

FEEDBACK FROM OWL VISITORS TO LEAMINGTON, JUNE 2009.

Before returning to Bo the 3 visitors addressed a meeting of OWL members to let us know what they thought of the visit.

Maada said he was struck first of all by our long daylight hours.

He was very happy to have had “doors opened” for him like visiting the WCC Observatory where he learnt about mapping techniques drawn from Google sources.

He felt the world becomes better through friendship, with observable improvement of peoples lives in Bo and Warwick Districts...The Community Centre which we had all worked together to erect, was having an impact on the Bo community.

With regard to human relationships between them and Europe, their first memorable ones were with colonial masters. Now they were learning to know whites better. He had gained a lot personally and felt his capacity was being built through his involvement with OWL. He said he would now be a catalyst to bring more people on board. He finished with “Kamallor” – goodbye.

Catherine said she had come over to represent the Bo women’s groups but because she was a teacher by training she had been able to school visits. She reminded us the children in Bo often attended schools without benches.

She said it had been difficult working with the women in Bo but now she hoped to go back and work with the most marginalised women.

She said that before this experience she had been told English people were not friendly or neighbourly.

Finally she expressed some concern that the three of them had had very little time for themselves during the visit. She thought maybe the prospective programme could be shared with them before they came so that they could comment...She particularly thought there should be more rest days.

Alpha said he had been told before he came that it is difficult to live with UK people. From his experience now he felt the British were better than Germans!

He said he had been asked some odd questions such as “Do you live in trees?” “Do you have houses?”

He felt he had learnt some of our culture, has learnt about the significance of taxation.

He referred to the colonial history of Sierra Leone (48 years) and was keen to see a new global network working towards global citizenship. How can we seduce new partners for this?

He looked forward to the development of the waste management programme in Bo, but he would also like to see other partnerships such as through music and entertainment.

When asked what had surprised him or amused him he listed;

- War,
- No people (where are they?)
- Seatbelt reoccupation
- Numbers travelling in a car
- Men helping women
- Beating children?