



**Savannah**  
Education Trust

# Newsletter



Educating Ghana's most needy children ▪ Charity No. 1104896 ▪ Issue No. 6 ▪ Spring 2009

This is a newsletter of the Savannah Education Trust, a charity set up to provide an education for some of the most needy children in West Africa. The initial aim has been to build a Christian primary school in Bagri, northern Ghana. The Trust is also providing each schoolchild in the village with a meal each day and funding a number of teacher training scholarships to attract teachers to this remote and poor area.

## Another School



**Children in Pavuu:** notice the young boy at the front of the photograph holding a catapult. This is a common sight in the Upper West Region of Ghana as children hunt in the bush during the dry season for rats, mice and snakes to eat.

Following careful consideration it has been agreed to proceed with a second school in the village of Pavuu. Pastor Charles Karbo (our programme manager) hopes, if the Lord will, to register the school during Spring 2009.

The first classes can then start in September for academic year 2009-10. They will initially be housed in the chapel buildings. The earliest that building work for a new school could start would be after the end of the rainy season at the end of 2009.

It is hoped that the school building will again be built with the help of villagers. As at Bagri, specialist help will also be needed from carpenters, painters and plasterers. Charles Karbo and his helpers now have the advantage of learning from the experience of having recently built a school. There is considerable enthusiasm for the school in the village, not least because the positive effect of the Christian school in Bagri is now renowned throughout this area.

The overall cost of a new school, including a borehole, teachers' accommodation and toilets, is estimated to be in the region of £100,000. As at Bagri, the work is likely to spread over a number of years, starting with the school building. The government have already provided funding for the construction of a nursery school.

*Back page: the village of Pavuu*



## News from Bagri



Building work on the 22 acre site in Bagri is approaching its final stages. The second teachers' accommodation block has reached roof level and work on the toilet block is just about to start. Work has been slowed by cement shortages in the north of Ghana. In September 2008, a fourth class of children started school. A newly trained teacher was added to the staff (making a total of three trained and five untrained teachers at the school). A new headteacher has also started.



## Child Mortality

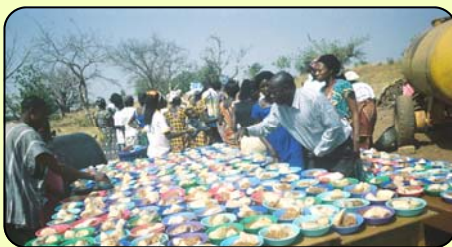
One of the deacons at Bagri chapel is called Thomas. You may remember from previous circulations that he is also a tailor, who is making the uniforms for the schoolchildren at Bagri School. We visited his house and saw him at work when we last visited Ghana. He has subsequently also been called to the ministry.

His daughter had been suffering since birth with an unidentified illness that has made it difficult for her to feed. We have been very sad to learn that she died at the start of March, aged 3.



In our presentations we have often mentioned a quote from the International Development Research Centre: "The savannah region in the north of Ghana is perhaps the most risky place on earth to live for an infant...222 out of every 1000 children die before the age of 5." The experience behind these figures is always distressing and our personal knowledge of Thomas and his family gives a sobering perspective to these tragic statistics. We hope and pray that the education provided by the schools at Bagri and Pavuu will over time help to alleviate some of this suffering.

## Conference at Bagri School



As in the UK, the children have a break from school over the Christmas and New Year period. But the school was far from silent or empty. Early in the New Year, the school hosted people from Baptist congregations across Upper West region who gathered for three days of preaching – known as the 'Believers' Conference'.



Visiting ministers stayed in the teachers' accommodation. Men slept in the school classrooms and women in the nursery. Preaching took place in the main courtyard and over 900 people attended, which was the largest gathering ever seen in the village (even larger than for the opening of the school in 2006).





# Our partners: supporters



*Bagri Baptist Primary School—painted by a Year 2 pupil (age 7)*

In previous newsletters, we have written about our important partners in Ghana: the Baptist church, local government, the tribal leaders and the parents of the children. Versions of these articles are also available on our website

<http://www.savannaheducationtrust.org/partners.htm>

It would be remiss to close these series of articles without mentioning the last of our crucial partners: our kind and loyal supporters. Without financial support and prayer, the projects in Ghana would not be possible. It has also been very encouraging to us personally to have so

many people showing a great interest in the work. The majority of the support has come through individuals and, from the start, we have emphasised how helpful we find regular contributions in helping to plan for future activities. A number of chapels/churches have held collections, and we have also been touched when people celebrating milestones (including, for example, a 90<sup>th</sup> birthday and Ruby Wedding) have asked for contributions to Savannah. Two couples getting married have asked for donations to Savannah instead of gifts from wedding guests.

Funds have also been received from sales of work, from schoolchildren, from Sunday Schools, from collections at our presentations – and even from the sale of eggs! We have been moved when the work is remembered in peoples' wills, or when donations are made in memory of someone who has recently passed away.

A number of grant-making trusts have been very kind in supporting us – and the purchase of a new vehicle last year was largely funded through this route.

Week by week as donations have been received we have been so thankful to see all of our needs met – often exactly at the right time. We are conscious of great and ongoing needs



**Above:** Key Stage 1 pupils explore life in Bagri Village as part of the 'Contrasting Locations' component of the National Curriculum

in the future, and the need to extend the number of our supporters. When the work sometimes seems daunting we have been greatly encouraged by the interest, support and prayers of a large number of people, many of them unknown to us personally.

We can do no better than quote the last paragraph of a recent letter from Charles Karbo:

"What else can we say than 'to God be the glory'? There is an old saying here in Ghana that 'the cow does not say thank you every day to the pond from which it drinks.' However, **we** continue to say thank you to all the supporters of the Savannah Education Trust. We pray the good Lord will continue to bless you."



**Top:** Eggs for sale in support of Savannah Education Trust **Bottom:** Discussion following a presentation



# The village of Pavuu



We have visited the village of Pavuu (pronounced Pa-voo) on a number of occasions. The main town in the area – the market town – is called Lawra. Bagri is located about seven miles north-west of Lawra. Pavuu is five miles south-east of Lawra (and hence some twelve miles from Bagri). It is just off the mud road which runs east from Lawra towards the town of Jirapa.

We first visited Pavuu during 2000 and were greeted warmly by the chief of the village, who was escorted by a man shading him with a large umbrella. Preaching had recently started in the village, led by Pastor Charles Karbo.

The chapel building was still being built. In the meantime, a small storage building – virtually open on two sides and looking across farming land – was being used for services. Both of these buildings will be used temporarily to house the school children while they await the construction of a school.

Pavuu is a small village (albeit slightly larger than Bagri) consisting almost entirely of farmers. Unlike Bagri, which is by the main Black Volta river, there is little danger of flooding from the nearby Kunyukuo tributary, which is often dry. But the soil is not fertile, rains are seasonal and inconsistent, and farming is very hard.



## Mailing List

We continue to maintain a mailing list (including emails) of supporters, and would be grateful if you could let us know of any details or changes – or if there are others who would like to be included when we circulate information.

## An extraordinary evening: Cross Pollinate

Last year we were invited to speak to a group of potential donors at a meeting held in the bank, Coutts & Co. This was the first meeting of an initiative called Cross Pollinate. At the end of the evening we were delighted and astonished to receive £18,000 – specifically pledged toward a second school in Pavuu. While we are very conscious of what lies ahead, we are very encouraged by the fact that (with this and other funds) we now have more than half of the costs of a new school.