

1 December 2012

Dear Supporters,

This time of year gives us a welcome opportunity to thank you for your interest in the work of Savannah Education Trust during 2012. We remain extremely grateful to you.

This is, of course, a time of year much anticipated by children in this country – not least because they enjoy a holiday from school. The contrast with the children in northern Ghana is never more stark than at this season. When visiting Ghana recently, we asked a girl at one of our schools how she spent her school holidays. The answer was shocking. She travelled about 150 miles south to help with the yam harvest, spending days carrying yams in the merciless sun for the equivalent of under £1 a day. And the reason? To fund school books to help her studies.

We pulled some chairs into the shade created by our blue school in the village of Bagri and listened to Bernice's story. Both of her parents died while she was young, leaving Bernice and her 7 brothers and sisters as orphans. But her eyes were bright as she told how a Christian school had changed her village – and how the school had improved her life. Now she is well dressed, receives a meal each school day and enjoys an education. "If you have no school", she concluded, "the community cannot develop".

When Bernice arrives home after school her work is not finished. In the absence of parents she takes responsibility for many of the household jobs, including helping to cook a meal for her brothers and sisters. But when we asked what the charity might do to help, she didn't ask for more food or other assistance - simply for a torch to read her text books during the evening in this remote village where dusk brings total darkness.

Similar stories can be told in all of the scattered villages around Lawra – the area in which we are working. One such village is Metoh. When we visited the village in September, it was



From top: a typical road in the Upper West Region of Ghana; mud huts; talking to students; a class at Bagri; Bernice, an orphan benefitting from a Savannah school.



Above: a community meeting in Metoh; children in Metoh
Below: the school building at Metoh takes shape

noticeable that the children were thin and malnourished with wasted bodies. But they were also excited and enthusiastic: a Savannah school is being built in *their* village. It has now reached roof level and opens, if the Lord will, in 2013.

The children in Metoh wanted to be lifted to sit in the window frame of their half-built school. As we held them we noticed how strikingly light they were to hold; yet, as they posed for photographs, their faces shone.

It is now 6 years since our first school opened. We are continually thankful to see what a transforming effect the schools are having in this desperately poor area. The lives of many hundreds of children are being touched.

None of this would be possible without our supporters. As the work continues and expands, and our responsibilities increase, we remain ever more dependent on your prayer and support. We do not take it for granted, and are very grateful to you.

We are joined by our friends in Ghana in extending our best wishes for 2013.

Yours sincerely

P. Lamberton H.Hickman Paulotto Jayan

