

Alan Davies rejects Indian claim that Racism is "Alive and Well" in Britain

The Hindustan Times Daily claim that racism appears to be "alive and well" in Britain, in the editorial Colour of Prejudice, has been rejected by Alan Davies, British educational psychologist and joint sponsor of a large number of educational projects in Africa.

"The alleged racist and bullying events in the Big Brother house, largely involving Jade Goody and Shilpa Shetty, do not do justice to the excellent relationships between the British people and those from other countries" said Davies. "We have nothing but the highest regard for other cultures. Indeed, my wife and I have received international approval for our Three-Point Plan for using money wisely in Africa. We work with local teachers and lecturers to make what is already good even better - and we all get on really well." he added.

"I think the Hindustan Times Daily reporters should visit Oxley Park Primary School, in Milton Keynes, England, where the children and parents have raised the money for Lucinda Meyer, a lecturer of Indian origin from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, to fly to the UK to stay with them for two weeks. They will get a much fairer and more positive picture of race relations in the UK, if they were to speak with Lucinda and the children." said Davies.

The visit is a consequence of the headteacher and deputy being released, by the schools' Governing Body, to visit South Africa in June 2006, where they worked with farm school teachers in the Kwena Basin, Mpumalanga. The schools have no electricity, running water or toilets.

"The children, with the help of parents, staff and governors, raised money so that we could take out clothes, books and pencils for the farm school children. When our children saw the videos of the visit, and we discussed the content, including Lucinda, they wanted her to come to our school. So they decided to raise the money so she could come" said Cathy Higgins, Headteacher.

Dr Jean Place, Principal Tutor, University of the Witwatersrand, has been a regular visitor to the school, and in June 2006 she brought nine student teachers to visit Oxley Park and also schools in Birmingham (Hollywood Primary), Cardiff (Windsor Clive Infants) and Welsh Medium schools in North Wales, as guests of Conwy County Borough Council.

The Davies' company THRASS UK have sponsored the visits and exchanges, either in full or in part. Other projects have included training for large numbers of teachers of the deaf, the setting up of a 'Centre of Excellence' in a Township school, a week-long workshop for educators and ministers from across Africa and two-day training workshops for large numbers of student teachers.

In February 2007, 150 Afrikaans-speaking student teachers at the University of Pretoria, and in June, 150 English-speaking student teachers, including some speakers of Zulu, Setswana and SePedi, at the University of the Witwatersrand, will benefit from sponsored two-day courses on the role of synthetic phonics in the teaching of English.

On 29 January 2007, Version 4.1 of the ground-breaking THRASS Phoneme Machine computer programme, a small but powerful Adobe Macromedia Flash application, is able to be downloaded from www.thrass.co.uk, for free, by those in the THRASS UK licensed territory that register for the software. Size A4 and A3 CALENDAR CHARTS for early language learning, also free, will also be obtainable (in English, Welsh, German, French, Spanish, Afrikaans, Zulu and other languages).

Video Clip 19 Jan 2007: Equality through Education. Interview with Lucinda Meyer at Oxley Park.

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