

Monthly Report (4)
June 2nd to June 31st

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Introduction

“T5 Star Events School of English” continues to exert a huge influence on Guinean society, particularly amongst the youth of Bissau. As we become more established and more well-known we have been able to attract, and provide for, students from a variety of backgrounds and professions. We are proud to announce an expansion in course provision during the rainy season with a series of higher level programmes.

Course Information

The first part of the Rainy Season Programme is currently underway. The two main courses are:

- 1) PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING**
This course includes a group of trainees from the National Teacher Training College.
- 2) ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES**
Aimed at, and providing for, groups of University students.

The second part of the Rainy Season Programme will commence shortly with two additional courses:

- 1) IN-SERVICE TEACHER DEVELOPMENT COURSE**
A programme of seminars for ELT practitioners currently employed in public secondary schools.
- 2) ENGLISH FOR DEVELOPMENT WORKERS**
Aimed at employees of International (and National) NGOs.

Note that the Teacher Development Course is a particularly expensive course for us to run effectively so any support (resources, funds for photocopying) is especially welcome.

Student Profiles

The Rainy Season Programme has a total of 160 students in 8 separate classes. When the second part of the Programme begins this number will rise to 220, 42% of whom are female. We feel very strongly that our Equal Opportunities policy is beginning to have a significant, positive effect despite the negative impact on revenue.

Teacher Profiles

The teachers at T5 Star Events School of English are vital elements in the success of the school. Their commitment to the T5 NGO project has often – far too often – meant that they are working for little or no salary.

The school has 8 teachers, each with a Bachelor Degree in ELT, all having graduated from the National Teacher Training College (“Tchico Te”). The prevailing circumstances in Guinea-Bissau mean that, at the moment, none of the teachers have the opportunity to study for a Masters Degree.

In addition to teaching, all the teacher work hard to promote the reputation of the school and to publicise the work of T5 NGO. Supporters of T5 NGO can be assured that donations marked “T5 Teacher Salaries” will be divided exclusively and proportionately between the 8 teachers. Our aim is to achieve an hourly rate of between £1 and £1.50 (1,000cfa –1,500cfa).

In order to present a flavour of “Life as an English Teacher in Guinea-Bissau” we asked some of the T5 Teachers a few questions about their busy lives:

First, TEACHER CECIL POLICARPO CABRAL ALMADA.....

Why I became an English teacher:

I became an English teacher for a simple reason; after finishing my studies at high school I was looking for the best way to give a contribution to my country. After a lot of thinking and many suggestions from my family and close friends I decided to enrol at the Teacher Training College in the English Language Speciality simply because English is an important language and it has a great influence in my country. I was aware, however, that I was going to be trained to be a teacher in a country where teachers are overworked and underpaid but when I thought about what I could help my people to achieve with the learning of the English language I quickly forgot the problem that would be waiting for me in the future. I said, “be an English teacher and help your people to overcome their major problems in learning this fantastic language”. After three years of training I became an English teacher.

A day in my teaching life:

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A day in my teaching is very interesting but also a bit exhausting because I usually wake up around 6:30 a.m and after taking a quick breakfast I rush to school where the classes normally start at 7:30 a.m and finish around 12:30 p.m. After school I normally go for lunch, take some rest, prepare my lessons again, rush to school for 5:00 p.m and go back home at 9:00 p.m. This means that I teach ten hours a day, which is sometimes very difficult and boring.

A typical lesson at T5 Star Events School of English:

My typical lessons at T5 School are based on establishing a great level of fluency which means we work a lot on communicative activities even though we lack a lot of materials. One thing else I always fight for is to keep the students' motivation high. Normally we do a variety of exercises to practise the languages systems and skills.

My hopes for T5 NGO:

My hopes are that one day T5 will be able to train many other English teachers and assure their professional development by giving them seminars and workshops. Also, I'd like T5 NGO to be well known all around the world and to create the conditions for the English Language Teachers to work in co-operation with other international organizations like TESOL, IATEFL and some others that I haven't mentioned so that Guinea-Bissau ELT will be able to share their experience with other teachers around the world.

Next, TEACHER JOAO AFONSO FERREIRA.....

Why I became an English teacher:

I became an English teacher because I wanted to be an English teacher since I was a child. That's why when I finished my 11th grade I went to the Teacher Training College and I studied there for three years, graduating in 2003. I have been teaching for three years now but I sometimes think about quitting because it seems there are no prospects in it here in my country and it is a hard life to be a teacher here.

A day in my teaching life:

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Teaching is a great responsibility here. It seems like carrying a world-wide responsibility on your shoulder. I spend all my day teaching and planning...it is a very fixed routine. Our lives here as English teachers are much harder than people worldwide may presume. Just imagine teaching almost 14 hours per day without any resources and at same time you future just looks like more of the same. I normally leave home 7:30 a.m. and go back at 8:00 p.m. My motivation is not high at the moment.

A typical lesson at T5 Star Events School of English:

As I normally deal with beginners at T5 School my lessons are my hopes for T5 NGO. Generally I base my lessons on short dialogues with basic English language functions and grammar. I do a lot of choral drilling and pair work. As an English language curriculum does not exist here, I, like many teachers, spend long hours of research even though sometimes you just can't find useful books.

My hopes for T5 NGO:

I hope that T5 NGO will be one of the big ELT organizations around the world and that it establishes a network with some other ELT organization around the world. T5 needs to be supported by those who care about English Language Education around the world.

Next, TEACHER FREDDY LOURENCO SOARES DA GAMA.....

Why I became an English teacher:

I was very early attracted to teaching.....I just didn't know what I should teach! After my high school graduation I was lucky to be given an English language book as a gift and I felt attracted by the language and decided to be an English language teacher. It was quite a disappointment for my parents but I was really determined and registered at the Teacher Training College in the English Language Speciality. After three years I started to teach this fabulous language. My determination was so strong that I was blind to the difficult life that I would have to face someday. I am sometimes discouraged by the situation for teachers living here. I have seen a lot of my fellow teachers changing their career just because they have had no support in what they were doing and it looks like a dead-end-job. I have faith that one day things may change and I really like what I am doing.

A day in my teaching life:

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Well... teaching is the hardest job I know. I normally spend all day planning and teaching. I usually wake at 7:00 a.m. and go for my classes at 8:00 a.m. I teach more than 14 hours per day which means different levels of learners; I haven't got enough time to be with my family because I have to run from one school to the other and lack of teaching resources (curricula, books, tapes, etc...) makes the teaching life even harder.

A typical lesson at T5 Star Events School of English:

The lessons at T5 School vary according to level but all of them are aimed at creating a good level of fluency. This means that we use a lot of communicative activities and some practical exercises on language accuracy.

My hopes for T5 NGO:

I have a great hope that T5 is going to be one of the biggest ELT organizations in Guinea-Bissau and West Africa because there are no other organizations here that care for ELT problems..... English teachers are quite abandoned. I hope that T5 will one day train more teachers and give professional development seminars. I hope that T5 will help the teachers here to participate in symposiums, conferences, etc... allowing them to share experiences with their fellow teachers around the world.

Finally, TEACHER NAMIR LOPES.....

Why I became an English teacher:

I became an English language teacher not because English is the first language in the world but because I wanted to make a contribution as a Guinean and also to help those who are vulnerable.

Therefore we need to work hard to help others to understand the importance of the English language.

A day in my teaching life:

Teaching English is a great task that I have because I spend most of my time in school. It is a pretty hard life running around the country in search of resources for an adequate class. Sometimes I feel dizzy for working such long hours without a single coffee break. All these things can sometimes create stress.

A typical lesson at T5 Star Events School of English:

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It is true that the teachers here have a lot of problems in planning their lessons because of lack of teaching resources. We find the weekly collective meeting that we normally hold where we share ideas very useful. Our lessons are based on the Communicative Approach, with lots of group discussions, debates and some grammar exercises.

My hopes for T5 NGO:

As a matter of fact, T5 NGO has got bright and dynamic English teachers but my hopes are that these teachers receive post-graduate education in the English speciality, I hope that one day T5 NGO will be supported by ELT practitioners around the world and thereby assure the good teaching of English in Guinea-Bissau.

REVENUE AND EXPEN DITURE

REVENUE TABLE

Ord	Amount	Derivation	Service
1	150,000cfa (£157.50)	Star Events Group	Advance on Rent
2	79,000cfa (£83)	School Fees	Courses
Total	229,000 cfa (£240.50)		

EXPENDITURE TABLE

ORD	Amount	Derivation	Descriptions	Expenses	Credit
01	150,000cfa (£157.50)	Star Events	(8) Teacher subsidies	160,000cfa (£168)	#
02	79,000cfa (£83)	Fees	Management support		
			Chalk	3,000cfa (£3.15)	
			Computer-internet-copies	20,000cfa	

				(£21)	
			Fuel	30,000cfa (£31.50)	
			Phone	10,000cfa (£10.50)	
			Generator maintenance	5,000cfa (£5.25)	
			Transportation	3,000cfa (£3.15)	
Total				71,000cfa (£74.55)	8,000cfa (£8.40)

Note: the reason for the decline in our school fees is that most of our classes went on holiday at the beginning of June with 52% of our fees unpaid. This is clearly an unsatisfactory situation, one which has developed despite our attempts to facilitate various fee-paying options. Unfortunately, we need to recognise that the country is currently suffering a period of severe hardship in which public employees have now been without salary for 3 months. This has inevitably hit our students very hard. Supporters of T5 are asked to help with this problem in whatever way they can. The total shortfall (including June) on student fees is now, regrettably:

235,125cfa (£246.88p).

PRIORITIES

We have designed the following priorities:

- 1) Assuring short-term payment for the teachers during the Rainy Season Programme.**
- 2) Organising capacity strengthening seminars for the teachers (subject to funding).**
- 3) Revising the school syllabus.**
- 4) Finding teaching resources.**

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