



# Savannah Education Trust

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**Savannah Education Trust  
is a charity which provides  
an education for some of the  
poorest children in West Africa.**

We now have ten Christian schools in northern Ghana in the villages of Bagri, Gberi, Korh, Pavuu, Mettoh, Tungan-Zagkpee, Boo, Baapari, Danko-Buree and Lyssah. The charity also ensures every schoolchild receives a meal each day and funds a number of teacher training scholarships to attract teachers to this remote and poor area.

Charity No. 1104896  
[www.savannahtrust.org](http://www.savannahtrust.org)



# Building, Building, **BUILDING**



A new school in the village of Lyssah

Around the savannah countryside and in the market town of Lawra, a number of important building projects are reaching completion: the fruit of much hard work and the generosity of kind supporters.

A new school is emerging from the savannah in the village of **Lyssah**. As mentioned in our last newsletter, Lyssah is one of the district's largest villages – and this will be the most northerly of our schools.

Most of the work on site has happened this calendar year. The work was slowed somewhat by difficult weather. Heavy rains made access for our heavy vehicles challenging along the dirt roads and a storm caused some damage to the building. Nonetheless, at the time of writing, our tenth school was virtually finished... and ready for pupils to arrive and be taught.



A new secondary school in the village of Baapari



Storm damage and roof repairs

At the village of **Baapari**, a new secondary school (for children aged 11-14) has been constructed. This will allow the village children who attend our school at Baapari to continue in education up until the age that they take the national exam in Ghana: the Basic Education Certificate Examination. The exam – which is needed to continue with any further education – includes a range of subjects including English, Mathematics, Integrated Science, Religious and Moral Education, a local Ghanaian language and Information Communication & Technology.





## TEACHER TRAINING & CONFERENCE CENTRE

The new teacher training and conference centre is now virtually complete. The centre is in the market town of Lawra. The construction has taken place across the course of the pandemic, and it is the most complex building constructed by Savannah. We give thanks for the funding to support the new centre – drawn from a legacy and from a small number of grant-making organisations.

It is already proving to be a wonderful base for Savannah. It provides a new office for the staff team. But, most importantly, it provides a centre for the ongoing support and training of our teachers. It is tough being a teacher in a

remote village school, and the centre will assist them in all elements of their work. It also provides resources which would be impossible to access anywhere else in the area, including Christian literature.



Alongside the physical infrastructure, we have also been able to appoint a School Improvement Officer and are in active conversation with another NGO about various imaginative ways to keep improving the quality of education at the schools.

Alongside the centre we have a small number of bedrooms which we hope will be useful for the centre, but will also be a source of income in the future (given the general lack of accommodation available in this remote area).



Improved iron roofs



The new tarmac road

## ON THE ROAD AGAIN

One of the challenges of the pandemic has been that travel to Ghana has been impossible. With travel now opened up we are thankful to be able to visit again – and indeed a couple of visits are taking place across the back half of 2022.

Apart from the joy of seeing the projects and our friends again, one of the striking things, as we return after a number of years, is how the whole of this area is developing. We are thankful that the work of Savannah has played its own small role in this development.

For many years we travelled to this area by driving the length of the whole country from Accra: a long, hot, dusty, difficult journey. It made for memorable experiences but meant that short visits were impossible. Recently, however, a daily flight has started from Accra to the regional capital in Wa. The small plane (generally packed with people) lands at a tiny airport just a 90-minute drive away from the schools.

Even the drive to our first school in Bagri feels different. The bumpy dirt track has been replaced by tarmac and electricity pylons now line the route into the village. The village feels less remote, and the traditional mud huts have corrugated iron roofs to better withstand the tropical rain.

Despite these welcome changes, you do not have to spend long in conversation with local people to discover the ongoing hardships. The recent rise in the cost of food has had a particularly difficult impact on lives here.



# THE OPENING OF DANKO-BUREE



In July we were able to attend the opening (or commissioning) ceremony of our new school, set in beautiful countryside at Danko-Buree. These twinned villages are to the northeast of Lawra, along the road to Eremon. The communities had recently tried to start a fledgling school – but only had trees for shelter and untrained villagers for teachers.

On the day of the commissioning, the delight at their beautiful new blue school was evident on the faces of pupils and parents, who slowly gathered at the school site.

Villagers came from far and near and, as the temperatures began to rise, we were joined by dignitaries from Lawra Municipal Assembly and the local education office as well as the Paramount Chief of the area.

The ceremony opened with prayer. Then there were a number of speeches, and it was a moving moment to be able to address the crowd who had gathered – to acknowledge the goodness of God and the importance of a Christian education.



It was also an opportunity to reflect on generous support for the school project, and to recognise the hard work of the Savannah staff team. “This school is a great tribute to your community. It is your school. You built it with your own hands. And it will provide an education for your children.”

The day, however, properly belonged to the children and not the dignitaries or speech-makers. They were smartly dressed in blue uniforms: a blue dress for the girls, and beige shorts and blue shirt for the boys. Marching in through the white school gates, they sang a number of songs. At the end of the speeches and children’s performances, we were presented (amidst much noise and commotion) with tribal robes. The ribbon was cut and a plaque was unveiled.

We left the school and travelled back through deep savannah landscape to the noise of xylophones and drums sounding. The hot air still thick with the dust created by dancing feet.

Although this was the ninth such opening ceremony for one of our schools, the day will linger long in the memory. We do not take any of it for granted and remain grateful to those who made this possible. We also remain thankful on behalf of the children, parents and teachers who will enjoy the benefits and blessings of an education. The ceremony marked both the end of construction, but also a beginning: the start of the school’s life. We look forward to seeing the impact across the next generation of children.

Top: The new school building at Danko-Buree

Bottom left: The crowds begin to gather

Bottom right: Commissioning celebrations

## LIVES CHANGED

**We are thankful to be able to report of buildings started or completed, of ceremonies held and visits undertaken. But the real measure of the effect of Savannah is in the lives touched by the work.**

During our visit in July, we met Oliver. We had met him before. He was three when we first visited his village of Bagri. Living in a simple mud hut, neither of his parents had enjoyed any education. He was part of the third cohort of students proudly to walk to our new school in Bagri every day. Having completed his schooling, he took a plumbing course – and now works helping to run a small plumbing business in Lawra.



Different local stakeholders have different (although complementary) motivations for supporting the work. For the church, one of their prayers has long been that the schools will help build their local churches – and they recognise the importance of educated church members.

It was therefore very moving to attend Bagri Church, and to see large numbers of educated young people. This was personified by Oliver, who took the early morning Bible Study – and gave an excellent talk (and spoke in English).



# THANK YOU



There is a lot happening across the Savannah schools. This newsletter can only share a fraction of the activities. Despite the scale of the enterprise, we have still managed to maintain a situation in the UK where we have no paid staff and no formal 'fundraising'.

None of the work would be possible without the generous donations of our kind supporters, and we want to thank you for your ongoing direct debits, one-off contributions and legacies.

This is particularly important at a time when our costs in Ghana are rising dramatically, alongside the rising prices internationally.

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*We thank the Lord who has built and sustained the work, and remain grateful for your prayer that we might continue to see His guidance and support.*

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Education Trust

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