

UNIT 6 LISTENING TRANSCRIPT

UN at 60: Staff members share their memorable experiences with the Organization: Supporting literacy in Uganda

Narrator: In celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations, UN Radio would like to present the human face of the organization to our listening public. In that spirit, we have invited staff members who have had memorable, interesting, serendipitous, or humorous experiences in the course of their work with the organization to share them with UN Radio, so that we can share them with our listeners. Our first guest was Pat Duffy, a language teacher at the United Nations with a strong enthusiasm in supporting literacy.

Duffy: The whole point of the Kitengesa library was to promote a reading culture in the little village in Uganda. Many people can read, but they don't have access to materials. And now this library has become a real community center.

Chuck: Pat Duffy is an English teacher in the United Nations language programme. Last summer (?) she visited the library in the tiny village of Kitengesa in Uganda, a library begun by a teacher from Hunter College in New York. Pat and her other teacher colleagues had raised money for the library with a book sale and she wanted to see first hand what the library meant to the people of Kitengesa.

Duffy: It's given them access to reading materials. It's given them access to the world. When I was there I had a chance to talk to a lot of users of the library. There I had a chance to ask them about their favorite books and how they like to use the library, and everybody very excitedly showed me their favorite books. Everything from George Orwell's *Animal Farm* to Chinua Achebe's, *A Man of the People* ...One thing that excited them very much was to see their own folk tales that they've heard from their grandmothers and grandfathers, written in the form of books.

Narrator: Building on that excitement, the library came up with the idea of having older and younger people work together so that their own folk tales become books.

Duffy: That is for some of the older people in the community – perhaps people who don't always know how to read, to share some of the traditional folk tales with the younger people, and then the younger students have the

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job of writing them down, and then creating...the idea is to create books of these traditional folk tales. It's kind of gotten the generations closer together, and everybody cooperating on this project.

Narrator: Another project was started to stimulate learning for women, who often miss out on learning to read. Pat tells the story of one woman, Angela, who took advantage of what the Kitengesa library had to offer.

Duffy: Some years ago, a much more educated man had proposed marriage to her, and Angela wasn't too sure about this and said, "Are you sure this is going to work?" "You're educated. And you went to the university. And I never had the chance to go." And the man said, "Well, but I love you, and that doesn't matter." Well, then a few years later, it did seem to matter to him, and the marriage didn't work very well. He ended up leaving her. And so Angela decided to go the library, become a member and benefit from the literacy program. She learned how to read and write, and one of the first things she wanted to do was write a letter to her husband, her former husband, to show him that you see, "I am developing myself, and I am becoming independent and strong, and using my skills."

Narrator: The money earned from last year's book sale on World Teachers Day, October 5, was used to buy solar panels to generate electricity so that many more people could benefit from the library.

Duffy: They were spent on a solar panel so that now the library can stay open until 9 p.m. every evening. There's not a lot of electricity in the village, but because the library has solar panels, and because it is open until 9 p.m., it is the only building that is lit in the night.

Chuck: The image of a lit library is not one that will leave Pat Duffy soon. She says her visit to the Ugandan village of Kitengesa was as wonderful for her as it was for the people there.

Duffy: Actually seeing how a literacy project is transforming the lives of people in a small farming community in Kitengesa, Uganda, actually seeing how people's lives are benefiting, and how a library has become a kind of center of the community, where a community has formed around reading books, and around people developing their skills and their knowledge and their potential. It was really quite a wonderful thing to see.