Q'enqo & Battalion Park Collaboration
Library Project 2013 Report

How did it all start?

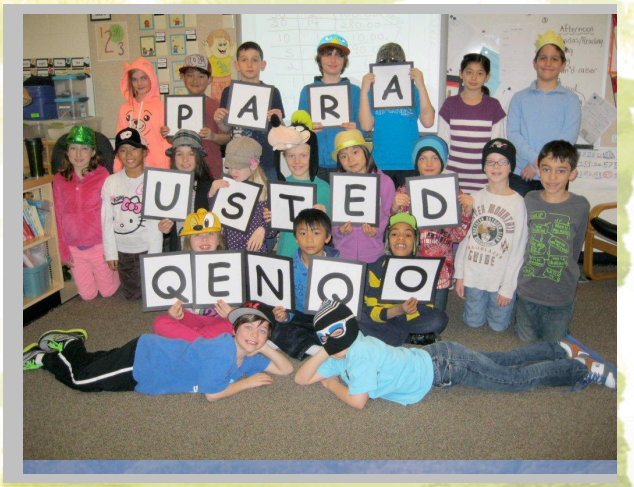
It all started back in 2011 when a Skype videoconference with **Tim Kitchen** inspired the Grade Three students of Battalion Park School to take their social studies learning WAY outside the box by helping other kids in the village of Q'enqo, Peru. "Kids helping kids!" said teacher **Ms. Laurie Renton**, "now *that* is what personalized learning is all about!" To do it, they decided to connect with Canadian organization, Mosqoy, who already worked in this community. This way, the relationships were already established so they could create the most positive change possible!

A child from the village of Q'enqo, on the inauguration of the library.

Tell me more about Q'enqo!

Q'enqo is a village located in the **Andean Mountains** in the Cusco Province of Peru. The community is surrounded by steep hills, and sits 4,200 metres above the sea!

Most people in Q'enqo speak the indigenous language, Quechua, and very little Spanish. Many people in Q'enqo are very poor and cannot meet their basic needs. There is an elementary school in Q'enqo, but the nearest high school is in Qolla, about a three-hour hike away. Their main food is the potato, which they eat for breakfast, lunch, and dinner!



Battalion Park's Fundraising Initiative

These eager and passionate kids, further energized by a Skype conversation with Mosqoy's founder and director, **Ashli Akins**, were so inspired by the experience that they were motivated to raise money for the school in Q'enqo during their school's **Celebration of Learning** in April 2011. During this event, these children and their parents raised **over $440**! Little did they know… this was just the beginning!

The First Big Lesson…

Originally, they thought it would be cool to raise money for sports equipment for the kids, but after some deep, focused research they realized that there were far greater needs that the Q'enqo kids had. In fact, often villagers in Q'enqo have a tough time meeting even their most **basic needs.**

This became one of their first **big lessons** to learn: It's important to really **listen** and **learn** when working with a community, before we know what's best. The students decided to leave that decision up to the people who live in Q'enqo and the organizations that support them.

After everyone decided to MAKE A LIBRARY, Battalion Park's Grade 3 students were more inspired than ever.

They decided to hold a school-wide fundraiser called **"Caps for Q'enqo."** The students encouraged their schoolmates to donate $1 to wear a hat for the day, in support of Q'enqo students. Leading up to the event, children donated additional money for Q'enqo by arranging weekend lemonade stands, emptying their piggybanks, and donating portions of their allowances. In total, this campaign raised a total of **$737.55** for the library project.

After that, another school-wide fundraiser called **"Show Your True Colours"** raised an additional **$1200.** Amazing!

The Library Project is born!

So what did they choose? **A LIBRARY!** A safe, fun place for all the kids in Q'enqo to learn, just like the one that Battalion Park has!

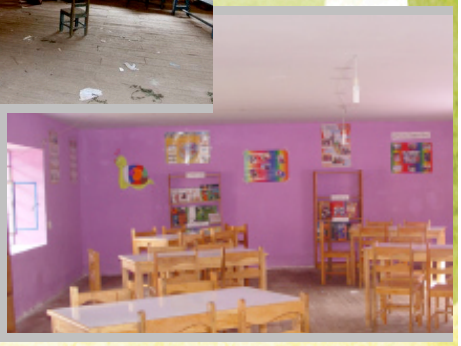
There was an old empty building on the elementary-school property that was the perfect fit. **Mr. Roy Jose Escobar Moreno**, the school's principal, thought this was the perfect spot for his students' dream come true.

So what was done with all that money?

The building needed lots of work before it was ready to be filled with books. There were lots of supplies that had to be purchased: bright colours of paint for the walls, glass to replace the broken windows, plaster to repair the walls, and other things to make the space welcoming.

And we can't forget the books! The money that the Grade 3 students worked hard to raise also went towards buying a whole assortment of interesting books, including books about math, Spanish, and an Ocean Geography Reference Book, to name a few.

Before and After!



The Q'enqo Library Inauguration!

The Inauguration Ceremony happened on the first day of school for the kids of Q'enqo: **March 5th, 2012.** Mosqoy team members were busy with last-minute preparations right up until the festivities began. **Geneva List** gave a great speech, and since she was chosen as the official representative for Mosqoy, she got to break a bottle over the doorway of the library: a Peruvian tradition to mark a special occasion such as this! The kids of Q'enqo missed the speech; they were too busy checking out all the awesome books inside the library!

Lessons learned along the way…

There are so many ways that we can become "**change-makers**" in the world. Some steps are big, while some are small. Everyday actions can make the world a happier, safer place. It's important to remember that **big** and **small** things are both important!

Sometimes donating money to a good cause can be a way to make change… but that's **not all** we can do. It's our **passion** that really makes the difference.

So, what's happening now?

The library got constructed. So, now what? We learned that it's not enough to start a project and expect it to run perfectly from then on. We need to practice something called **monitoring** to see how the library is being used. When Mosqoy visited Q'enqo to **monitor** the library's progress, we realized that the community members and teachers were lacking the appropriate training and time to manage the library. Because of this, the library was often closed. Certainly, the books were safe, but they weren't getting used! This was another big lesson for us to learn. We needed to make some adaptations to make sure our library could meet its full potential. This is called **capacity-building**: After the library was built, we needed to make sure it actually WORKED as a library!

This year's Grade Threes added to the pot, fundraising another **$850!** Meanwhile, Mosqoy volunteers hiked to Q'enqo to ask questions about what the community needed to keep the library open and help the students read. Mosqoy's Board of Directors agreed that the community's requests were wise decisions. But there was one vote left! Ashli met the Grade Three students of 2013 to see if they – the funders of the project – also agreed. And they did!

Next year, we will spend the rest of the money, based on these votes, and by September 2014, the library will be fully functioning!

The Future of the Library!

The Battalion Park Grade 3 students have raised **$5029.50 Canadian TOTAL!** We still have $2538.46 to spend on the library in Canadian Dollars. This is equal to 6600 Peruvian Nuevo Soles (the Peruvian currency). Money goes a long way in Peru!

We have enough money to:

1. Hire a librarian to keep the library open, teach the students how to read, and teach the community's teachers how to run a library.

2. Renovate a room for the librarian to live in while they work in Q'enqo, since they will travel from several hours away.

3. Pay transportation for our Mosqoy monitors and the new librarian, to keep checking on the library's progress.

3. Buy fiction and early-reader books!

Report created by Mosqoy for Battalion Park's Grade Threes! Thank you!