'I hate saying goodbyes
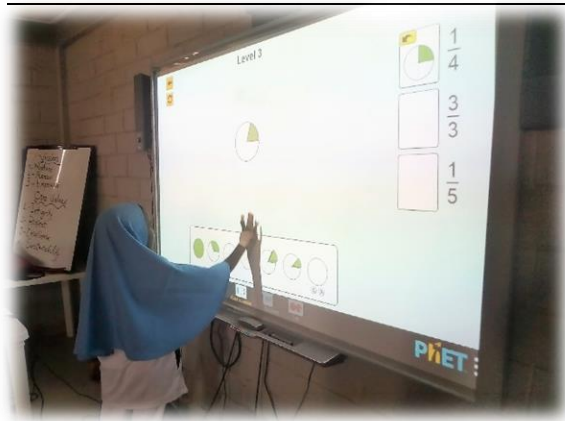
so… "See You Later!"'   *- Ajibola Lawal*

Mr. Musa and Ayo taking a stroll

Some things in life are inevitable, but very few of these unavoidable elements are as necessary, frustrating and rewarding as **Change**.

A student volunteering to solve fraction & shape questions during orientation

As the orientation sessions came to an end, it became clear that the children were quickest to adapt the Fountain for their own learning. I found it impressive that though they all showed signs of being shy at the beginning, their hands now shot up quickly to volunteer to start up the Fountain or to answer questions on the smart board. A wind of change began to blow through the Center.

Children pair up to solve questions on the Fountain

A group of teachers testing out a Biology PhET simulation on the Fountain

But even strong winds are unable to move large boulders at their first try. And just as I witnessed the widespread acceptance of the Fountain by the kids, the facilitators and I also noticed resistance to the new technology by some of the teachers. This scenario was expected, not hoped for of course, but well within the scope of what we had considered could happen. The concerns were also reasonable: "How do we ensure the children are not distracted by the tablets while in class?", "What if they become dependent on the Fountain and it affects their 'notebook learning' ability?", "Won't this require us to change our approach?" Fortunately, these questions were brought up in an open discussion with the teachers as it gave us the opportunity to properly address their worries.

Together, we resolved that there is a need for the teachers to adapt their teaching styles to incorporate the Fountain at relevant points during classes. While the versatility of the teachers takes priority, the potential benefits of these interactive educational resources in enhancing a child's learning experience should not be overlooked.

Photograph of the group of students at the final orientation session

Projects for Peace

Children handmaking Bama caps

Teachers were reminded that they were about to pioneer an educational journey never embarked on before in Nigeria for the growth of these amazing children. The eagerness of the teachers to be part of this experience, together with the support of the facilitators, was refreshing.

My final two days at the center were filled with euphoria and glee! I received countless Connect4 challenges after my public loss to Mustafa. I also witnessed something magical: a handful of children who were highly skilled in hand-crafting traditional Bama caps! The dexterity and concentration involved in producing headwear that was both fashionable and stunning left my mouth wide open in awe. I was therefore not shocked to hear that some of these children were eager to start a cap-making business and earn a livelihood even while gaining an education – this is exactly the type of entrepreneurial spirit the **Brave Starter Fund** is meant to support! (a fund TBE created using part of the Davis' Peace grant).

I nearly exploded when they handed me a bag of five Bama caps as farewell gifts for the rest of the team. There is definitely something special about these kids!
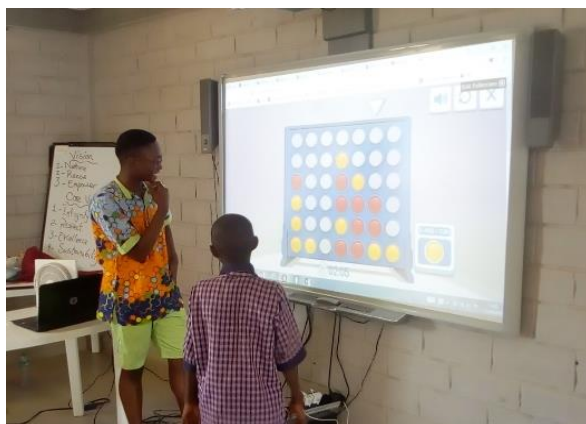
Connect4: Mustafa versus Ayo – Mustafa won !

Class Reps present the TBE team with farewell gifts (handmade Bama caps, kilishi and beads)

Projects for Peace

With all the talk about change, the team was equally reminded that in order to improve also we must change – both with respect to our team's structure and with respect to the Fountain specifications and functionality.

From left to right: Hillary Tamirepi, Simon Schnabl, Terry Kang, Mrs. Dupe-Killa, Ajibola Lawal, Ayomikun Ayodeji

Conference call between TBE Team and NECT

In addition to improvements detailed at the end of earlier reports, the major upgrade that we will strive for in the next version of the Fountain is to include **the ability to handle and administer Identity Management**.

The current version of the server acts solely as a repository of various opensource and interactive learning aids. However, it is vital that the teachers and facilitators are able to **monitor the progress and activity of each child**, especially given that they have all experienced trauma that could impair their learning. Also, **giving flexibility to teachers in deciding their classroom material** would surely aid in versatility and boost staff productivity. Therefore:

o   We are considering creating a **teachers' resource center** which will contain all learning resources in addition to teaching guides and device-agnostic sign-ins that will store each teacher's data and progress regardless of what device is used for access.

o   Similarly, we are looking to design a **children's access portal** and create device-agnostic sign-ins that carry each child's data and progress on whatever device is used for access.

o   A backend, for Administrators (i.e. facilitators and select staff in NECT) to **load content** and enhance the experience for users.

All the above features and more are encapsulated in a **Learning Management System (LMS)**, similar to what is used for academic work at MIT. In the near future, we will select, test and deploy an open source LMS that will hopefully meet all of NECT's needs.

There is no doubt that we still have a long road ahead of us, but we have begun this journey of a thousand miles by taking one solid step. Thank you so much for all the support – till next time!

-   Taking Back Education (TBE) team