

# Zungumza na Mtoto Mchanga

## Newsletter 1 – January 2012

A very happy New Year to everyone!

We intend to issue a periodic (monthly if, as we hope, we have sufficient news to report) newsletter to keep everyone informed of progress. We hope that this will be useful and encouraging.

Since we met in Morogoro at the end of November there have been a number of developments.

- Mr Mnjagila has looked through the list of offers of assistance made at the Morogoro meeting and has decided the initial make-up of the various groups. It was wonderful to have more offers than it was possible to take up and, of course, it will be possible to include others for particular tasks if they wish. The list for 2012 is on page 2. Please let us know if you are no longer able to serve as shown.
- Matt Banks (CiC) has provided funding to enable a baseline/intervention research project to take place in Moshi Rural. In December we travelled to meet representatives of Tanzania Women's Research Foundation (TAWREF) to make the preliminary arrangements. Next week we visit Moshi again, to train 20 researchers to carry out the baseline research and an attitude survey. Essentially they will count the words heard by a baby in the home environment in 30 minutes. A separate count will be kept of the words actually addressed to the baby. There will be a control group of 50 families and an 'intervention' group of 50 families. Once the baseline is established, intervention will take place in one group and then, after 6 months, a further word count will be done in both groups (this should measure by how much the intervention has improved the language environment of the baby. Then, after a further 6 months, a simple language comprehension test will be administered to the two groups (this should show whether the enriched language environment has led to an increase in comprehension of language by the baby). Further details can be found on pages 3 and 4.
- A similar project (but with only 30 families in each group) is almost certain to take place on Mafia and Chole Islands. Janet has had a preliminary meeting with the Chole Society for Women's Development, and they are very enthusiastic. Currently funding is being sought from a variety of sources.
- Some donation funding has been made available to 'Yes I Can', from Japan, for a project among schoolgirl mothers in Shinyanga; ZUMM is to be a part of this project, and we are standing by to travel to Shinyanga to meet the relevant people and plan how ZUMM research and intervention can be incorporated into the wider project.
- As part of our intervention, and for training purposes, we proposed to make a DVD, and Matt Banks (CiC) has encouraged us to move forward with this, not only by providing some funding, but also by suggesting a suitable producer, who formerly worked for the BBC, lives in DSM, and is willing to undertake this project.
- We have had a very useful tutorial with Mr Gange (MoEVT) on the structure of a strategic plan. Now that we understand the various chapter headings we can begin to draft at least some of the sections although, of course, a substantial part of the plan will need to be developed in response to the initial research findings

Janet and David  
31 01 2012

## ZUMM Structure and Membership 2012

The project will be managed by the steering committee (PCT), but the more detailed work will be shared with the small Groups, who will communicate mainly electronically.

Team or Group	Team or Group Function and Membership
Project Co-ordination Team (PCT)	The steering group for the project. Members will meet in Dar es Salaam no more than once each month for up to three hours. Ideally each of the Groups listed below will have at least one representative on the PCT.
	Mr S Mnjagila (MoEVT); Mr V Gange (MoEVT); Mr C Mwinuka (MoEVT); Mr B Missani (MCDGC); Mr A Rutajwaha (TECDEN); Mr M Banks (CiC); Mrs J Townend (VSO/MoEVT); Mr D Townend (VSO/MoEVT)
Information Campaign Group (ICG)	Will seek funding for publicity activities and will work with the PCT to implement them.
	Mr S Mnjagila (MoEVT); Mr M Banks (CiC); Mr J Mtaka (WAMA); Mr A Nkunga (TECDEN); Mrs J Townend (VSO/MoEVT); Mr D Townend (VSO/MoEVT)
Community Reach Group (CRG)	Will find ways of getting the message to hard-to-reach communities and suggest ways of implementation.
	Mr S Mnjagila (MoEVT); Mr B Missani (MCDGC); Mr A Rutajwaha (TECDEN); Mr N Nkinde (MPDI); Mrs J Townend (VSO/MoEVT); Mr D Townend (VSO/MoEVT)
Training and Education Group (T&EG)	Will contribute to courses development for professionals, and the curriculum materials for inclusion in both primary and adult education curricula.
	Mr S Mnjagila (MoEVT); Mr Gange (MoEVT); Mr C Mwinuka (MoEVT); Mr N Moshi (MoEVT); Dr Mtahaba (UDOM); Mr A Nkunga (TECDEN); Mrs M Shegwando (MoEVT); Mr D Taylor (VSO); Mrs J Townend (VSO/MoEVT); Mr D Townend (VSO/MoEVT)
Research Group (RG)	Will oversee investigation of the project key questions and measurement of progress.
	Mr S Mnjagila (MoEVT); Mr C Mwinuka (MoEVT); Dr Mtahaba (UDOM); Mr A Rutajwaha (TECDEN); Mr Nkinde (MPDI); Mrs J Townend (VSO/MoEVT); Mr D Townend (VSO/MoEVT)
Monitoring and Evaluation Group (M&EG)	Will advise on monitoring the project. It will also be responsible for reviewing the project outcomes.
	Mr S Mnjagila (MoEVT); Mr C Mwinuka (MoEVT); Mrs M Shegwando (MoEVT); Mr B Missani (MCDGC); Mr A Rutajwaha (TECDEN); Mrs J Townend (VSO/MoEVT); Mr D Townend (VSO/MoEVT)

## ZUMM Research by TAWREF

### Aim:

The aim of the research is to count the number of live words (not radio/TV etc) heard by the baby in the general environment (e.g. as the mother talks to a friend as she works on her shamba with the baby on her back, or as family members talk at home). A separate record will be kept of the number of words actually spoken *to the baby* (e.g. 'What a beautiful girl you are!' or 'Be quiet!').

### Background:

Two groups of fifty families will be selected in two geographically separate wards in Moshi Rural. Each family must have a baby born between 1.3.2011 and 31.8.2011 inclusive (i.e. the baby will be approximately between 6 months and 1 year old when the research begins). The group in one ward will be the Intervention Group (I) and the group in the other ward will be the Control Group (C).

The initial word count will take place in Feb/March 2012 in both groups to establish a baseline. A second word count will be done in both communities after 6 months (i.e. during Aug/Sept 2012). After a further 6 months (Feb/March 2013) a simple language comprehension test will be administered to both groups.

In both the initial word count and the second one (six months later) each baby will be observed on *three* separate occasions, at different times of the day (e.g. morning, afternoon, evening). The observation period on each occasion is to be thirty minutes (timed accurately) and it is important that the baby is awake throughout. If the baby falls asleep, the researcher will need to arrange to come back at a time when he/she is more likely to be awake (for example, ask when bath-time or feeding time might be, or what time of day the baby is usually awake.)

At the end of the *third* 30 minute observation period, the researcher will complete a short questionnaire which attempts to explore the expectations and priorities of the mother for the language environment of the home, and her reasons for them. The questionnaire will be written in Kiswahili and will be completed by the researcher interviewing the mother.

After the initial count to establish the baseline, the Group I will receive information and training about enriching the language environment of the home, particularly by including the baby in conversations about everyday life and daily activities. Group C will not receive this training until **after** the simple language comprehension test has been administered in Feb/March 2013.

It is most important that the parents do not know precisely what the researcher is measuring. Parents should be told that the research is to observe the behaviour of babies, and that it will help all Tanzania's children. During the observation period, the researcher should be regarded as invisible and must not be involved in conversation with those present – if a stranger arrives then the mother will have to explain the presence of the researcher.

We hope to be able to show that the intervention has increased the number of words heard by the baby (and, particularly, words addressed to the baby) and that, subsequently, the Intervention Group have better language comprehension than the Control Group after 12 months.

### Detail:

The completed form, attached, shows the sort of information that should be collected and how to record it. We appreciate that it might be difficult to keep a precise count of words if conversation is rapid, and you may find it necessary to approximate. (Tip: it may help if you repeat what has been said in your head, as you make a mark on the paper for each word.) Words heard by the baby, but not actually spoken *to* him/her, are scored in the top part of the form; words spoken *directly* to the baby are recorded in the lower section.

Start timing the 30 minutes when you have finished greeting those present, and agreed where you are going to sit, and explained that you will be observing the baby and not joining in conversations yourself!

During the administration of the questionnaire (at the end of the *third* 30 minute word count) it is most important that the researcher uses a variety of words to ensure that the mother understands exactly what is being asked. In particular, the precise meaning of *zungumza* must be explained – the mother needs to know that it refers to including the baby in conversation *as if the baby is capable of responding in words* (instead of just sounds or a smile) and even *imagining what the baby might want to say in reply* (and saying it for him/her!). We do know that babies of this age do not hold actual conversations, but they can and they do communicate! Use whatever words are necessary, and give examples, to make sure the mother knows precisely what you are asking.

Tick the answer that means the same as the mother's reply to each 'WHY?' question; if the mother gives a reason that is not similar to one listed, write down what she says. If she gives more than one reason, ask her to choose the most important reason.

After the questionnaire has been completed, (*but not before!*) you should inform the mothers in the Intervention Group that there will be some meetings for groups of those participating in the research, to share some important information with them about how babies learn to speak, and encourage them to come. It would be good to be able to issue an invitation for the agreed number of family members to the first session, and give a card with the date, time and place. For the Control Group, the invitations should not be issued until after the language comprehension test has been administered (one year after the research has started).

**Wider Context:**

It is hoped that similar research programmes will be carried out with women's groups on Mafia Island, and Shinyanga (schoolgirl mothers). In March/April 2013 it is planned to publish a report on the research as an opportunity to launch the ZUMM project more widely.

Janet Townend  
David Townend

January 2012