

*'It's not **hot**, it's not **hot**, it's not **hot**...*

*I repeat it like a **mantra** until my body believes it' - Mrs. Dupe-Killa*



The older boys' soccer team gearing up for practice

It is hot in the desert.

I am aware how obvious that statement must sound, but as a person who prided himself in enduring the broiling heat of the southern metropolitan Lagos for almost 20 years, it hit me hard. I was not prepared for the moisture-sucking, skin-blistering, sweltering heat of the north, of the Sahara. I quickly sought advice from a fellow southerner, Mrs. Dupe-Killa, who looked bemused, smiled softly and said: 'I have no idea what you are talking about' [see quote above].



Playing badminton with the younger boys

What heat? Nothing could stop me from having fun with the kids when classes were not in session. I played a round-robin badminton tournament with ten boys and despite my muscles not being as flexible and explosive as they used to be (*shakes head*), I managed to hold my own against the very energetic lads!



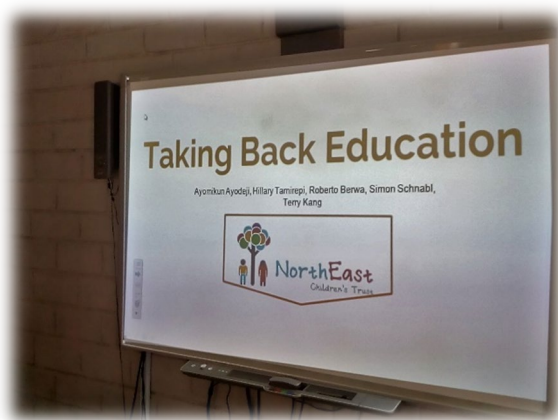
Playing beach soccer with the older girls



Playing beach volleyball with the older boys

Soccer with the older girls was lively! They held nothing back – from long crosses and dribbles to the occasional slide tackle that drew a penalty, they displayed great teamwork and intense passion for the national sport. They did not even need a referee! They quickly settled disputes and fouls on the pitch, demonstrating an impressive level of conflict resolution.

During a casual and amusing game of volleyball, the teachers joined in midway and made the stakes of winning even higher for the older boys. They all became eager to make superhuman leaps just to smash the volleyball with as much force as they could muster. I wonder why 😊.



*Starting slide of **Fountain of Knowledge** orientation session*

After all the exercise and enjoyment, it was time to get to work! The team had designed orientation programs to help students and teachers become familiar with the **Fountain of Knowledge**. The aim was for each person to feel fully confident in their ability to setup and navigate the contents of the **Fountain** by themselves, in order to achieve their independent or group learning objectives.



Ayo presenting the fountain on a smartboard



Students surfing the fountain on tablets alongside the presentation

Sessions were carried out in groups of about 30 persons and each lasted from 1 – 1½ hours. Armed with the Center’s sole smartboard (to simulate similar interactivity that learners would experience on their tablets), we dove into the fountain, navigated educational resources, answered probing questions and in all, had a great time doing so!

In the first afternoon session, the **heat wave** struck again and hit the fountain! Suddenly, switching through resources became painfully slow, devices that were previously able to connect were shut out, and we were left baffled as to what could have caused this. Sessions were postponed and after a couple test-runs, the team discovered a surprising truth: the fountain overheated!



Experiencing technical difficulties: the fountain overheats!

The last thing we had expected to pose a problem to the project was...the climate. It just goes to show that one cannot be prepared for every possible outcome, and we had to quickly maneuver out of this one.

Morning sessions were left unchanged, but afternoon sessions required a cooling fan to be situated right next to the fountain and were kept more tightly to the 1-hour mark.



Mrs. DK and children after an orientation session

The team realizes that this is a short-term solution and we need to find a more pertinent and lasting solution so the fountain can be accessed regardless of the time of day. However, it was an eventful week and we learnt the following lessons:

- 1) **We might need to install a self-cooling system into the fountain** – this could be a better long-term solution and should enable the fountain to be used in varied climates and conditions. We are grateful to have caught this issue early in the beta phase of the project!
- 2) **We need a contingency plan for long-distance troubleshooting and support** – this situation brought another concern to light – what happens if the server breaks down when no member of the team is at the center? We decided to equip the fountain with TeamViewer – an application that allows us to remotely access and control the fountain from anywhere, provided we have a 3G or better internet connection. This should help us provide short- and medium-term support and troubleshooting for software issues. In the long-term however, we are considering training a facilitator or staff, already skilled in CS, in understanding the workings of the fountain.
- 3) **It is definitely hot in the desert.**

Goals for following week: Video call with project team; Get to know more of the kids and the staff; Round up orientation sessions for teachers and kids; Collect feedback