

# Witnessing a Vision Become Reality

## Kabala Team #4



The Mango Tree

It started with a vision of school children playing under a mango tree; of children in uniform, who otherwise would not receive a quality education in a country recovering from civil war, learning to read and write in spacious classrooms with qualified teachers in a Christian school. This vision became a reality on September 7, 2007, when 40 school children in grades 1 – 4 sang, danced, and prayed at CRC Primary School's first all – school assembly.



September 2007 – 1<sup>st</sup> All – School Assembly

Since that day, this unique Christian school in a largely Muslim setting has grown to add grades 5 and 6, and more recently JSS I, II, and III, (or grades 7, 8, and 9). Today, thanks to this mutually gratifying partnership between our SCS community and our brothers and sisters in Kabala, Sierra Leone, over 300 students are discovering the teaching and learning process in a way that has seen unprecedented exam results.



March 2013 – CRC School Today

Just like any partnership, we need to see each other face to face in order for the relationship to flourish. We need to spend time with each other, learn from each other, and simply share stories, meals, and parts of ourselves and our culture with each other. This is the reason for our 'teams' of students and teachers visiting Kabala. In 2008, the first team visited this quiet town in Sierra Leone's remote Northern Province, and since then 3 more have gone, the most recent being Team #4, who visited this past Spring.

So what did we, Kabala Team #4, 'do' on our visit to Kabala? We simply visited. We were hosted by families, the school, the church and the community, and had an absolutely wonderful time.

On March 15<sup>th</sup>, Grade 12 students Malissa Moniz, Caitlin West, Anna Bomhof, and Kaitlyn Boessenkool, and teachers Jenny Vanderbeek, Evelyn Bouwman, and Joe Melissen left for Kabala, Sierra Leone. After a 48 hour travel experience, we arrived at in Kabala to a wonderful meal and welcome at Reverend Bahago's home, with JT Koroma (principal) and some other members of the community there to greet us. From that moment forward we felt as welcomed and taken care of as we had ever felt in our lives, and we knew we were in for a fantastic few weeks.



Team #4

The reason for our trip of course, was the partnership with the school, so that is where we spent every school day. What a blessing to witness the impact the school is making on the community! It was evident that the manageable class sizes, the adequate teaching and learning materials and the innovative teaching methods are impacting the learning of the students in truly positive ways. We were able to spend a lot of time observing in classrooms, and talking with students and staff during our time at the school. We also took many staff/school/student photos that we need for our Child Sponsorship program, and our students collaborated with some CRC students on some educational video projects. During our visits with other schools in the town, a recurring theme came through that they see CRC Primary/JSS as a ‘sister’ or ‘partner’ school, sharing their knowledge and resources with them, and their students and teachers have felt the benefit of that.

In addition to spending time at the school, the team was able to have some rich cultural experiences. The most impactful of these, of course, was the bond that was formed between our Grade 12 students and their host families. Staying for time period of 3 weeks can in many ways be heartbreaking, because you have to leave just as the bonds are being formed so significantly. If the many tears shed at the end of our visit were any indication, the students felt like they were being torn away from their family in order to go back to their families in Canada.

Another rich cultural experience was a 3-day Youth Conference that our students attended during our visit. The conference was put on by The Peoples Foundation for Sierra Leone (or ‘TPF’), an NGO that was started by Krissi Bucholtz, a member of Team #1 in 2008. Our students were able to learn and share differences between Canadian and Sierra Leonean culture, cite various obstacles for youth and brainstorm ways to overcome them, and discuss many other topics during the conference. Through this, lasting relationships were formed between our students and Sierra Leonean youth.

In and around these experiences, we were able to take part in a wide variety of other activities such as hiking a mountain, visiting a village for 2 days, going to an Easter celebration at a river, visiting a gold mine, spending time in Freetown, relaxing for a couple of days at a beach house, and many other things that will forever be in our minds and memories.

It’s hard to describe how we have been changed or impacted by our visit to Kabala. There is something about visiting a culture so different from our own that changes and broadens your perspective of God, yourself, and others. We are forever thankful to the staff and students at CRC Primary and Junior Secondary School, our homestay families, and everyone in that community for hosting us so graciously, and allowing us to have such an amazing experience.

In Christ,  
Kabala Team #4



Vision Becoming Reality: School Children Playing Under the Mango Tree



Team #4 Receiving Gifts from JT at a Goodbye Assembly