



# Teachers Without Borders Canada

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## A New Year - A Renewed Spirit!

Here we are at the beginning of a new year caught between trying to shake the woes of a tumultuous past few months and inspired by the hope of a renewed spirit.

As educators we are not only entrusted with advancing the knowledge and skills of the students in our care, but also to motivate them to strive for greater things. But who or what motivates us?

This, our second issue of the TWB-Canada newsletter, is dedicated to our colleagues in Kenya and South Africa who shared a small sample of their lives with us as we tried to support and motivate them in their circumstances—only to find it is they who inspired us.

If you were able to take some time to read some of the 2008 team members' reflections, you would soon realize the great impact the experience had on our lives and would have on the classrooms, schools and communities to which we would soon return. Many of you, who have had similar experiences, understand the power of these emotions and feelings.

Now, as you read some of the “what are we doing now” stories in this issue, start to imagine how these kinds of experiences will affect you and why you may have hesitated to get involved. Now is the time to act. We are currently accepting applications for our 2009 projects. For information on how to apply, you must be a member of our online community and join either or both of our South Africa and Kenya 2009 Project groups. If you have not yet joined us online, do so at [www.twbcanada.org](http://www.twbcanada.org) today!

Even if you cannot travel with us this year, you can still get involved. The economic climate not only has had a drastic effect on the financial world, but also on many non-profits as we try to secure the funding and grants that we need to support our projects. Those of you who are willing to lend a hand with grant applications and fund-raising, please contact Silvia Knittel, our Fund-Raising Coordinator, at [sknittel@twbcanada.org](mailto:sknittel@twbcanada.org). If fund-raising is not your thing, we could also use your help to collaborate, share ideas, develop content, network, create partnerships, etc. So don't delay—join us online today!

Together, through our collective action, we can harvest the motivation we seek to renew our spirit and inspire greatness in our colleagues, our students and ourselves.

Noble Kelly  
President, Teachers Without Borders - Canada



## What We're Doing Now

Members of TWB-Canada who traveled to Kenya and South Africa share their reflections on how the experience of working with African teachers affected them and their classroom practice.



### A Plan of Action

Betty Anne Kiddell, Winnipeg

I found our time in Kenya with TWB-Canada during the summer of 2008 to be both stimulating and exciting, and also a bit overwhelming. I found it challenging trying to determine what I could do to help that would be meaningful and attainable. The Kenyan teachers we met were all working in difficult conditions with huge classes, but were amazingly enthusiastic about their jobs. It has taken me several months to formulate a plan of action for myself.

My first plan was fairly simple to accomplish. The high school chemistry teachers in Kenya desperately needed periodic tables, so I ordered more of the free ones for them and sent 100 back to Kenya with a Kenyan community leader who visited Vancouver in the fall. I have 100 more to send to teachers in the Naivasha district.

Dennis, who traveled with our team last summer, and I met with staff at the Manitoba Teachers Society (MTS) and discussed ways to financially support Manitoba teachers who become involved with TWB-Canada. As a result, my school division representatives are presently drafting a motion to present at the next Annual General Meeting for MTS in which five Manitoba teachers could obtain \$2000 each to help defray the costs of travel to TWB workshop locations. This motion will hopefully be presented in the spring.

I've met with executives at Manitoba Hydro to request funds from them for TWB projects but that request has been unsuccessful. They are presently considering a request for laptop computer donations and are offering classroom supplies to take to Kenya such as posters and pencils.



Betty with high school students in Kenya.  
Photo by Betty Anne Kiddell.

At my junior high school, I have been including references to my experiences in Kenya where appropriate. We have a club at the school called HOPE (Helping Other People Everywhere). In September, I gave a short presentation to the students in this club, and they decided to help me raise funds for a student in Kenya. Last week at a staff meeting I gave a slide show and talked briefly about the Kenya project. When the staff became aware of my goal to raise \$350 to pay the fees for one high school student in Kenya, they opened their wallets and have given me \$200 in the last few days. The students are planning a bake sale in February to raise money for this.

I have since shown the slide show to many of my classes and discussed my experiences with my students. They are curious about the schools and the curriculum. They enjoy seeing the students and teachers doing some of the lessons that I use in my classroom. The experience with TWB has enriched my teaching, and given me a new way to connect with my students.



## Students Learning Without Borders

Sharon Peters, Montreal

My trip to South Africa and Kenya last summer with Teachers Without Borders - Canada opened my eyes to the potential of tapping into the power of technology tools in order to create and maintain connections. I also witnessed the desperate need for not only computers and Internet connection for schools, but also the teaching of technology skills.

Four XO laptops (from the [One Laptop Per Child](#) program) had been donated to our team and given to two schools while we were there in July and August. When I returned from Africa, two more of those laptops were donated to me to give to schools in Africa in October. Knowing I would be meeting a Kenyan educator in a few weeks' time in Vancouver, I turned to my grade seven students and asked for their help. XO laptops may have a limited capacity in hard drive space, but they are chock full of educational activities and are designed specifically for young students. I asked my students to create content on and for the laptops, knowing that they would be used by students in Kenya.

My students enthusiastically threw themselves into the project and, as usual, came up with excellent ideas on what content to embed on the machines.

They created "day in the life" stories of themselves, recorded their stories, and produced various tutorials on how to use the XOs. We also sent along donated usb flash drives with educational videos and portable applications that can run right from the flash drives.

The machines have since been delivered to [Loise School](#) in Nanyuki, Kenya, a school for disadvantaged female students. School has resumed in mid-January and now, with the aid of the [Ol Pejeta Conservancy](#), one of the NGOs we have partnered with, we are hoping to sponsor the employment of an education worker who will go into the school and teach computer skills to the teachers and students of that school, thus creating a sustainable partnership with the students there while contributing to the Kenyan economy.

I have since been donated another two XO machines and am creating a similar project with my grade eight students and a school in rural Nepal. My students are also [creating a web presence](#) for the school to draw the world's attention to the needs of the school.

Along the way, we at Teachers Without Borders - Canada have also created an online space where we hope our students can meet and collaborate. We call this space School2School and it can be found at: <http://school2school.ning.com/>. It is an initiative just getting off

the ground, but if you are interested in partnering with a school in Africa or would like to become a member of our community, please consider joining.

Looking ahead, I am hoping that as the new school year begins in Kenya and South Africa, teachers we met in July and August of last year will consider collaborating with schools here in North America. Also, with the costs of DVDs, usb flash drives, and small laptops dropping even more, I am hoping to bring over even more of these supplies on our next visits to Africa. Please consider donations of these devices if you are interested in supporting global education. They are important tools for the development of relationships between students!



Grade seven students in Montreal creating resources for their peers in Kenya. Photo by Sharon Peters.



## Special Education in Kenya

Carolanne Oswald, Victoria

During July and August, 2008, a group of ten teachers traveled to Kenya with Teachers Without Borders-Canada to provide professional development for Kenyan teachers, teaching resources and an opportunity for teachers from both countries to collaborate together and learn from each other. It was a rewarding experience for both the workshop facilitators from Canada and the Kenyan teachers. The Canadian TWB Team also visited many schools and met with Kenyan teachers in order to better understand the strengths, needs and challenges faced by both teachers and students in Kenya. The group soon learned that there isn't adequate, if any, funding for special education in Kenya.

Children with special needs are not provided with opportunities for an education and most stay at home while their siblings go to school. For one group of children with special needs, this has recently changed. In April 2008, the Malaika Kids daycare was established by Comfort the Children, a non-profit organization based in the US. Malaika Kids is a daycare for children with special needs in the town of Maai Mahiu in Kenya. The children are taught by volunteers, many of whom are grandmothers who want to give back to their community and care deeply about children. The volunteers at Malaika Kids provide activities for the children, including singing, games, and instruction in basic counting, letter recognition, and movement skills. While their children are learning, the mothers sew bags in the room next door. These canvas bags are then sold in the US. As a result of this program, the mothers are able to earn money for their families and the children are provided with learning opportunities.

The TWB teachers were very interested in helping the Malaika Kids and visited the daycare during their stay in Kenya. As an experienced Special Education teacher, I was particularly interested in this project



Danson testing out his new fitted chair at Malaika Kids Daycare. The chair was purchased with funds secured by Carolanne through her fundraising efforts.

and spent time working with the children in order to assess their abilities, needs, and challenges. After an enjoyable time working with the children, I determined how the students' educational needs could be met and wrote Individual Education Plans for each student. After purchasing a variety of needed educational resources, supplies, and clothing for each child, I returned to the school and provided instruction for the volunteers and parents. Funding was also provided for the purchase of special fitted chairs for students with physical disabilities and to ensure that each child received proper medical assessment. Other TWB-Canada team members were also inspired to help the Malaika Kids. For example, upon her return to Canada, Betty Anne Kiddell worked with students in Manitoba to raise funds for the Malaika Kids. The family of Anita Hayhoe, another member of our team, contributed funds to pay for hearing assessment and hearing aids.



## Reflection on TWB South Africa 2007 - An Unplanned Journey

Elspeth Anderson

I found out on May 4th that, by June 20th, I was flying to South Africa (many, many thanks to all those who told me “yes, just go!”). It was a whirlwind with lesson planning, packing, house sitter organizing, and meetings; there was little time to wonder if this was right. The trip developed a pace and a wonder all its own that remains all these many months later.

Within hours of our arrival in Johannesburg, we were touring a game park with the Math team from Hawaii. We were the newly formed TWB-Canada team of Science teachers and soon were learning the ropes with Noble Kelly, Canadian leader and IT teacher. TWB-SA is Yunus Peer’s brainchild, which implements workshops in South Africa.

Learning about post-Apartheid South Africa, a public servants strike that included the teachers, and how to interact, filled the first two days of our journey. We experienced the generosity of people as we travelled from Johannesburg to Port Shepstone in Kwazulu Natal to Mthatha (Nelson Mandela’s home town) in the Eastern Cape. We did a lot of driving and saw great tracks of the country and took thousands of photos.

Above all it was the teachers--black, rural teachers, some of whom were returning to participate again in the workshops on middle school science and math, who were hungry for knowledge. They were the most amazing people I have ever met. They have impossible class sizes, no resources, and the barest of classrooms. I have never felt so needed in a classroom before. It was hard to say goodbye to them, which we did three times, and I caught myself wondering if I could come back to my comfortable life and able students. Someone else can always do your job here but they truly needed us. It is a feeling that reaches far down.

We visited a high school outside Port Shepstone and saw for ourselves the 60 to 70 students in a class. The teacher, who knew the name of all the students, was drilling them in their knowledge. Their textbooks are shared and paper scarce, yet there were jokes being told and grins and laughter. It certainly is not the doom and gloom you might expect. Perhaps it was the fact that, to them, education is life. The excitement over the new computer lab, even if it does not yet have the Internet, also echoed the promise of prosperity. Even for these students, children of the sugar cane farmers, orphans of AIDS, and being raised by grandma, if you have IT skills then there may be hope for a better job.

There were many experiences to process. I found myself needing to spend time just thinking it all through and it has changed my life forever. I am actively working in my school to develop the opportunities for the next generation to both travel to Africa and South America and to pay attention locally to those whose lives are not as advantaged as ours but that we can do something about.

My heartfelt thanks to the other teachers of our team and to those amazing folks, our colleagues in South Africa who love to sing. You inspire us to be more than we are.



Elspeth leads her group as they explore the concept of electricity.

# Building Professional Knowledge Online ...



An interview with Lucy Gray, founder of the *Global Education Collaborative*, an online community for teachers and students interested in global education.

## 1. When did you create the *Global Education Collaborative* and what inspired you to start it? What is the rationale behind it?

First and foremost, I believe in being professionally generous with knowledge. The read/write web has allowed me to learn so much from others and I feel an obligation to give back and to foster collaboration. This drives my work.

In 2006, I went on a trip that really changed my perspective on education and the world in general. As part of the Apple Distinguished Educator Institute, I traveled to Berlin and Prague to help write curriculum around global awareness. This trip came about by many ADEs reading *The World is Flat* and being struck by the significance of globalization. I loved collecting digital material on the road about our experiences, and everything I learned changed my perspective on my own country.

While I had traveled extensively throughout North America, I hadn't really spent a great deal of time abroad. I regretted this in hindsight and came to the realization that kids and teachers really need to get to know the world better. Simple as that.

About a year later, fellow edublogger Steve Hargadon started an online community using a platform called Ning. His community allowed people to carry on threaded discussions, share multimedia, and customize personal pages in a social networking setting. Called Classroom 2.0, it focused on helping experienced and not so experienced teachers implement new and emerging technologies in their classrooms. I was struck by the sheer number of people that joined this group and by the ensuing



online conversations. Ning seemed like a great tool for bringing people together and I thought there was a need for a global education community. As a result, I created the *Global Education Collaborative* using Ning. The main premise of this site is to provide an online space without cost where educators and students can meet, collaborate, and share their ideas.

## 2. What are some of the advantages of being a GEC member? How can teachers or classrooms benefit from becoming a member?

The *Global Education Collaborative* provides a searchable directory of educators, links to resources, threaded discussions on various topics, space for personal blogs, and a multimedia collection of project examples and inspirational videos. I've also established a rudimentary database where educators can post specific projects in order to find potential collaborators. I am also now trying to hold monthly meetings online so that we can all get to know each other a bit better. It seems like the key to successful collaborative project is personal relationships; if project partners really know each other, it just leads to better project planning and implementation.

On a basic level, educators can peruse at their leisure the many resources, discussions and videos on the

GEC site; there really is a nice repository of information there. If teachers want to kick things up a notch, there are also groups within the GEC community for those looking for specific information on a topic or interested in pursuing an interest more in depth. When GEC members are ready to try projects, it's easy to make the necessary connections around the world as we have member representation from just about every continent.

### **3. Are there any collaborations or projects on GEC that you find particularly inspiring? Any success stories you would like to share?**

It's been difficult to assess the reach of GEC and if people are really connecting here. My feeling is positive connections are indeed happening from informal feedback from members and through our online meeting conversations. I think as our numbers climb, the activity in the community will climb. In Ning communities, it seems like those with many members are the most successful with keeping this online space active.

I really admire the work of one of my ADE colleagues, Valerie Becker. She has done a few projects that are interesting and she's combed the GEC to find project partners. Valerie works on the island of Martha's Vineyard off of Massachusetts and uses the island's history for inspiration when designing long term global projects. Last year, her main project focused on whaling (or former whaling) communities around the world. This year, she is conducting a project called Islands Around the World. You can check out some great videos by her students in the video section of the GEC.

Other things that have caught my eye recently include the work of Laurie Korte on using Moodle with global projects, the posting of a conference at Harvard on teaching about India, the Global Link of World Educators media literacy project, and Kari Stubbs' blog posts on her experiences in China.

### **4. GEC has enjoyed strong growth over the years ... do you have any specific plans for the future?**

In the future, I'd like to see representatives from various global education organizations post about their work within this community and hopefully, this will bring more transparency and collaboration to the multitude of organizations already doing great work in this arena. I see the GEC as a spot for connecting everyone.

I'd also like to see more members from Africa and South America. I know bandwidth and access are problems on these continents, but I am hopeful that equity issues will be conquered in the years to come. I'd also like to see more student voices intermingled with the adult conversations already going on!

And finally, I'd like to get members to help hammer out some sort of ideal global awareness curriculum, complete with examples and tips from schools that are making strides in preparing students to be active global citizens.

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The Global Education Collaborative can be found at:  
<http://globaleducation.ning.com/>

### **Interested in Applying to be Part of This Year's TWB-Canada Projects in South Africa and Kenya?**

To apply for our Kenya or South Africa projects, please join either the [South Africa](#) or [Kenya](#) discussion groups on our website (<http://twbcanada.org>). Then contact Noble Kelly to request an application form ([noble@twbcanada.org](mailto:noble@twbcanada.org)).



Staffroom at Miti Mingi Primary School, Kenya, August 2008. Photo by Konrad Glogowski.

### Eye to Eye with Child Labour

(<http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/eyetoeye/english.htm/>)

This resource by [Save the Children](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/) and funded by the European Union focuses on raising awareness of child labour issues by sharing photographs taken by the children themselves. The site's teaching resources include films and downloadable lesson plans for a variety of subjects. The site's creators hope that the resources will provide a glimpse into the lives of working children by allowing us "to see the world through their eyes and to better understand the challenges they face and some of the reasons why they work."

### TWB-Canada recommends ...

Online resources:

#### Project Explorer

(<http://www.projectexplorer.org/>)

ProjectExplorer offers free K-12 educational resources that focus on helping young people gain a better understanding of different cultures and issues from around the world. The creators of this resource describe it as a "free story-based, cross-curriculum education program that enhances the learning experience and sparks the imagination of students." The site features lots of multimedia materials to support a variety of curriculum areas.

#### Global Education

(<http://www.globaleducation.edna.edu.au/globaled/go>)

This is a very rich and diverse collection of resources on global issues. Funded by [AusAID](http://www.ausaid.gov.au/) and created in order to support global education in Australian schools, this site aims to help young people become more aware of international issues and to prepare them to become active citizens capable of contributing to social change. This collection includes excellent materials on the environment, gender equality, globalization, HIV/AIDS, human rights, peacebuilding, refugees, and many more key global issues.

### What's in a Name? Everything!

Our TWB-Canada newsletter needs a catchy name that reflects our mission and values. If you have an idea, please let us know!

You can forward your ideas to [newsletter@twbcanada.org](mailto:newsletter@twbcanada.org). Winner will be announced in our next newsletter.

Deadline for submissions is February 28th, 2009.

#### Contact us:

If you have any questions or would like to suggest or write content for our newsletter, please let us know.

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