



HELP for children in UGANDA



MANCALA. A traditional counting game.

Mancala is a game played, not just in Uganda, but in many developing countries all over the world. It has many different names and there are variations in the board used.

The version here is adapted for use in schools by young children.

I have found it a great way to develop thinking skills, strategy and number skills.



WHAT YOU NEED.

Look at the photograph with this sheet and you will see that I have used a piece of packaging from a supermarket as the board. This one happens to have two rows of five

'pots'. The number of pots is not critical as long as it is four or more, but you do have to have two rows. Traditional boards are carved out of wood.

In Uganda players use nuts, shells, beans, seeds etc. for the pieces. Whatever is to hand. If you can use something similar it is much better than plastic counters as it gives more of a traditional 'feel' to the game.

HOW TO PLAY.

1. To start put four pieces in each pot. (You can use less if you want to have a quicker and simpler version of the game whilst learning but you must have at least two.)
2. Place the board long ways across between two players.
3. Each player can only pick up pieces from the pots on his/her side of the board.
4. Player one chooses a pot and picks up the four pieces from it.
5. Moving clockwise the player then puts one piece in each pot until the fourth is put down. All the pieces in this pot are then picked up and the player continues to put one piece in each pot until they are used up. This carries on until the point is reached when the player puts the last piece in an empty pot (so that there is only one piece there).
6. This is the end of that player's turn.
7. It is then player two's turn. He or she picks up pieces from any pot on his/her side of the board and plays the same way as player one. However, players are not allowed to pick up from a pot where there is only one piece.

Play continues until one of the players cannot go because all the pots on their side are either empty or only have one piece in.

You will find that this is a game that is very easy to learn, but to play well and be able to predict several moves ahead is quite hard !