



Read, Enjoy and Discover: Reading Connects goes global

Encouraging reading for pleasure is not just a priority for schools in the UK: Esther Wamweta, Project Manager of the Read, Enjoy and Discover (READ) project for charity Ka Tutandike Uganda, provides a snapshot of one of the activities they are running to promote reading and writing for pleasure in the primary schools of the Kampala District in Uganda.

Ka Tutandike Uganda (KTU) is a Ugandan based charitable organisation which was founded by Ka Tutandike Trust UK. KTU focuses on making timely interventions and improving the quality of life of children and of people with disabilities in Uganda, working closely with children, their parents and families, people with disabilities, Government and Non Governmental Organisations.



One of our key aims at Ka Tutandike Uganda is to encourage a culture of reading for pleasure in the primary schools of the Kampala district. Interviews with teachers, parents and children from a select sample of schools in the district found, amongst other things, that there weren't many reading activities available in schools and that appropriate resources were few and far between, with only one book available per five children. With this in mind we decided to teach the teachers and pupils in some of the local schools a book-making activity, which was based on an idea given to us by Red Earth, a partner organisation of ours who carry out teacher training in the district.

We tried the activity first with a small group of teachers and pupils from Ttula Primary School. We made the books from pieces of sack, a few sheets of photocopying paper and some string (**see below for step by step instructions**). The books are now used as diaries in which the children (and some of the teachers) write about anything they would like to share: their families, their favourite class, things that have made them happy or sad. Once all the pages are filled, the diaries will take pride of place in a special area of the school's libraries, where parents and other children can come and read them.

The idea is to make the book-making activity sustainable through the transfer of skills and knowledge from child to child and teacher to teacher. Each week the teacher and pupils who completed the activity the previous week will teach a new bunch of children and teachers until every person in the school, whether member of staff or pupil, has a book they have made themselves. Ka Tutandike will then roll the activity out in the rest of the schools, so that eventually, every one of the 1,720 children in the schools will have learnt this new skill!

Both teachers and pupils alike have really enjoyed this activity. Not only has it given the children an opportunity to develop their writing skills, but the practical skill of book-making may well come in useful: many families may not have the money to buy notebooks for their children, so this is an excellent alternative. As the Deputy Headteacher at Ttula Primary School commented, "The children can now make their own books without having to ask their parents to buy them books at the beginning of every term".

The children also feel like they will have "left their mark", as their completed diary will remain in the school library long after they have left.

Overall, we at Ka Tutandike Uganda would deem this book making activity a great success. It just goes to show that you don't need an abundance of resources to make an activity work; a little imagination goes a long way!

Reading Connects and Ka Tutandike have been sharing ideas for developing reading in schools. You can find out more about Ka Tutandike Uganda's READ project on their website (www.katutandike.org).

See below for step by step instructions for the book-making process...

The book-making process

1. First, we cut the sack into small pieces, each the slightly above the size of an A4 piece of paper. This is the cover to the book.



You will need:

- A sack
- photocopying paper
- string
- a big eye needle
- scissors
- a candle

2. Then we used a candle to burn the sides of the sack so that they don't unravel.



3. Next we folded four or five pieces of paper and put them inside the sack cover.



4. Then we used the needle and string to attach the paper to the sack cover, making sure we sewed down the folded line of the paper.



5. Finally, we wrote our names on the front cover, and our books were ready to be written in!

