illness spread, many people did not believe that it was a normal epidemic. As long as people still had doubts about the disease, the number of victims increased rapidly. Pupils are more exposed to Ebola since they study in a public place. Thus, it is obvious that, if it had reached the school setting, Ebola would have killed too many people.

Therefore, as teachers are often able to reach a large number of people at the same time, not only because they are in general contact with pupils, but also because their pupils can spread the message at a surprising speed, the English club has played a crucial role. In DRC, English clubs are supported and grown by the Congolese Language Supporters' Society. 'CLASS' is the association of Teachers of English in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It was created in 2001 with the mission of assisting the National Ministry in Charge of Education in implementing new approaches in English Language Teaching. It got its recognition by the Government in 2009; CLASS operates countrywide with the support of its partners (The US Embassy and the British Council). It has been leading some projects to promote The Teachers' Continuous Professional Development (CPD). In so doing, the association trains English Teachers and English Club Leaders and makes a regular follow up in different schools to see how English Club Activities are organised. This teacher association has been serving as umbrella in support to English clubs in collaboration with school leaders countrywide. In the North Kivu province for instance, CLASS collaborates with around twenty-eight schools where English clubs are very active, impacting English language learning and teaching positively.

ENGLISH CLUB AND FIGHTING EBOLA

In the Ebola fighting process, the role of teachers has not been like that of doctors, but more informative. The English clubs in particular have been used as a medium to pass on the message concerning Ebola. Generally, the English clubs function with scheduled activities. The latter take place after school once a week and they are voluntary activities. The teachers who are involved in English clubs are not paid but schools encourage them to run them as they provide space and time for them. Such activities always involve free discussion on real life problems such as democracy, health, governance, human rights, the role of women in the community, violence and gender challenges, love and many more. Unfortunately, in Goma, English clubs have never received any funding; there are pending activities which require buying some stuff or paying for transport for their success. The pupils aged between 12 and 21 come to all club meetings and they really enjoy attending meetings and partaking in the voluntary activities.

From the time when Ebola started devastating the country, an opportunity was offered to teachers to make it the central concern of English Club discussions. Such discussion has generally been centered on:

a. Ebola awareness

The first concern was to make pupils aware about Ebola. In the English Club activities, teachers of English took time to organize free debates on what Ebola is. Every participant gave their opinions concerning Ebola. The purpose was to lead those who have wrong perceptions of Ebola to admit that it is a dangerous disease.

b. How Ebola Spreads

The pupils had to understand, not only what Ebola is, but also the different means by which it can be spread. First, every participant in the debate had the freedom to say what they think. The ways Ebola spreads include: greeting a patient, touching anyone who is infected, washing a corpse of someone who has died of Ebola, sharing clothes or sleeping mats with anyone infected.



c. The Signs of Ebola

This next discussion involved how we can discover who is already infected by Ebola. Through the talks, pupils tried to list the most common signs of Ebola which include: feeling an unusual heat, vomiting, having a persistent headache, feeling very tired even when you have not worked. Beyond these first symptoms, there is the fact of having blood flowing out of some parts of the body such as nose, ear, mouth or anus, which is the last sign of Ebola. When someone has reached the step of blood flowing, it is now difficult to survive.

d. Ways of Fighting Ebola

Next, we discussed how to avoid Ebola contamination. Everyone was free to tell to the audience what they think could be the way to avoid Ebola. By the end, everyone at least grasped something about how to prevent Ebola, which include: washing hands with chlorine water after greeting any person, not touching any person who shows signs of Ebola, not participating in a burial ceremony, informing the Ebola First Response team of any case of death in the village/area, and not touching the objects of anyone who died of Ebola.

e. Attitude to adopt in case of symptoms

The following club activity concerned a discussion about the attitude to be adopted once you feel any symptom of Ebola. This has been crucial since pupils had to understand from one another what they need to do if ever reached by Ebola. Among the recommendations the pupils retained are the following: they should go immediately to the hospital once they feel any Ebola-like symptoms. Beyond that, there is a Green Number (1444) which is available and free of charge. Once you call the Green Number, a team of doctors would come to see you, no matter where you are in order to assist you medically, whether infected or not.



Actually, the clubs' discussions have their value beyond the disease assistance or awareness in the sense that they benefit the English language and skills of the students who come to the clubs. The types of vocabulary about illness / symptoms, the functional language of suggestions and recommendations, explanations and descriptions as well as role-plays and debating skills, agreeing and disagreeing, which pupils practise during their meeting, justify their valuable time spent in English clubs.

Conclusion

In fact, the English club debates have been absolutely crucial in the process of fighting Ebola. The very important thing was to pass on the message. Pupils in the English clubs have the freedom to share the information. Such activities have helped pupils understand that Ebola is dangerous and avoidable at the same time. Through the free talks in English clubs, teachers have helped save many lives through the English club activities. English is important, but saving lives through such activities thanks to English is far more important. We need to use some content when teaching English, but if we can use content this vital in importance, helping to save many lives, this gives so much more value to what we are doing.



Mr Kaleba Walingene Joseph earned his M.A. Degree in English Didactics from “Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de Bukavu” in DRC. He was Chair of the Department of English and African Culture at “ISP/Bukavu” where he is currently a lecturer. He has been coordinating English club activities for 4 years. He is a teacher trainer and consultant facilitator at the British Council Rwanda. He is also the East-Regional President of “CLASS” an English Teachers’ association in DRC and has presented at several conferences.



Mr Uwezo Nkuba John is an EFL teacher at MAMA Mulezi High School in Goma, North Kivu Province in DRC, is the North Kivu Provincial Representative of CLASS and an assistant lecturer at the Department of English at Goma Teacher Training College.

Improving youth's socioeconomic empowerment through enhanced English language skills

by Liberty Christopher, UNELTA, Uganda (edited by Ssemogerere Qasim Rogers
President UNELTA and Amoni Kitooke Project Coordinator)

How do you address unemployment in a context where 70% of the population are under 35 years old? What can English classes offer to curb this global scourge which significantly reduces the quality of life for individuals, communities and their next generations?

Well, UNELTA (Uganda National English Language Teachers' Association – www.unelta.org) initiated a breakthrough in an albeit small and short term (1-year) project dubbed, “**Improving youth's socio-economic empowerment through enhanced English language skills**”, supported by the US Embassy, Kampala. The project involved training 50 teachers from 25 schools on micro-project business skills, cascading by trialling the skills with their students organised in a club working to solve a major community problem, and giving awards to best performing clubs and individuals. The goal was to score on three counts: learn the target ‘functional’ English language skills, acquire a range of life-long skills in a self-initiated project, and solve a problem in their school or other community.

Let's take a peek at two of the winning projects:

1. The Loving Rabbits project

Teachers Bamukunda Hillary and Isaac Ssebuyiira of Loving Grace High School in Mityana, implemented the “Loving Rabbits” project with their students. They were responding to the rampant poverty in their community, on the one hand, and saw an opportunity in biology laboratories which could buy their rabbits, on the other hand. Additionally, they wanted to supplement their school diet. So, they started by collecting subscriber fees that enabled them to buy two rabbits: a doe and a buck. In just a few weeks, these had multiplied; and when a UNELTA monitoring and evaluation team visited about 2 months later, they had 13 rabbits! By the end of the project period, they had over 70 rabbits and this was after a sustained supply to school laboratories, the community and their own school's kitchen.

“The Loving Rabbits project was selected and run by students. All I did was bring them together and suggest expectations. Students selected their own Project Committee, opened a financial account with the school bursar, held regular meetings and kept up-to-date minutes, all in the English language. The students selected a Project Manager, Secretary, Treasurer and two Sales Executives. Their document file includes minutes of their meetings, purchase, expenditure and sales vouchers, letters for example to the head teacher requesting time and space to operate, adverts they designed, etc. It is so very amazing, and I want to continue this. I feel I am making a real impact, and I am happy about it!”

Hillary Bamukunda, Loving Grace High School Mityana



Bamukunda Hillary (2nd from left) with UNELTA Project Monitoring Committee



The Director of Loving Grace High School, Mr. Jackson Ssekiryango (2nd left), receiving certificate of excellence from UNELTA



Loving rabbits

2. The “Deja Vu” club projects

The Deja Vu club at Passion Christian High School sought to address a number of challenges and initiated a number of projects. To curb polyethylene bag littering and contribute to environment sustainability, they embarked on a paper-bag making project. To raise some money for themselves, they created a mobile seasonal restaurant on school open days like when parents were visiting. They also created a health drink made from fermented kombucha mushrooms.

Another skill that involved the use of their chemistry skills was the making of liquid soap and selling it to their fellow students, their teachers and the community. Most fascinating about this project was how the club's Project Committee documented their different project activities and organised them into one large file: every step had documents from letters, receipts, inquiries, quotations, reports and elevator pitches to account statements among others.

Other projects implemented include Adesta Juice making project, English Resource Books Making project, Confectionary Project and Crisps Making Project.



Skills & evaluation criteria

The projects were evaluated for English language, business, student involvement and sustainability potential using the following rubric:

		Evaluation criteria				Max points	Total score
		Business skills	Documentation	Student involvement	Sustainability potential		
LEVELS OF PROGRESS	Fully developed	<p>Up to 25 pts</p> <p>Participants have consistently carried out their business/project with skill and diligence.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capital mobilization skills - Book keeping is exemplary - Products made (goods / services / social activities) - Business / project name reflects mission 	<p>Up to 25 pts</p> <p>Advanced language skills are well reflected in business or project documents. All steps of the business/project development are documented and can be understood by anyone who did not necessarily participate in writing them.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business/ strategic plan - elevator pitch - Meeting minutes - activity reports - Sales receipts - purchases invoices - etc. 	<p>Up to 25 pts</p> <p>Students run the project / business and they report to or consult the teacher(s) for guidance. It is clear that the club members are confident with the student leadership.</p>	<p>Up to 25 pts</p> <p>There are definite indicators that the business / project will run at least a year and beyond. The club already has a written plan for next year.</p> <p>Some indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - working towards a goal - resource mobilization is sustainable and increasing - Vision is clear - school admin supports the project / business 	100	
	Satisfactorily Developed	<p>Up to 20 pts</p> <p>Participants are able to run their business without much struggle with prevailing conditions.</p> <p>Tips</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Market understanding is adequate - Bookkeeping is adequately informative - evidence of products/ services provided 	<p>Up to 20 pts</p> <p>Considerably good language skills are reflected in the business or project documents. Language structures (grammar, formats, etc.) are understandable</p>	<p>Up to 20 pts</p> <p>Students run the project with minimal support from the teacher</p>	<p>Up to 20 pts</p> <p>There are some indicators that the business / project will run for at least a year. The club already has a plan at least in mind for next year</p>	80	

LEVELS OF PROGRESS	Developing	<p>Up to 15 pts</p> <p>There is a growing understanding of how to conduct the business or the project in the context. The business/project skills are steadily developing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the market is growing as a result of lessons from project progress - Bookkeeping may have some gaps 	<p>Up to 15 pts</p> <p>The language structures in business or project documents indicate progressive growth now in comparison with when the project started.</p>	<p>Up to 15 pts</p> <p>The teacher's hand in running the project is still strong, but is on course to have the students run it.</p>	<p>Up to 15 pts</p> <p>There is evidence of learning from successes and challenges, and measures are being put in place to consolidate the strengths and mitigate the challenges.</p>	60	
	Efforts made, but challenged	<p>Up to 10 pts</p> <p>Either the teacher or students or both are trying to establish the project or business or new activities, but the environment is not favorable.</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project plan is clear in the minds of either the teacher, the students or both by they haven't found the space and time to meet. 	<p>Up to 10 pts</p> <p>Documents generated by the teacher, students or both are available, but the environment has not allowed them to proceed with the business or project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elevator pitch and other preliminary documents are available is well made, but admin has not provided go ahead. 	<p>Up to 10 pts</p> <p>The teacher(s) have evidently tried to build the capacity of students' leadership capacities and confidence, but the students have not taken up the opportunities.</p> <p>Or:</p> <p>The students are evidently eager and trying to take on leadership of the club but the teacher(s) have not given them the opportunity.</p>	<p>Up to 10 pts</p> <p>Both strengths and challenges have been identified, but the environment is not favorable for making any further progress.</p>	40	
	Non-existent	<p>0 pts</p> <p>Evidently, no business or project skills whatsoever have been learned during the micro project.</p>	<p>No documentation has been made whatsoever.</p>	<p>00</p> <p>Teacher(s) have not involved any students in the micro project.</p>	<p>00</p> <p>No ideas for sustainability have been thought about or exhibited, or the business / project was simply never started.</p>	00	
TOTAL SCORE						100%	

About Uganda National English Language Teachers' Association (UNELTA)

UNELTA was incepted in 2011 by former students of Makerere University who were concerned about the many numbers of English Language learners failing the subject both at higher institutions of learning like universities and other tertiary institutions and also in lower institutions like primary and secondary schools and most especially at the national exams in Uganda. The concern was deeply rooted in the way English language is taught where learners are largely taught just to pass examinations. UNELTA aims at engaging teachers to teach English practically and in context including using project-based teaching right from nursery through primary to secondary levels of education. UNELTA continues to strengthen the capacity of teachers by engaging them in projects, conferences and workshops. This has subsequently bolstered the teachers' personal and professional development. Projects about important local, social or global issues are perfect for this purpose because they use real English in real situations, and also, at the same time, raise awareness about how we can create change

UNELTA prospects

UNELTA continues to strengthen the capacity of teachers by engaging them in projects, conferences and workshops. The association is currently focusing on creating chapters across Uganda, and strengthening its membership and collaboration with global networks like IATEFL.



Liberty Christopher is a human-rights activist, project manager and educationalist. He is the Programs Manager at Kigezi Women in Development. He also volunteers as Monitoring and Evaluation Officer at UNELTA.

'Rise in Suicide' - How do we adjust our shoulders?

by Rukia Mohamed, English Language Professionals Association of Kenya (ELPAK), Kenya

Watching the news on 19th November 2019, there was yet another suicide report along with the many other such reports that hit the news in 2019. This time round it is a 14-year-old boy who allegedly took his life for failing to attain 300 marks in the recently released Kenya Certificate of Primary Examinations (KCPE) results. My thoughts stray to some questions jokingly asked about how different things we learnt in school applied to our daily lives today. Only this time the thought was serious and I was wondering how to use English clubs to contribute towards solutions for the day to day issues facing society, such as suicide.

A month later while doing a random survey on probable causes of suicide in Kenya, I pick up my phone and call Sylvia Gatwiri, a community leader from Mathare area of Nairobi, Kenya. Sylvia works with the youth and schools around the area and as we discuss the short survey, she can't stop talking about the challenges they've had to tackle this December holiday regarding youth being lured into gangs, drugs and other dangerous behaviors. She strongly expresses her fear that such issues could easily lead to hopelessness and contribute to suicide.

The idea of incorporating aspects that would instill hope in the students and help them deal with life's challenges through English club activities lit up Sylvia's voice from the other end of the phone. She arranges for the English Mastery Community Group, a chapter of Kenya's English Language Teachers Association ELPK, to visit one of the schools in the area where she volunteers.

When the schools re-open for the first term, we visit and meet a very welcoming principal and head of English language department. After the presentation of our objectives and briefing the teachers, we head straight for a session with some pupils from the upper primary.

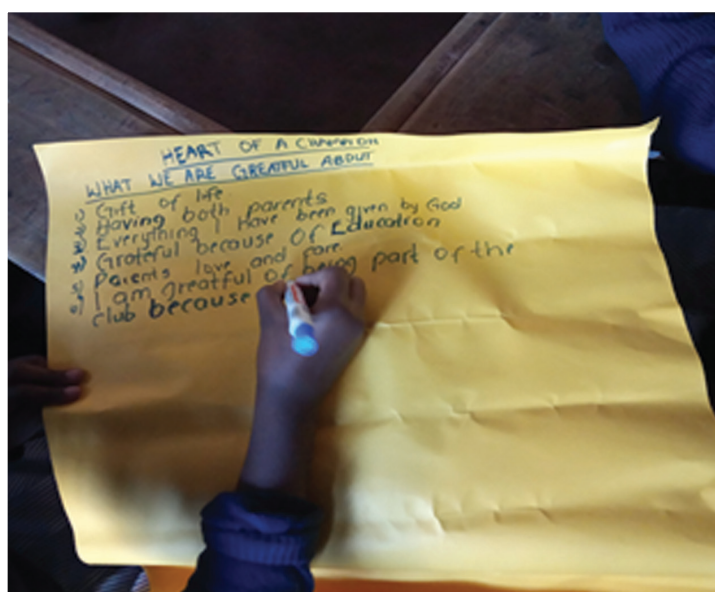
After introductions and gathering some information on the pupils' understanding of an English club, we dive right into some activities that would serve a number of aims including: practice of the English language skills (writing, listening, reading and speaking), reducing stress through fun and conversation from the games, evoking some thought about the good things in life that keep hope alive and give satisfaction and confidence from having completed the tasks.

The pupils are put into three different groups with one discussing things that they are grateful about and the other two playing games: one discussing places they've been to and giving details as they pleased - this was timely as they had just resumed school from the long holidays -and the other playing a dice game describing what they would rather be and giving reasons if they wished.

One could see the smiles and excitement on the pupils' faces as they discussed and played the different games. The teachers could not hide their smiles as they moved around assessing what the students were doing. As they did their presentations for us and explained about their activities, we did not want them to stop.



Suicide prevention is just one of the issues that can be handled in an English language session either in class or in an English club. In the above session the English Mastery Community Group did not discuss suicide directly, but facilitated activities that would help pupils deal with issues that could lead to the contemplation of suicide along with other social problems, such as stress release through games and instilling hope through the gratitude exercise.



My mind wanders back to the suicide stories in the media, only they are not just stories but realities. Realities holding not only people's names but people's children, fathers, mothers and productive citizens of Kenya.

Kenya is located in the Eastern part of Africa and known for its wildlife with the annual wildebeest migration and landscapes such as the great Rift Valley. Nairobi the capital city is cosmopolitan with people from different parts of the country residing and working there.



Sylvia Gatwiri giving feedback about the session.

Kenya is a developing country faced with normal economic challenges like any other developing economy, such as inflation, as well as other life's challenges which could contribute to despair amongst the population. While it may not be possible to directly attribute suicides to this, it can only be assumed from a social perspective that economic constraints, coupled with a person's ability/inability to cope with life's demands could be probable factors. There are also a lack of records on suicide. Suicide is a criminal offence in Kenya and as such the possibility of stigma and fear of reporting.



In a short random survey by the club seeking to find some causes of suicide in Kenya in general, and also among the young population, a number of probable reasons came to light, including:

Depression, unemployment, stress, trauma, lack of hope, failure to achieve set targets, low self-esteem, parental and societal expectations in relation to exam results, drugs and substance use, poor relational skills, lack of resilience and stigma, attaching success to exam results and stigma attached to mental health issues.

The respondents, ranging between 19 years and above from different professions including teachers, mentors, counselors among others, felt that discussions of suicide and incorporating activities in schools would contribute towards suicide prevention.

Going through the responses I see even more the need to take action and the possibility of contributing towards solutions in this regard through English club activities:

- ▶ Fun board games that prompt conversations.
- ▶ Skits with purposed messages.
- ▶ Poems and spoken word with messages of encouragement.
- ▶ Guest speaker presentations by experts such as counselors and psychologists.
- ▶ Article and book reading on content that helps pupils deal with different challenges in life such as dealing with peer pressure, stress management and self-awareness.
- ▶ Incorporating audio visual materials with messages that lead to discussions contributing towards change.

Kenya as a country has a development blueprint ‘Vision 2030’ that seeks to empower through the social, economic and political pillars. We hope that in the long run there will be positive change. In the meantime, there’s need to look into different contributions we can make as citizens towards this change. I take a deep breath, now more sure than ever before that something needs to be done and I choose to make a contribution through the English clubs.

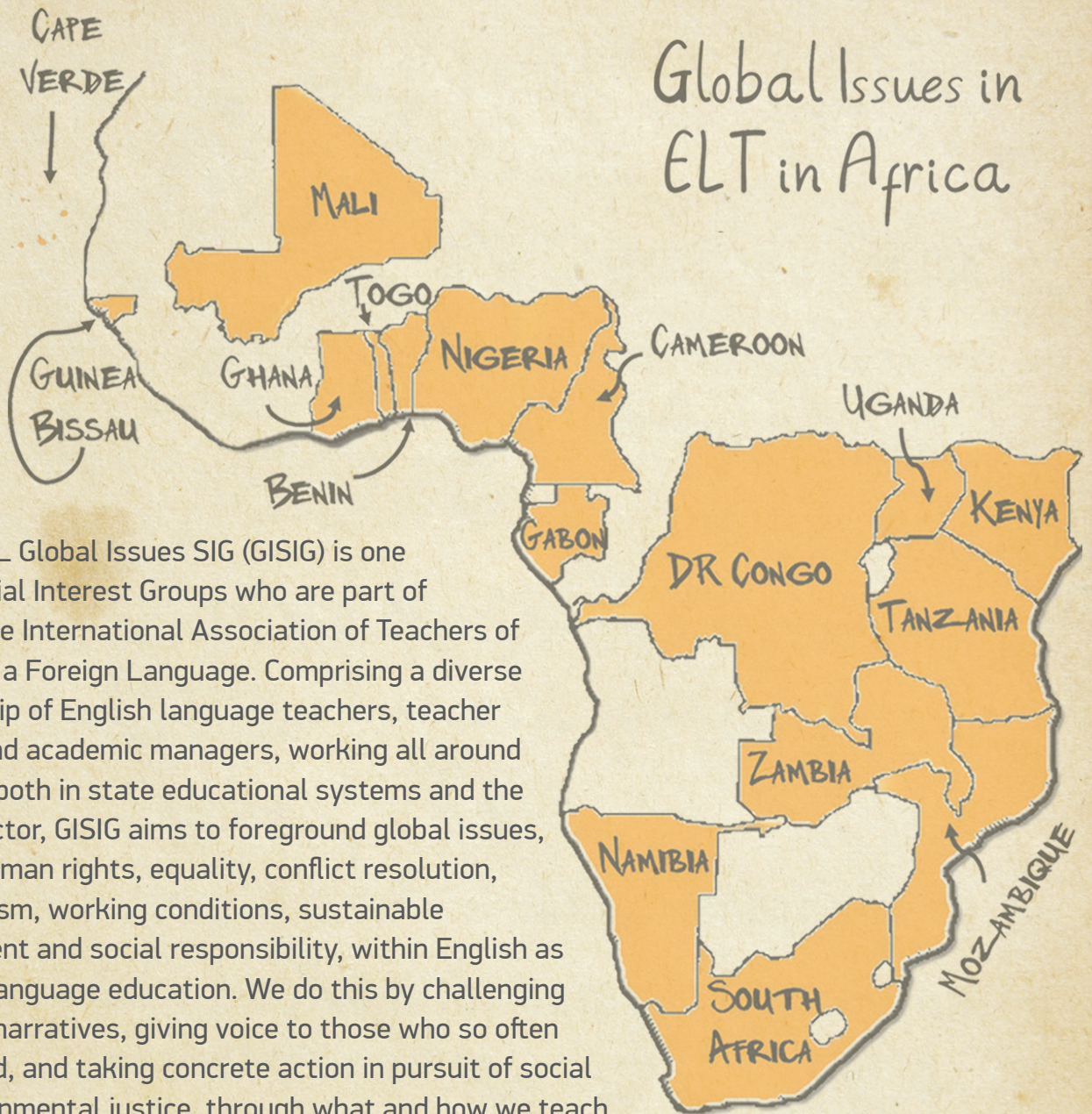
The English club initiative is a chapter under the Kenyan English language teachers’ association – ELPK (English Language Professionals Association of Kenya). ELPK’s objective is to empower English language professionals and encourage continuous professional development through various activities. ELPK is expected to host a regional conference ALZELC where we hope to disseminate information on ways that English clubs can contribute towards suicide prevention and other challenges among other agendas. In addition, we plan to train regional leaders under ELPK chapters on leadership aspects follow up, monitoring and evaluation of the association’s activities such as those conducted in the English clubs.

In the meantime, the English Mastery Community Group, a club under the English clubs’ initiative (borne from ‘learning English at American Spaces’ - an initiative sponsored by the US Department of State) has started working with schools to make a contribution as part of the club’s objectives.



Rukia Mohamed is the Organizing secretary of English Language Professionals Association Kenya (ELPAK), Coordinator of the English Mastery Community Group, Facilitator of Learning English at American Spaces through English clubs, counselor with a passion and experience for community empowerment, and has over ten years’ experience at Teachers Service Commission Kenya HR department.

CREATING CHANGE



Global Issues in ELT in Africa

The IATEFL Global Issues SIG (GISIG) is one of 16 Special Interest Groups who are part of IATEFL, the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language. Comprising a diverse membership of English language teachers, teacher trainers and academic managers, working all around the world both in state educational systems and the private sector, GISIG aims to foreground global issues, such as human rights, equality, conflict resolution, consumerism, working conditions, sustainable development and social responsibility, within English as a second language education. We do this by challenging dominant narratives, giving voice to those who so often go unheard, and taking concrete action in pursuit of social and environmental justice, through what and how we teach. Through our presence at international conferences, including the annual IATEFL conference, as well as on our website, social media and in our publications, we advocate for an inclusive, dialogic, critical pedagogy that empowers and inspires both teachers and language learners to act, in their role as global citizens. If you are an English language teacher who is keen to bring real-world issues into the classroom and to develop your learners' critical literacy as well as their English, then please join us!

Rose Aylett, IATEFL Global Issues SIG

To find out more, visit our website: <https://gisig.iatefl.org/>.

