

NEWS RELEASE, 24 October 2013

Charity founder 'stunned' by MBE honour

A Bethnal Green resident has said she was "stunned" upon learning that she had been awarded an MBE.

Maire Tejani, 54, of Knottisford Street, is the founder of Yaarah Schools, which works to improve education provision in developing countries. The charity builds classrooms and provides learning resources for children who have limited access to education. A recent project saw Yaarah Schools build and equip five classrooms in the Volta region of Ghana.

The London Metropolitan University graduate, who now works full time for the Department of Education, received the MBE from HRH The Prince of Wales during a ceremony at Buckingham Palace.

"I had absolutely no idea that I had been nominated for an MBE, let alone that I had been awarded one" she said. "It is a huge honour, but it represents the achievements of the charity as a whole, including my colleagues and our fundraisers.

"I was really nervous on the way to the Palace, but Prince Charles was very nice and made me feel relaxed," she said. "It was incredibly exciting!"

Maire's achievement is particularly impressive given that she works full time as a Policy Officer for the Department of Education, did a part time degree course and runs Yaarah Schools in her spare time – testament to her passion for education and development.

Malcolm Gillies, Vice-Chancellor of London Met, said: "I am delighted that Maire has gone on to find such success after her studies, and I congratulate her on this prestigious award. As a University, we are well aware of the value of education and I applaud Maire for carrying out this important project. There is no doubt that her work is changing the lives of hundreds of children in Ghana."

Over 200 children have benefitted from Yaarah Schools so far, and Maire is determined to continue the work, both in Ghana and elsewhere. "These children were attending lessons under trees, outside, and have nothing in the way of teaching resources. We try to provide classrooms and equipment to improve their education, from building classrooms to providing pencils and PCs," she said.

"We will go wherever there is a need. Children should have access to education wherever they are in the world."

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Notes to editors:

Images are available. To request an interview with Maire Tejani, please contact Luke Foddy via the details below.

London Metropolitan University

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