



A. S. Hornby Educational Trust

REPORT ON HORNBY-FUNDED TEACHER ASSOCIATION PROJECT

Title: Best Practices in the Classroom workshop and CoPs creation and implementation in Bukavu, Goma and Kisangani for CLASS Sustainability

Country: Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Dates:

Training in Kisangani: 15–17 February 2019
Training in Goma: 18–20 February 2019
Training in Bukavu: 22–24 February 2019

1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Teachers of English among CLASS members have been working on best practice in the classroom. This has contributed to an improvement in the quality of English teaching and learning in secondary schools in the targeted cities: Kisangani, Goma and Bukavu.

Given that the Teacher Association in the DR Congo – CLASS – always struggles to bring its members together but permanently fails to maintain them because of distance, lack of funding and facilities, as well as the teachers' living conditions, it would be useful to train some Communities of Practice Leaders in order to boost the Association's activities.

2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Main objective

This project's main objective was to boost CLASS activities in the eastern Congo.

Specific objectives were to:

- contribute to the promotion of ELT in Kisangani, Goma, and Bukavu;
- contribute to the spread of English language mastery;
- increase the level of teachers by providing them with modern methods and techniques in the teaching of English in secondary schools;
- create CoPs and train the leaders to run them on their own;
- increase teachers' involvement in CLASS activities through CoPs;
- help CLASS increase and maintain its members.

3. PROJECT MEMBERS AND THEIR ROLES

Team leaders

Name: KALEBA Walingene Joseph

Institution: CLASS



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Responsibilities: East Regional President of CLASS and Trainer and Project president: coordinated all the activities and gave the report.

Name: Kyalumba Kubenghi Modeste

Institution: CLASS

Responsibilities: Provincial President of CLASS South Kivu and Project 3rd Secretary: managed the finance of the project for Bukavu.

Name: Claude KIKURU Samaneno

Institution: CLASS

Responsibilities: Provincial President of CLASS North Kivu and Project 1st Secretary: managed the finance of the project for Goma.

Name: Pierre BATOKE Billy

Institution: CLASS

Responsibilities: Provincial President of CLASS Tshopo and Project 2nd Secretary: managed the finance of the project for Kisangani.

Name: MUBAKE Ndume Walasa

Institution: Congolese Language Supporters Society CLASS

Responsibilities: CLASS Trustee – was meant to advise the team about eventual risks and problems during the execution of the project, but unfortunately could not make it because of health problems.

4. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

The training sessions in the three provinces were officially opened and closed by the provincial education authorities. In Kisangani, the Provincial Minister of primary, secondary and professional education was accompanied by the Provincial Director of Education (PROVED) and the Provincial Inspector Principal (IPP). In Goma and Bukavu, the Vice-Inspector Principals in charge of Professional Trainings were accompanied by two Inspectors each.

4.1 Session organisation

The Training venues

There were three training venues: in Kisangani, the training took place at IFCPS institute; in Goma, in the meeting hall of Mwanga High School; and in Bukavu, in 'Salle Vandenaute' of the 'Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de Bukavu'.

Training Participants

With the project goal being 'CLASS sustainability', to be selected the training participants had to be CLASS active members. Hence, in Kisangani 50, Goma 40 and Bukavu 30 teachers attended the sessions. It is worth mentioning that they were from different networks: catholic, protestant, official and private schools.

4.2 Session procedure

In each province all sessions were run alike:

DAY ONE: 'Best Practices in the Classroom'

The facilitator of the session started by saying that those best practices were not new, but rather existing practices that teachers know well but don't put into practice. So, the sessions were a reminder of some good practices that teachers should apply in their daily teaching.

Therefore, for the best practices in the classroom, the facilitator spoke about the following:

Knowing our pupils' names

Here are some techniques that a teacher can apply in order to learn the pupils' names:

- using printed cards with names on the learners' desks;
- asking the learners to tell their names before giving answers;
- using a reference that the teacher establishes in advance.

Referring to the National curriculum

Teachers were advised to use the national curriculum; the random selection of the materials to teach cannot bring good results.

Using a balanced curriculum

A balanced curriculum is a curriculum that takes into consideration all the language skills and is adapted to the situation and the context of the classroom. This means that although there is a national curriculum, the teacher should contextualize it according to the realities of the school or the classroom where they are teaching.

Adopting a good position

It is a good practice for the teacher to adopt a good position when teaching and while writing on the blackboard. This means that it is not good for a teacher to write while keeping their back to the pupils for a long time without talking to them. The teacher should either stand right or left provided that what they write can be seen by all the learners at the same time.

Some videos about the foremost practices were shown simultaneously, followed by comments from both the participants and the facilitator. We called it a day at 5pm.



Joseph training teachers in Bukavu town.

DAY TWO

The second day for all the sessions began with some warm up activities. Then, the participants went back to the training halls and began the sessions.

The facilitator introduced 5 principles of good practice in the classroom:



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- giving clear instructions for activities;
- providing a model task;
- monitoring the groups as they work;
- using gestures;
- providing feedback to exercises.

Giving clear instructions

It is better for the teacher to explain well what they expect their learners to do. This means that, whenever there is a task, the teacher should give clear instructions for the learners to understand what they are required to produce as result of the task.

Providing a model task

It is also a good practice for the teacher to provide a model activity before the learners are asked to perform it so that they can imitate or at least get inspiration from the teacher's model.

Monitoring the groups

It is a good practice for a teacher to monitor the pupils when they have given them an activity. This means that the teacher should not sit or stand in the same spot when the learners are working in groups. Instead, they must circulate so as to see how the pupils are working and assist them whenever there is a need, or control them as well.

Using gestures

Teachers were advised to facilitate the learners' understanding by using gestures which better explain the words. Pupils understand well a word which is followed by a gesture. Meanwhile, gestures help save energy in that the teacher will not talk much in the classroom.

Providing feedback

After an exercise or any work given to the pupils, teachers should provide feedback while or after correcting in order that the pupils understand why/how answers were judged correct or wrong.

Other videos were shown, and then the participants engaged in a lot of discussion. Many questions were asked including the following:

- *How can a teacher use group work in a crowded classroom?*

The discussion led us to discover that clear instructions should help the teacher to handle the classroom. The teacher should always allow the whole class to work at the same time, with clear instructions and tactful monitoring.

- *What can a teacher do if school leaders are against the communicative approach?*

It is obvious that when the teacher resorts to the communicative language method, there must be a lot of noise in the classroom. It is also possible that school leaders are not being informed about the methodology and can misunderstand. After a long discussion among the participants, we came to the conclusion that every time when there is any innovation we should take time to explain to our leaders. The teachers were therefore advised to give a debriefing on all the training they attend.

- *Is it good to resort to local languages or at least to a mother tongue while teaching foreign languages?*

The answer is yes, especially when giving instructions. The role of the teacher is to ensure learners understand what they are teaching them. For this reason, the teacher should make sure that all that they tell the learners is understood correctly, so that the learners can give the teacher what s/he is expecting from them.

At the end of the day, the facilitator tackled the point of how someone can become more engaged in their profession. The idea was that those who want to become a resource should:

- Affiliate in associations: national (like CLASS) or international (like TESOL/ IATEFL);
- Attend local and global conferences like the annual conferences of CLASS, TESOL or IATEFL;
- Develop leadership skills (check out TESOL's leadership programs) so you can be a resource.



Billy (CLASS President in Kisangani) and Joseph (Facilitator) workshop in Kisangani.

DAY THREE

The last day also started with some warm up activities, generally songs or games and then the facilitator introduced the CoPs sessions.

Communities of Practice for teachers are helpful because they:

- help us to build our expertise;
- make us confident as we share experiences with colleagues;
- help us to have fun;
- save time when coming to meetings;
- help save energy as they are located where everyone can attend;
- help us build personal development;
- give professional identity;
- give opportunity to network;
- provide marketability.



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The advantages of the CoPs are not only for individual members, but there are also advantages for organizations. The facilitator gave then the characteristics of CoPs:

- They are for all the members and the respect is equal;
- There is no boss in the CoPs; all the members are valued;
- Members are sharing and not competing.

And after giving these characteristics, the facilitator gave some benefits of CoPs:

- Members don't feel alone;
- Members build self-esteem when they are sharing with others;
- Members can confirm their thoughts;
- Members look forward to teaching again;
- Members can brainstorm solutions to problems.

Common activities in CoPs:

- Sharing professional findings;
- Sharing teaching tips or exploring classroom challenges;
- Discussing theories or principles in relation to actual practice;
- Seeking each other's advice and feedback;
- Setting up lesson study groups;
- Action research projects;
- Opportunity to use and practise English.

Key to CoPs success:

- Participation is voluntary;
- Begin with small things which happen daily in the classroom;
- Focus on teaching issues; avoid administrative problems you can't solve;
- Interaction with peers is obligatory;
- Acknowledge other people's contributions;
- Use questions over statements;
- Value description over evaluation;
- Hedge your opinions.

Reasons for resisting CoPs:

Some people refuse to attend CoPs meeting for a range of reasons. These can include:

- I am too busy;
- I know how to teach;
- I don't have enough time;
- I have too much work to do;
- They aren't paying me for it;
- There is no way to teach ourselves. They ought to give us good training;
- I have done my duty. Let others come over.

By the end of the presentations, different CoPs were created and the members from each CoP got time to plan their meeting venues, days and times. Then the CoP leaders were elected. In Total, 15 CoPs were created:

	Kisangani	Goma	Bukavu
1	Makiso CoP	Mwanga CoP	INPP CoP
2	Mangobo CoP	Katindo CoP	Together we can CoP
3	Kabondo CoP	Kyeshero 1 CoP	Go Forward CoP
4	Lubunga CoP	Kyeshero 2 CoP	Panzi CoP
5	Tshopo CoP	Ndosho CoP	Nguba CoP

A WhatsApp group including these CoPs members was created for posting all necessary pieces of information. This has allowed the training facilitator Mr Kaleba W Joseph to coach the CoPs at distance.



Joseph in yellow T-shirt among the participants after the workshop in Bukavu town.

The training sessions were concluded with the satisfaction of all the participants. It is then that the provincial Authorities closed the meetings officially with speeches in French.

5. EVALUATION

A total number of 120 secondary school English teachers in Bukavu, Goma and Kisangani were provided with best practice knowledge in the teaching of English. It is our hope that the teaching and learning activities will be improved as those beneficiaries have committed to put into practice the knowledge learned in order to mitigate the chaos of technology and globalization. In each province, 5 members were elected as CoPs leaders and were equipped with adequate strategies to run CoPs successfully.

Because of the distance, we agreed that each Provincial President will follow up with their CoPs. We have heard from the teachers who missed the training that they wish to be trained as well. We created a WhatsApp group through which we are in contact with active CoPs but some others are not as active as expected. Up to now there has not yet been any formal evaluation carried out.



CoPs created during the workshop

6. EXPENDITURE

Description	Breakdown	Total costs	Remarks
Rooms Hire	The trainings took place in comfortable rooms in Kisangani, Goma and Bukavu.	nil	Rooms were granted free of charge as local participation thanks to CLASS diplomacy.
Paper	3 reams of paper	\$18.75 (£15.00)	Hornby funds
Pens	2 boxes of pens	\$12.50 (£10.00)	<i>Ditto</i>
Hotels	Hotels for the facilitator in Goma and Kisangani.	nil	CLASS made arrangements for hotels as local contribution.
Chalk	2 boxes of chalk	\$2.50 (£2.00)	Hornby funds
Trainer allowance	\$62.50 (£50.00) per each three-day training in three areas	\$187.50 (£150)	<i>Ditto</i>
Secretary's allowance	Three secretaries and each received \$25.00 (£20.00)	\$75.00 (£60.00)	<i>Ditto</i>
Advisor's allowance	Three advisors and each received \$25.00 (£20.00)	\$75.00 (£60.00)	<i>Ditto</i>
Catering	Food and water were served at \$125.00 (£100.00) for 9 trainings.	\$1,125.00 (£900.00)	<i>Ditto</i>
Flight, Ship and Cab tickets	Cab: \$37.50 (£30.00) Ship: \$50.00 (£40.00) Flight: \$410.01 (£328.00) Gopass: 15.00\$ (£12.00)	\$512.51 (£410.00)	Hornby funds. Gopass is an extra tax required besides the flight ticket in DRC.



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Local transport	Local transport: \$125.00 (£100.00) for the CLASS staff	\$125.00 (£100.00)	Hornby funds
Telephone	Telephone calls: \$50.00 (£40.00) Megabytes: \$35.00 (£28.00)	\$106.25 (£85.00)	<i>Ditto</i>
Certificates for participants	Kisangani:\$15.60 (£12.50) Goma:\$12.50 (£10.00) Bukavu: \$10.00 (£8.00)	\$38.10 (£30.48)	Hornby funds. We delivered certificates instead of badges.
Attendees' transport	Kisangani: \$75.00 (£60.00) Goma:\$400.00 (£320.00) Bukavu:\$250.00 (£200.00)	\$725.00 (£580.00)	Each province paid for their members' transport according to their contributions.

CLASS was awarded **£1907**, but we used **£1822.48**, i.e. **£84.52** was lost due to exchange: Pound → Rwandan francs → US dollars → Congolese francs.

7. DISSEMINATION TO A WIDER AUDIENCE

These are the activities we are planning in future:

Who?	How?	Why?
Existing CoPs in Bukavu	talk to them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They haven't understood the rationale for their own growth in their profession; They prioritize money over knowledge; They are self-reliant for their knowledge and qualifications.
Ditto	Schedule meetings (twice a month)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They are not functioning as expected. To train them on CPD to trigger their desire for regular meetings. Progressive attraction towards the CPD activities.
New CoPs in Bukavu	Sensitize them about creating new CoPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need for other CoPs in Bukavu.
Ditto	Organise a two-day training on CPD Deliver lesson model demonstrations followed by reflections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To train them on CPD to trigger their desire for regular meetings. Progressive attraction towards the CPD activities.
Old and new CoPs in Bukavu	Include the new CoPs in the monthly meetings together with old CoPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For CoPs perennality
CoPs in Goma and Kisangani	Same as in Bukavu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as in Bukavu



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8. OVERALL REFLECTIONS

As the project team we have noticed that the project was worth running because CoPs will contribute to our TA sustainability. Such trainings need to be multiplied, however we have learned that when planning trainings in our different provinces we need to be cautious with the budget.

9. GOING FORWARD/ LOOKING AHEAD

The project started in February and ended in June 2019. There is a strong need for another project to familiarize teachers with CPD. Meanwhile, CLASS DRC is grateful to the British Council, especially the Hornby Trust for funding such a valuable project.