



Savannah Education Trust

Educating Ghana's most needy children

5 Kings Gate
Gordon Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex RH16 1DY
Tel: 01444 456 865
Email: paul@savannaheducationtrust.org

December 2007

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we come to the end of the year, we wanted to take this opportunity not only to thank you for your interest during 2007 but also briefly to update you on the latest situation in Ghana. We are thankful to report, as shown on our Christmas card, that the nursery is now complete and has its first 55 children. Preparation for the construction of teachers' accommodation has started and bricks are being prepared in anticipation of construction during 2008.

Sadly, people living in Bagri (where the school is located) are facing a serious shortage of food. This is a direct result of the floods in late August/ early September, when the President of Ghana declared the three northern regions of Ghana a disaster zone. While there was torrential rain and some localised flooding in the area around Bagri village the initial impact was not as significant as in other some parts of northern Ghana. The severe weather, however, virtually destroyed this year's crops. For a community almost entirely reliant on 'home-grown' food, this is an extremely difficult situation. Between now and the next harvest (October 2008) there will be very little to eat. Those who are able-bodied are likely to move for a few months to other parts of Ghana to find enough to survive. Those who are left behind – generally the older people and those with families – will suffer, with people existing on less than one meal every other day. When we spoke to Charles Karbo (the local pastor and our programme manager) on the telephone this week, he simply said "our people know what it is to suffer".

www.savannaheducationtrust.org

Charity No: 1104896

Trustees: Paul Ramsbottom; Howard Hickman; Stephen Ramsbottom

Of course, it is not unusual to hear about this type of situation through the British media. What has been shocking for us is to experience it affecting those who we know so well. We have given prayerful consideration for some weeks as to what we - with modest resources - could do to relieve the suffering. We felt strongly that, while we had power to act, we could not let people die from malnourishment or related diseases within walking distance of the school.

We therefore plan to extend the existing feeding programme to include a small amount of uncooked food for the children to take home from school. The few households in the village without any link to the school (mainly elderly people without children) will have similar provision made through Bagri's Baptist chapel. We hope this will not only prevent the worst of the suffering but also enable the children in the village to continue in education. It is a solution that is widely used by other agencies (such as the World Food Programme) in other parts of Africa, and can be carefully managed to avoid any unhealthy 'dependency' emerging.

We expect this programme to cost up to £1,000 per month and to run for just under a year until the next harvest. It will be funded where possible out of our current income but any additional donations or direct debits to help cover these costs would be welcome. We have, of necessity, kept details brief in this short letter but please do let us know if you would like any more information.

We are grateful for your continued prayer at this difficult time for our friends in Ghana, and wish you God's blessing during 2008,

Yours sincerely



Paul Ramsbottom



Howard Hickman



Stephen Ramsbottom