



**QUIDS IN** Young entrepreneurs, from left, Stephen Jones, Shona Gallagher, Amy Jones, Jessica Davies and Simon Jessop, the winners from Abersychan Comprehensive School, Pontypool

## In the money

THE classroom was swapped for the bear-pit atmosphere of the trading floor when the Stock Market Challenge came to Cardiff.

Year 10 and 12 pupils had the chance to experience the excitement of trading in company stocks and foreign exchange, just like real-life brokers do every day on trading floors and on-line all over the world.

Each team of five used an initial £35,000 investment to interpret and analyse information from the stock market to finance their deals and build a portfolio of shares during an intense two hour simulated live trading session.

The one with the highest portfolio at the closing bell won a £1,000 cheque for their school from Black Horse.

The Year 10 event was won by a team from Abersychan Comprehensive School, Pontypool, with a staggering portfolio value of £301,200. In second and third place were Bassaleg School, Newport (£234,500) and Oakdale Comprehensive, Blackwood (£234,400).

The Year 12 event winners were Cyfarthfa High School, Merthyr Tydfil, with a portfolio value of £371,600, ahead of a team from Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf, Cardiff (£305,900) and one from Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr, Cardiff (£282,500).

Stock Market Challenge was organised and co-sponsored by Black Horse, part of the Lloyds TSB Group based in Cardiff, and the Cardiff "hub" of the First Campus project, based in the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff (Uwic).

# 'It is the year of Africa. Let's support them in education'

AGAINST the background of tensions and conflict in Nigeria in recent years, a new determination has emerged to assert local self-identity, their language and culture, a distinctiveness from the majority culture.

Compare to Wales in the 1950s: monolingual Welsh-speaking children having to be educated in primary school in a "foreign" language.

The political will transformed the linguistic landscape of Wales and brought about a sense of nationhood, respect for the local language, government support for initiatives in education, and the media, literature, and public bilingualism.

This sense of concern in Gombe State, in north-east Nigeria, led to an approach to an American linguistics charity, The Seed Company. They respond to local initiatives with expertise in developing a spelling system and training in translation, principally for Luke's Gospel. They assembled a small team of linguists to analyse the local languages of Gombe State, in response to these local initiatives.

Small teams gathered for a three-week workshop held in Gombe State. One such team represented the Tera language - two retired men, a civil servant and a teacher, educated and able to read and write in Hausa and English.

We recorded a story, played it back word by word, phrase by phrase and they attempted to spell their language from their knowledge of Hausa and English spellings.

The theory behind the project is that language is in the mind; we carry a large stock of words in our minds - all the words we know. They represent all the things, qualities, actions and so on that we have ever experienced for ourselves.

We carry all the grammatical patterns we know - they represent all the kinds of situations we have experienced (who does what to whom). We know what is acceptable, what is not and what is marginal. We know how to be polite and impolite, how to put a message across, how to get things done. All this is stored in the mind. We also know how to pronounce all our words - there may be a few that we feel rather uncertain about, but we are able to learn how to pronounce any new word we come across.

We have in our minds a pronunciation system for English which consists of a number of vowels and consonants, stressed and unstressed syllables, rhythm and intonation. The whole of this pronunciation system is in the mind, ready for use any time we speak. Even illiterate people have all this in their minds - what they don't have is a spelling system in their minds that they can use.

**Dr Paul Tench** has been working with a community in Nigeria to record their language in written form for the first time since the 1930s. Here he describes the work done to form a new written language and the comparisons between the Tera language and Welsh.



**ON RECORD** Dr Paul Tench discusses a point of linguistics with his Tera team

We can teach them. But what about people who don't have a spelling system at all in their language?

Our methodology was to use the skills they have developed for reading and writing the other languages that they know. An alphabet - spelling system - might as well conform as closely as possible to the other languages that they have to engage with, so that people can transfer skills from one language to another.

The ideal spelling system matches sounds to letters in a regular and consistent way, much as Welsh does - and Hausa - and not like English!

The Tera team used Hausa spelling as a basis for the vowels and consonants as far as they could, and supplemented it with a few items from English like *p* and *ch*. They got the idea of using *h* to mean "something like"; for example, as *sh* is a bit like an *s* in sound (think of how Welsh spells the *sh* sound), so *zh* is used for a sound a bit like *z* (actually like the middle sound of *leisure* and *vision* - and just like in *Dr Zhivago*!).

They use *kh* for a sound similar to *k*, equivalent to Welsh *ch*; and parallel to *kh*, they need a *gh*. They use *ng* at the beginning of words just like in Welsh, and also *mb* and *nd*, but the most amazing thing is that they have exactly the *same sound as a Welsh ll*.

I truly was amazed, because in all my reading and research for this project, there was never a hint that any language in Nigeria had anything like our Welsh *ll*. But

they too were amazed that a visitor - and a white man at that - could say their own special distinctive sound without any trouble!

Their own name for themselves also contains the Welsh *ll*: Nyimatli (Welsh spelling: niumallu).

The *ll* sound does not occur in Hausa or in English, and they could not use *ll*, because it is possible to have words with a double *ll* sounding in the middle of their words, but they do not have the possibility of a *l* sound following a *t* sound.

To complete the consonant chart, Tera has so-called implosive sounds like Hausa, where you get a kind of *b*, *d*, *g* by sucking air in; they simply use the special Hausa letters for the first two and *q* for the third.

The vowels were much simpler, just six of them. Five are easy, and they could use the five vowel letters of our alphabet: *a* (as in man), *e* (as in men), *i* (as in Welsh *ni*), *o* (as in Welsh *glo*) and *u* (as in glue). Their sixth vowel has a distinctly North Walian flavour to it, just like their pronunciation of *tyl* ('house'), but the Tera have chosen to spell it with *u*.

One enterprising man has produced an alphabet chart and two little booklets of stories from the Bible and is planning to produce a series of wall charts on things they use at home, at school, on types of animals and birds, and so on.

Others are undergoing translation training to prepare the Gospels in Tera. One of them is doing a computing course to enable the team to produce their own printed materials in Tera; another, who did his Masters in Education at Cardiff University, has produced a training manual to help teachers to learn to read and write their own language. One great hope is that local governments will be persuaded

to introduce reading and writing in Tera in primary schools.

Who is paying for all this? Primarily it is the local community. The whole project is theirs; the initiative was theirs and the ongoing support, and The Seed Company has responded in kind.

But the planning and the decision making beyond that lie in the hands in the local community. It is their project; we have helped to establish it, but with their orthography and training, and with enthusiasm and enterprise, they will carry it on.

Enthusiasm? Goodness me! I couldn't stop them. We began each morning at 8.30am and continued non-stop until 12.30pm, and if lunch was late, we had to carry on until it arrived. We began again after a siesta at 2pm and continued, again non-stop, until 6pm - or later if the evening meal was delayed.

We kept this pace up for three intensive weeks. We began work on an elementary dictionary - we needed to do that to be sure of where words began and ended.

This is the year for Africa. Don't think of Africa as just a hopeless case, with rampant HIV/AIDS, famine, poverty, corruption and dictatorships. Africa is more than that: there are also plenty of ordinary people with honest hopes and ambitions, great concern and compassion, a will to achieve something good for their community, resourceful, skilled and educated, ready to work with just a little help from others. Let's hope that our governments and NGOs will support all such efforts, in education as well as health and the environment.

■ Paul Tench is Senior Lecturer, Centre for Language and Communication Research at Cardiff University

## BRIDGEND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC TEAM

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You will be required to teach at a combination of primary and comprehensive schools within the authority, under the direction of the Music Co-ordinator.

Successful candidates will be well - qualified, enthusiastic, with experience as a performer on his/her principal instrument. A good working knowledge of all brass instruments is essential.

Application forms are available on receipt of a large stamped addressed envelope from the Director of Education, Leisure and Community Services, Bridgend County Borough Council, Personnel and Governor Support Unit, Sunnyside, Bridgend CF31 4AR

Closing date for applications: 31st August 2005.

Applicants are requested to note that the successful candidate will be required to agree to an enhanced criminal record clearance being undertaken.

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