Inspiring Hope

Positive change through linking communities in Sierra Leone and Canada

Peaceful Schools International and Centre for Development and Peace Education

Saidu Timbo and Carolyn van Gurp
What?

- “Solidarity for children”
- Build relationships
- Combats myths and stereotypes
- Leads to understanding and action
- Comes from our experience with child combatants, teaching and solidarity work
Why?

• The world is facing massive change (e.g. peak oil, climate change, resource depletion, etc.)

• 99% of parents stated developing social skills is a key goal schools should set for the education process

• Personal connections lead to most meaningful learning
Historical connections
Centuries of slave trade left a devastating legacy...
Black Loyalists

• About 3,000 Black Loyalists and 2,500 slaves came to Nova Scotia during the American War of Independence.

• Harsh conditions, broken promises and racism make life untenable, Thomas Peters takes petition for land to Britain and the Sierra Leone Company offers transport to “The Province of Freedom”.

RUN away on the 27th Inst. a Negro Man, named, DICK, (belonging to Mr. BENJAMIN DOUGLAS, late Ensign in the King’s Carolina Rangers) about five feet eight inches high Stout Made, had on when he went away a red Coat turn’d up with blue, white Waistcoat and Breeches, Aged about Twenty seven Years. Whoever will apprehend said Negro and bring him to Mr. ANDREW THOMSON, of Halifax, Merchant shall be handsomely rewarded.

Nov. 29th, 1783.
Freetown

• In 1792 about 1,200 Nova Scotian Black Loyalists migrate to “Freetown” followed in 1800 by about 500 Nova Scotian-Jamaican Maroons

• The “Nova Scotians” history influences culture, language, politics to today
Resource Exploitation

- [Image of people working in water]

- [Diagram of resource exploitation]

- [Diagram of resource depletion]

- [Diagram of resource conservation]

- [Diagram of sustainable resource management]
UNICEF reports that IMF “Structural Adjustment Policies” meant less money for education, especially in rural areas.

Lack of educational opportunities in rural areas was one key factor contributing to the war.

“Sierra Leone: IMF, World Bank Are a Major Cause of Poverty”
Concord Times (Freetown)
March 14, 2007
• School twinning presents a different history

• Presents alternate models of social organization

• Opportunity to investigate international or global issues
What do you know about Sierra Leone?
Legacy of war

• 11 years of horrific civil war described as the most brutal war in the history of Africa in terms of human rights violations.

• Ranked at the bottom of the Human Development Index and is considered as the least livable country in the world based on education, health, and economic standards and has some of the worst indices in literacy and mortality.
  – Life expectancy at birth is 41 years
  – Adult literacy is 34%
  – Under-five infant mortality is almost 30%
Impact on Education

• The war displaced half of the country’s population. Schools were destroyed and the economy was totally devastated.

• Children abducted by adult combatants were forced to fight often under the influence of drugs.

• About 67% of school age children stayed out of formal school education for many years.
• Recovering from war has been a slow process as the reconstruction of schools and other basic infrastructure has barely started.

• A shortage of schools and teachers has made the implementation and achievement of Universal Primary Education impossible in the rural communities.
...but...

- Sierra Leone has a long history of village-based conflict resolution that has much to teach the rest of the world
- It had a successful disarmament program
- Many former child combatants are reintegrated into communities
- Education is highly valued by community members
- We now share our expertise in resolving conflict in other war-torn African countries.
We are presently developing education through school twinning and peace education which generates a culture of sharing, knowledge and ideas through connecting with schools on both sides of the ocean.
School Twinning for a Small Planet
~ Sierra Leone ~
Photo Review

• Name the person in the photo
• Look carefully at the person and background
• What is he or she doing, thinking, feeling?
• Have you had similar thoughts, feelings or actions?
• Discuss with a partner.
WE BELIEVE...

PEACE is in OUR hands...

...and the LOVE of Humanity will guide our steps.
SIERRA LEONE
PEACE WAS BORN
HERE
UNAMSIL
Mrs. Rush's Kindergarten Class.
My dear Emma,

I am Isatu Turay. We are of the same group (12 years). I enjoy playing volleyball and basketball. I have two brothers and a sister. I am in J. S. S. I; that is grade 7 in Canada. I want us to unite and make the world a better place.

With LOVE
From Isatu.
...inspiring hope through...

- Community peace-making
- Egalitarian communities
- Living within our resources
- Respecting others
- Children’s understanding and action
- Building relationships
Contact and Resources

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