

Ghana School Aid



THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19 IN GHANA

*By S. Kofi Ohene, Ghana School Aid
Representative, Accra. April 13, 2020*

The first two cases of COVID-19 were reported in Ghana on March 12, 2020. The initial reported cases were from travellers from Turkey and Norway. Since then, the Government has been introducing measures to control and prevent spread of coronavirus.

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Image below:

Mercy, an ATE-supported Small Business Owner, and her apprentices make facemasks for distribution. See page 7. Photo courtesy of Action Through Enterprise (ATE)





Ted Mayne and Michael Hammer at the 2019 AGM



AGM Reunion, June 2019



AGM Reunion Lunch, June 2019



AGM Reunion Lunch, June 2019

All Educational Institutions, both Public and Private, were closed, indefinitely from 16th March 2020. Two weeks later some additional measures were introduced. These include, restrictive movement in the hotspots of the outbreak, quarantine of passengers from countries where more than 200 cases have been reported, testing of all travellers at point of entry, and eventually closure of country's borders, and ban on air flights. As at 11 April 2020 a total of 37,954 persons have been tested for COVID-19, with 556 being positive, 4 treated and discharged and 8 dead.

An Emergency Legislation on Imposition of Restrictions Bill has been passed to help aid the enforcement of President's directives. The President has been addressing the country each week. He delivered the 6th address on Easter Friday, April 10, 2020. In addition, a Special Team provides daily update and press briefing. Greater Accra, Tema, Kasafo and Kumasi Metropolitan areas were totally Lockdown from March 30, 2020. There is a ban on public gatherings in churches, mosques, social centres, beaches, festivals and funerals. Shops are closed, except those selling food items. There are restrictions in movement of people from one district to another.

Isolation Centres have been established in all Regional and District hospitals. Frontline Staff, including Medical, Police, Military, others providing essential services are provided with PPE, other protective clothing/materials depending on degree of contact with people.

Noguchi Medical Research Centre at Legon is the National Laboratory for testing and confirmation of cases. A team has been established in all Regions to undertake contact tracing of persons

who arrived in Ghana from abroad from 3rd March 2020; and those who have come into contact with persons who have been tested positive. Fumigation exercises have been carried out in major markets throughout the country and it has been extended to Tertiary Educational Institutions.

Provision of funds and incentives

The Government has introduced some incentives, aimed at ameliorating the hardship of the citizenry, following the introduction of Lockdown and restrictions in movement. These include: 1. Free bus transport, meals, 50 percent increase in monthly salary, for frontline personnel; 2. Absorption of Water Bills and 50 per cent reduction in Electricity Bills for March, April and May 2020 for all citizens. In addition, the Government has allocated funds to District Assemblies to support combat against the coronavirus.

Institutions, Organizations, companies and individuals have also been making contributions in cash and in kind to support government's efforts in fighting against the spread and prevention of coronavirus. A National Committee has been established to receive and manage all such donations and contributions.

Some street children, market head porters and some vulnerable persons in lockdown areas, have been provided with free temporary accommodation and meals. Free meals on wheels, tanker water supplies are being provided by government and private organisations and distributed to people living in slum areas in the cities and some remote districts.

Arrangements for continuation of learning and education

Following the closure of all schools, measures have been introduced with a view to ensuring continuity of learning and education. The University Institutions are using online facilities for studies and contacts.

Senior High Schools, Junior High Schools and Primary Schools are provided with scheduled learning programmes from designated Television Stations. School Certificate Examinations, WASSCE for SHS and BECE for JHS final year pupils have been suspended.

Challenges in the fight against COVID-19

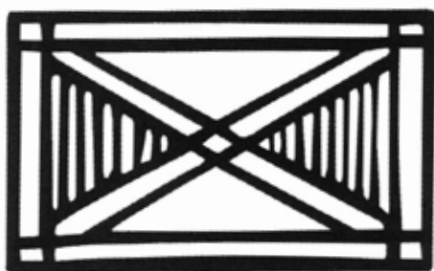
As part of the measures against the spread of COVID-19 the Government has directed strict adoption and enforcement of WHO Protocols in Ghana. A major challenge has been enforcement of practicing, social distancing and hand washing. Some cultural practices (e.g, shaking of hands, funerals), housing facilities, open markets, transport facilities and poverty, combine to make it difficult in enforcing social distancing, lockdown, and restrictions in movements.

In the area of education, lack of facilities in remote villages for Television, and Internet connectivity, will mitigate against availability and equal access to learning resources being provided for virtual and distance learning during the emergency period.

The country's resources may not be able to cope with rapid increase in demand for Medical Care, if the COVID-19 spread to proportions as being experienced in Europe and USA. Poor living conditions and abject poverty in some parts of the country will make life difficult for vulnerable

people during the enforcement of the restrictions against the spread of COVID-19.

Under the circumstances the Government and the people of Ghana are making the best efforts against the spread and prevention of COVID-19. The Government had just introduced a tracker app (GH COVID-19 TRACKER), to assist the Ghana Health Service in fulfilling its 3 T's: Tracing, Testing and Treatment in preventing the spread of COVID-19 in Ghana.



GHANA SCHOOL AID COMMITTEE

The Ghana School Aid Committee is continuing to meet remotely from our homes, which benefits enormously from the inclusion of our members in Ghana. Thanks to our hard-working secretary, Jo Hallett, we are in constant contact by email and phone. Now that schools in Ghana are closed, however, contact with them is impossible in many cases, especially in the more remote areas. The latest “funding window” for applications in February/March 2020 had to be suspended.

The 2020 Annual Reunion Lunch has been cancelled but the AGM will be held online via Zoom on June 25th 2020 at 2pm. We invite everyone to join in - please contact our Secretary for details at jo.hallett74@gmail.com

AGM 2019 REPORT

by Jo Hallett, Secretary GSA

The Chair, Ted Mayne, welcomed everyone to the 2019 Annual General Meeting of Ghana School Aid, with a particular welcome to four people who had come for the first time. They were - Reginald Quartey, a Ghanaian studying for an MA in Curriculum & Assessment at University College London; Joy Francis, a long-time member of GSA who had lived in Ghana for 3 years; Sarah Gardener from Action Through Enterprise (ATE); and Sadia Hussain, who had recently spent two months in Ghana as a volunteer, in two schools.

There followed a discussion on fund-raising. Suggestions included:

- Contacting VSO volunteers who have returned from a placement in Ghana
- Setting up a Facebook page for GSA (Rita agreed to take this forward, with help from Sarah)
- Getting small standing orders from all supporters
- Sponsored walks or other events. We could organise our own, or join events already organised.

Nigel Dennis presented the accounts for 1st April 2018 to June 10th 2019. We have a current balance of £29,131 [June 2019]. During the financial year 2017 – 2018, our income was £41,084 and expenditure £42,899. We were fortunate to receive several large legacies and other donations in memory of former GSA supporters. We very much appreciate these contributions. The full accounts can be found on the website.

Ted thanked Nigel, and his assistant, William Spooner (currently working on St Helena), for their hard work on the finances.

In 2018 Ghana School Aid continued to have a very large number of applications for funding. We provided grants to 32 different schools or projects. In comparison, in 2016 we funded 19 projects: in 2017 we funded 31 projects.

Jo reported on a request that she found of particular interest, from Sumaman Senior High School in Suma Ahenkro – from Joseph Yeboah. He is Head of Science, but their science laboratories have hardly any equipment and almost no furniture. She found out that LabAid, a charity founded by the late Alan Welch, a founder member of Ghana School Aid, is still in action, on a reduced scale. They collect second-hand science equipment from UK schools to send to schools in developing countries with little access to science equipment – schools like Sumaman. They collect the items and parcel them up – but the people requesting the equipment have to take it on from there, arranging transport and delivery – so that’s a challenge! She had spoken to Josh, Vice President of the University of Maryland chapter of Engineers Without Border, a group which has provided solar panels to this school. He encouraged her to get in touch with another NGO called Changing Lives Together, which specialises in logistical support in Ghana. This is an on-going project! [See Jo’s report, page 8]

Because of the large number of requests for grants, we have now set up a system of “application windows”, a 6-week period when we are happy to receive new requests. We have also designated our next two application windows – in October/November 2019 and February/March

2020 [currently suspended] – for requests for water and sanitation projects. It will be interesting to see how this goes!

Jo paid tribute to the great contribution made by our two most active representatives in Ghana – Kofi Ohene in Accra and Salifu Baako in Tamale. Without them, GSA would be struggling to fulfil our remit. Baako works with schools in the Northern Region, ensuring that the requests are reasonable and well grounded. Kofi helps us by visiting schools from time to time, but is now an essential link in our payment operation

Talks on projects and visits

After the AGM, we had an inspiring, illustrated talk from Michael Hammer about the Mayhew family’s extended visit to Ghana in 2018. In the afternoon, Jo shared a list of the projects that received grants in 2018, and showed pictures of a few of them.

We also heard from Sarah Gardener about the work of Action through Enterprise (ATE), working with communities near Lawra in UWR [see also News, page 7]. Jane Scott talked to us about the Wulugu project, a well-established charity working with communities in many different ways in Northern Ghana. GSA has supported this project in the past.

Sadia Hussain, who is a volunteer coordinator at Age UK, told us about her recent trip to Ghana for 6 weeks, working in a school near Tamale and one in the Volta region.

[Photos of the AGM and Reunion Lunch are on page 2]

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Given to the AGM and Reunion lunch by Ted Mayne on 13th June 2019

Welcome to everyone and thank you for turning up today for this AGM and Reunion lunch. This is the fourth time we have met here and the venue is proving popular. A huge thank you to Penny Sewell for the effort she has made to organise this occasion so well.

Ghana School Aid has had a good year and reports coming out of Ghana indicate that the nation is coping well and making progress in the education programmes. Of course all is not perfect but, from the evidence available, the situation is improving. With regard to Ghana School Aid, we continue to support projects in the North with emphasis on girls. We have been helped by the increase in donations from our supporters. In addition, our up-to-date website has enabled would-be contributors to gather information on what we actually do and I have been hugely encouraged by the way that our bank balance has grown and we have considerably increased our giving. The response from our recipients has been phenomenal and most encouraging. We received a generous legacy for nearly £10,000 from Sheila Mercer and a similar amount from the estate of Elizabeth Bennett. Generous donations from the estate of John Hampshire and £5,000 from Karola Strong. One surprise came in the form of a cheque from St James's Place Charitable Foundation for £2,500 to go to Asuadei Basic School in Brong Ahafo. Full details of our finances appear in our Newsletter. We actually received nearly £41,000 in one year to March 2019 which is amazing considering our annual totals in the past were around the lower four figure mark. In the 12 months up to

March 2019 we were able to give away almost £43,000. This is fantastic and we have received numerous letters of thanks from grateful schools.

Looking back over the year, it is easy to see why and how we have made so much progress and this is thanks to the efficient way Penny Sewell and Jo Hallett have kept our website up-to-date. All this, plus our Newsletter produced so professionally by Jennifer and Anna MacDougall. Our website gives a clear indication of what we have achieved and what are our aims. Our Newsletter and website have provided the public with a shop window which comprehensively details our achievements.

I cannot conclude without further expressing the importance of a good education and many of the Ghanaians who have been helped by Ghana School Aid are very grateful and we have provided them with a lift out of poverty. In Ghana poverty and the breakdown of family life have secondary effects. Too many children wander about the streets because they have no schools to go to, or nor money for them to go to school, or no parents at home to see that they go to school, because both parents (if there be two) have to work to keep the family alive. This so often leads to a breakdown in moral standards. This is a mounting problem. It is hoped that Ghana's recently found wealth from oil will go some way to easing the burden of the poor and lift them out of poverty. It was Clement Attlee who said that if we can educate our people we will eliminate poverty and sickness. Our small contribution to education in Ghana does not go far, but it is of vital assistance for those whom we are targeting. We must go on.

NEWS

Urgent Appeal from Action Through Enterprise (ATE)

We received an appeal from Leela Shanti of A.T.E. in April 2020. This is the organisation working in Lawra UWR, which we have supported in the past, and where committee member Kate Regan volunteered and worked with them in 2018. [See GSA Newsletters 2018, p8, and 2019, p5]. It is a well-organised group supporting the schools and the community in many ways, in one of the most remote areas of Ghana.

The impact of the coronavirus in Ghana, where the schools have been closed down, initially for 4 weeks, has been devastating, especially in poor rural areas. In Lawra the children rely on the school feeding programme and ATE were asking for £994 in funds to support about 300 families in 4 junior high schools with an alternative source of food.

Whilst this did not fit into our usual categories of grants, in these unprecedented circumstances the committee felt very sympathetic to their request, as it is supporting children who will be back in school as soon as they are open again. The full amount requested was sent to ATE.

STOP PRESS

We received a detailed report from Leela Shanti describing how the money was used to address the immediate problems of child hunger and hygiene. The school children received maize, soap and facemasks (made by local women - see photo on front cover). More information can be found online at www.ateghana.org/ates-covid-19-response-timeline

Raise money for GSA when shopping on-line

By Kate Regan

Ghana School Aid is registered with the on-line shopping fundraiser Give as you Live. This is an easy-to-use service whereby, once you are registered with them (this is free), you can raise a small percentage of your purchase price for GSA each time you shop from any one of hundreds of on-line suppliers who are prepared to donate to charities through this service. Once registered, you simply make your purchase via the Give as you Live website - www.giveasyoulive.com

Contributing merchants cover all walks of life from food and clothes through to insurance, travel and hotels; for example, Tesco, M&S, Ocado, Aviva insurance, EasyJet, Europcar, Hotter Shoes and the RSPB shop.

In addition, one can purchase in-store shopping cards from Give as you Live, which are sent to you and can be reloaded at will. They work as pre-paid units, just like using a gift card in a store. For example, buying a £100 shopping card for Tesco can raise £2, for M&S £3, and for John Lewis/Waitrose £1.50.

As you can see, a community of GSA supporters all contributing in either of those ways, could provide a useful small income stream for us. *"Many a mickle makes a muckle!"*

Please do have a look at Give as you Live if you use the internet and whether or not you do, consider recommending it to friends and family who might be interested.

Patrick Heinecke

Committee member Patrick decided to step down last year due to ongoing mobility problems. He has been a valued member of the committee for several years and his regular extended visits to Ghana contributed much to our meetings. He has worked in Sandema in the far north of Ghana for many years and GSA was able to support some of the many important projects undertaken in the area. These have been highlighted in the Newsletter and on the website (www.ghanaschoolaid.org). We will miss his insight at our committee meetings and his colourful presence at the AGMs!



Patrick Heinecke with Mary Owuso at the 2016 AGM

Laboratory equipment for Sumaman SHS

By Jo Hallett

When I received a request from a Senior High School for Lab equipment, it spiked my interest – a change from providing plastic chairs and tables to primary schools, which was the most common request at the time! – and close to my heart as a life-long primary school science coordinator. That was in August 2018.

The school is in Suma Ahenkro, a rural community in the Jaman North District in the Bono region of Ghana, having a population of about 8,000. I found out that an NGO, based in the USA, called Engineers Without Borders had supported the school and built them a water tower, and I was in contact with them.

The pictures of the science lab at this large secondary school with 1500 pupils were heart-wrenching. They had little furniture and hardly any science equipment.

At the next GSA meeting, we agreed to allocate a grant of £1000 for new tables and stools, and I was reminded of the work of a former GSA member, the late Alan Welch, who helped to set up LabAid - www.labaid.org This organisation collects used science equipment from schools in UK to be shipped out to schools and colleges in developing countries, where such resources are very scarce. LabAid is still active – volunteers work in a small building at the back of a church in Amersham. It's like an Aladdin's cave with shelves of second-hand science equipment, being constantly cleaned and packed for use overseas!



The Sumaman SHS science lab



Sumaman pupils in a science lesson with their new lab equipment

The science teacher at Sumaman, Joseph Yeboah, sent me a list of the equipment they would like, and LabAid matched up items that they had and more as they came in, packed it all carefully into three boxes ready for transportation. They didn't get everything, but it was a fair selection of items.

The next challenge was to go and collect it. The deal with LabAid these days is that they will get the equipment and pack it up but it has to be collected from their workshop in Amersham. So off I went in my little Peugeot – to collect the three large boxes. I had a warm welcome – a gang of ex-science teachers offering a very useful service! – and put the equipment into the back of my car.

Next challenge – to get the boxes from Coventry to Suma Ahenkro. Our GSA committee member, Mary Owusu, was kind enough to point me in the

direction of possible transportation companies. I contacted Thomas Okyere of Ghana Door-to-Door Shipping, based in Reading. He was very helpful, but the three boxes of lab equipment did not constitute a big enough order to warrant “door to door” shipping – just Reading to Accra! So, another cross-country journey to take them to his house in Reading. A container would be leaving a few weeks later, and took 6 weeks altogether for them to get there. At the other end, the school managed to collect the boxes from the shipping company's warehouse in Accra.

Around Christmas time, 2019, I received an excited email from Joseph – and some heart-felt thanks – along with the pictures.

Job done!

Voices of Ghana

Literary contributions to the Ghana Broadcasting System 1955-57. Second edition, 2018. Edited by Victoria Ellen Smith.

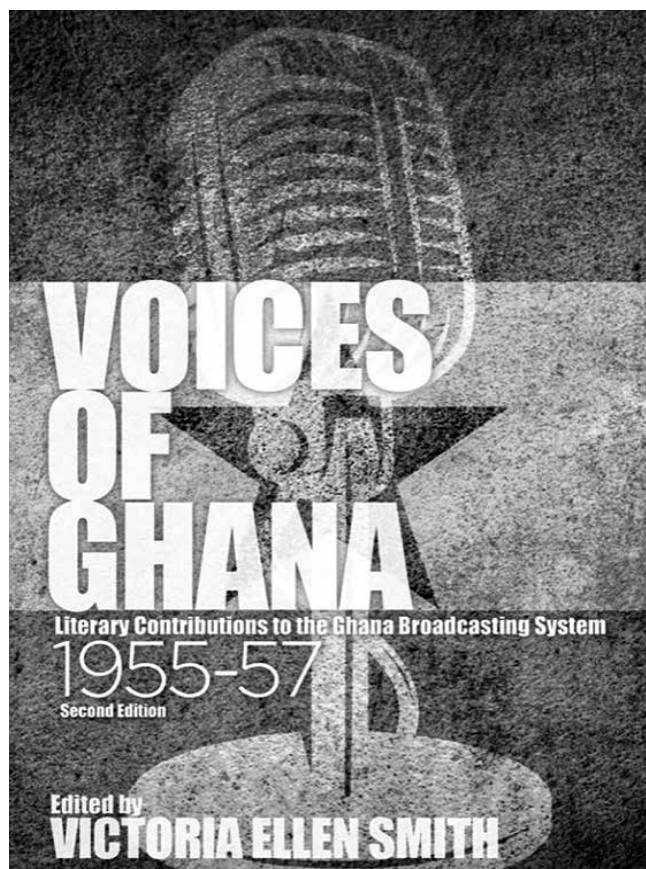
James Gibbs (GSA long-time member and supporter) contacted the committee in early 2019 for help distributing a new edition of *Voices of Ghana* to schools, colleges and universities in Ghana. James explained that “*this is vitally important for those trying to get a sense of Ghanaian literature - and there is a Sub Saharan edition on sale in Accra for £9.90. I have secured £1000 for the purchase of copies and distribution to educational institutions in Ghana. The publisher Akoss Ofori-Mensah is on board, but I need a registered UK charity who can accept the cheque and pass on the money to her in Accra.*”

The money was paid into GSA accounts and passed to our representative in Accra, Kofi Ohene, who facilitated the transfer for the distribution of the books with the help of others and the publisher Madam Akoss Ofori-Mensah who acknowledged the help: *“Thanks to you all for making it possible for this book to reach Ghanaians.”*

James reported back in July 2019:

“It is very good to hear of the distribution of 165 copies of the Sub-Saharan edition of Voices of Ghana to universities and senior secondary schools in Ghana. The project, involving publication, purchase and distribution, has not been easy, and the completion is the result of effort and collaboration.”

Voices of Ghana is an annotated edition of the original landmark anthology, including poetry, plays, stories and essays first broadcast on Gold Coast radio.



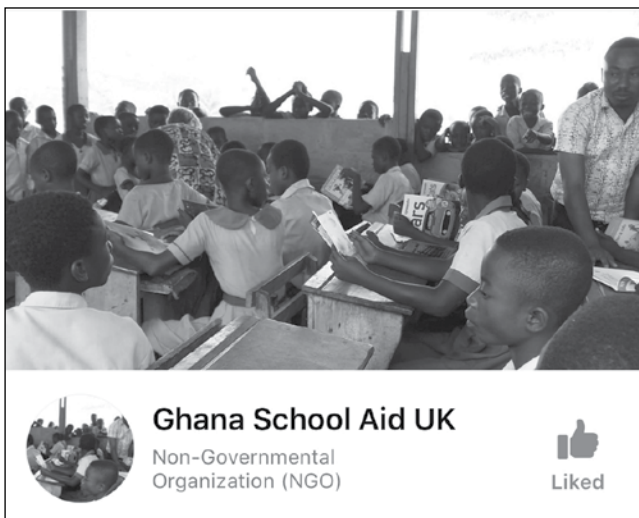
From the website (www.boydellandbrewer.com): *“Ghana’s first radio programme of original literature, The Singing Net, began in 1955 as part of the development of a national radio station in the years leading to independence in 1957. Its central aim was to bring Ghanaian writers to the forefront of cultural programming as part of the Africanisation of radio in Ghana. It was a critical cultural expression of the radical changes that were unfolding across the colonial world. The programme successfully introduced listeners to a series of pioneering Ghanaian authors who would go on to become significant figures of Anglophone West African literature in the early postcolonial decades: Efua Sutherland, Frank Parkes, Amu Djoletto, Geormbeeyi Adali-Mortty, Albert Kayper-Mensah, Kwesi Brew, Cameron Duodu, J.H. Nketia and many others. The anthology, Voices of Ghana (1958) is a collection of the poetry, short stories, play scripts and critical discussions that were aired on the Gold Coast Broadcasting Service (later the Ghana Broadcasting System) (1954-1958). Both The Singing Net and Voices of Ghana were edited by the BBC producer, Henry Swanzy.*

The context of Ghana’s independence, the singularity of the anthology’s history, and the significance of many of the writers all contribute to the importance of this text. This second edition is a timely intervention into recent debates within postcolonial studies and world literature on the importance of broadcast culture in the dissemination of “new literatures” from the colonial world. It includes an unabridged version of the 1958 text, a new introduction and footnoted annotations, which draw on extensive research undertaken in Ghana and Britain. It will appeal to a general readership with an interest in Ghanaian

literature, 1950s broadcast culture, the figure of Dr Kwame Nkrumah and the making of a national literature in the era of decolonisation, as well as engaging scholars. The new edition presents a deeply insightful and engaging history of Voices of Ghana and reintroduces the original works on the occasion of the anthology's 60th anniversary.”

GSA Facebook page

Our committee member Rita de Graft has set up the “Ghana School Aid UK” Facebook page. Please visit and “Like” the page to get updates!



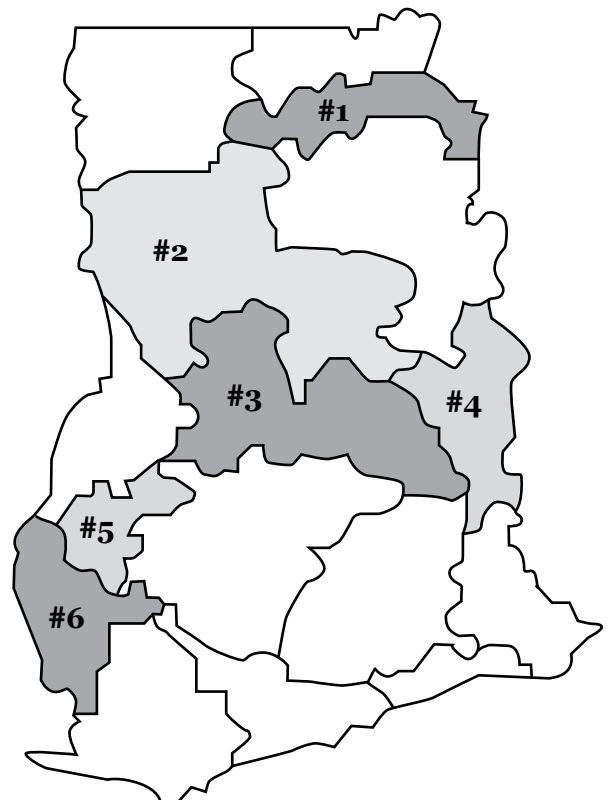
GSA Facebook page images from the mobile app (top) and web browser (bottom)

New map of Ghana

A referendum was held in December 2018 which led to the creation of six new regions. These are (with # shown on the map below):

- #1 - North East (capital Nalerigu)
- #2 - Savannah (capital Damongo)
- #3 - Bono East (capital Techiman)
- #4 - Oti (capital Dambai)
- #5 - Ahafo (capital Goaso)
- #6 - Western North (capital Sefwi Wiawso)

The new regions were created from four of the original areas – Brong Ahafo, Northern Region, Western Region and Volta Region. There are now 16 in total.



Map of Ghana, highlighting the six new regions

UPDATE ON PROJECTS

By Jo Hallett and Jennifer MacDougall

Esinianim District Assembly Primary School, Brong Ahafo

This school applied for a grant to supply desks, tables and chairs and was awarded £600. Subsequently the District Assembly provided 40 desks and so the Circuit Supervisor, Samuel Addae, reported that the GSA money was used for much needed storage cupboards, teachers' tables and chairs, exercise and note books, pens and pencils. Previously, he reports, teachers had to carry books and materials back and forth to their homes to keep them secure. They had to mark pupils' work while leaning against the wall. The report concludes:

“on behalf of the Ghana Education Service in the Asutifi North district of Brong Ahafo in Ghana and on my own behalf as the Circuit Supervisor of Kenyasi 2 wish to thank you



New desks for Esinianim pupils

(GSA) the Committee, Chairman, Jo Hallett, and all other members for your selfless support to Esinianim school. May God bless you for your good thought and sense of judgment to locate us as well.”

(Akim) Batabi Presbyterian Primary School, Eastern Region

This school submitted a detailed report asking for funds to help build a school office and store room. Two grants of £750 were provided over 2 years. The proposal stated that:

“Akim Batabi Presbyterian Primary School is a community based school in Akim Batabi in the Birim Central Municipal Assembly in the Eastern Region. The school is a public school which is being jointly managed by the Presbyterian Church and the Ghana Education Service (GES). The school has a total enrollment of 180 pupils from KG to Primary 6 consisting of 80 males and 100 females with a staff of 11 including the Headmistress - Mrs. Patricia Anane-Antwi.

The town in which the school is located is a small agricultural community growing on a small scale cocoa and palm tree[s]. The total population is about 700. The economic condition of the people do not prevent them from engaging in communal labour to embrace any developmental projects that will better their lots especially the well-being of their children.

The school has been in existence for the past three decades through the support of the Ghana Education Service (GES), the Presbyterian Church of Ghana and the community. These institutions have played key roles in the smooth

running of the school. The school has been plagued with many challenges since its inception ranging from lack of furniture, logistics and the lack of an office and a storeroom block for the school as the most challenging and immediate problem. The school has a dilapidated six classroom block without an office. This situation has greatly affected the school in various ways. It is against this background that we humbly appeal to you through this proposal for your kind consideration.



Building work in progress at Akim Batabi School

The project aims at providing the school with the construction of an office and a storeroom. For the past decades, the previous heads and teachers have been using the verandah as a staff meeting place and also as the office for the headmistress and has since become a tradition of using the verandah as an office for the school which has been very disturbing. Again, this has resulted in poor records keeping, hence most valuable documents of the school which are supposed to be kept at the office are kept in the classroom or sometimes with the headmistress in her own room which supposed not to be so. The proposal when granted will help address these challenges.”

We received photos of the building work in progress [above].

Asunsu No 2 Roman Catholic Primary School, Brong Ahafo

This school applied for a second grant to complete a new classroom block. GSA had awarded them £1500 in 2018. We received photos of good progress already made on the building, but without doors, windows and flooring. The Committee decided to award one further grant of £1000. A teacher from the school wrote:

“Asunsu No.2 is a rural community in the Dormaa Municipal with a population of about 2000 and about 40 kilometres away from the Municipal capital Dormaa Ahenkro. The community has only one basic school thus R/C Prim. and JHS which serves the educational needs of children in the community. The main occupation of the people in the community is farming. Most farmers in the community grow to feed their families. The community is connected to electricity on the national grid. Asunsu No.2 R/C Primary and JHS is a school established in 1970 by the community folks to cater for their wards education and later handed over to the Catholic Church. The school currently has a population of 304 students with 10 teachers and two headteachers. It is



New KG block at Asunsu RC Primary School

the only school in the rural community but lacks classrooms to accommodate students. Due to the deplorable nature of the JHS block, JHS students have their teaching and learning in an open space under a tree. Those in the KG are lucky the community has put up a wooden structure for them which they used as a classroom. Teaching and learning in the school comes to a halt when the rain starts in Ghana because students study outside.”

Kwaboanta D/A JHS, Eastern Region

In 2018 we awarded a grant of £800 for the school to purchase furniture and other equipment. Mrs Lucy Tengey wrote from the school:

“The Kwaboanta D/A staff, P.T.A executives, the pupils and the entire community write to express our profound gratitude and appreciation for giving us a Grant of GH¢4390.54 towards the provision of furniture for the school. Due to the massive support of the project, we were able to buy furniture, running vests and jerseys for the school. The grant has made a significant impact in the social and



New sports shirts for Kwaboanta JHS

academic life of the pupils.

The memory of your organization will forever linger in the hearts of the school as you are the only organization that has extended an arm of help to the school.”



Some of the new furniture (desks) provided for Kwaboanta JHS

Kenyasi No 2 Methodist School, Brong Ahafo

This school requested funds to improve their school library:

“The headteacher of the school found out that the pupils level of reading was very low so she put it upon herself to establish a library to inculcate reading habit in the school. After all the necessary consultation in 2016, the library was officially opened with limited available resources.

Currently the library is achieving its purpose for establishment as most pupils go there on their own to read. But one problem we face now is the sitting posture of pupils during reading due to lack of appropriate library furniture. We therefore appeal to GSA to assist us with

some library furniture to aid sound and healthy reading in the library.”

GSA agreed a grant of £500 which was soon converted into much needed library furniture. The Headteacher reported:

“On behalf of the PTA, SMC, Myself and the staff and all the Pupils of Kenyasi No.2 Methodist Primary School, we say a very big thank you to GSA and all the stakeholders who made what we are witnessing today a reality.

These chairs and tables will not only provide a comfortable sitting posture when using the library but have come to improve literacy in the school.”



New library furniture at Kenyasi Methodist School

Asanteman L/A Primary JHS, Brong Ahafo

In the previous 2019 Newsletter (p.12) we reported on the building progress of a toilet block for this school to replace the appalling existing facilities. The committee granted another £500 in 2019 to complete the building and we have now received photographs of the completed block shown here.



New toilet block at Asanteman Primary JHS

Aboabo L/A Basic School, Brong Ahafo

This school received £1,200 in 2018 towards rebuilding the kindergarten block which was dangerous and provided no protection from the rain. In March 2019 the committee heard from Atia Yaw at the school:

“I am very excited to update you again about the progress of my school kg block and the furniture that GSA sponsored us through your assiduous effort. The new kg blocks, that’s kg one and kg two have been erected and roofed. The pupils and the community are very happy upon seeing that because the previous kg classroom blocks were death traps.

Because we are entering into light rainy season here in Ghana, we are compelled to move the children into the new uncompleted block because the old one is having poor roofing which will not support schooling and teaching and learning of the pupils and the teachers in this rainy season. Apart from that, the pupils are also very excited to sit in the new block to learn.

Dual desks of twenty have been done to provide comfortable seating for the kg one and two pupils to ensure effective teaching and learning. GSA gave us a handsome grant of 7,000.00 [cedis] to do the projects...

The community paid for the roofing cost which amounted to 1,000.00 [cedis]. The community upon seeing this great initiative on the part of GSA, they supported with their labour and the school also supported with our small capitation grant. The pupils are now happy to learn in a new classroom block although not completed. Girl child education are now encouraging upon parents seeing the new classrooms.



New desks in the partially completed classroom at Aboabo Basic School

Teachers and pupils are now saved from the rain and sun shine because of good roofing sheets. The entire school community thank GSA very much for this great support given to us.”

GSA awarded the school another £900 to complete the classroom with flooring and block walls. This work was delayed due to the rainy season and at the time of writing we are awaiting reports on the completion of the building.

Suponso-Onomabo Basic School (also referred to as Akim Anamabi), Birim Central District, Eastern Region

Teacher Steve Forson wrote on behalf of the school explaining its situation in a very poor area of peasant farming and high unemployment. The school was in dire need of desks for pupils, and tables, chairs and cupboards for teachers. The photographs show up to six children at one desk! GSA supplied a grant of £700 to help address this problem. Later he wrote again to let us know the benefit to the school of 33 new dual desks:

“The grant has made a significant impact in the social and academic life of the pupil’s in the school. The memory of your organization will forever remain in the heart of the school as you are the only organization that has extended an arm to the school.”

The previously crowded desks *“affected ... handwriting and also hindered them from doing independent work in class. Pupils always resort to copying from their friends whenever an exercise is given but the provision of the new desks together with the existing ones has solved these problems and now comfortability,*

independent work is a hallmark. Handwriting of the pupils is now improving as a result of their new seating arrangements. On behalf the P.T.A the unit committee, the staff and the entire pupils of Akim-Anamabi Basic school we wish to express our profound gratitude for your support. Merry Christmas and Happy new year to you and your noble donors.”



Before - six pupils to a desk at Suponso-Onomabo Basic School



After - the new desks at Suponso-Onomabo Basic School

Assin Asamankese TI Ahmadiya Basic School, Boameso, Central Region

The Headteacher, Mr Harrison Ibrahim, sent an application for funding to provide furniture for the kindergarten classes at this school, founded in 1932. He explained that:

“Assin Asamankese community is predominantly a farming community with a population of about 4000. Out of this figure about 2500 of them are Women. This has put Women on the economic and social ladder as the breadwinners of their families. The challenging economic situation has put about 90% of the people in the poverty bracket. As a result of their economic and social standings, parents find it very difficult to make ends meet in the provision of some basic school needs of their wards. Despite these challenges, Assin Asamankese is well known for its religious tolerance with three main religious bodies and 13 different denominations living peacefully in the community. The communal and voluntary spirit of the people is very high there by supporting any developmental project with much enthusiasm.”



New KG furniture at Assin Asamankese Basic School

GSA gave a grant of £500 to provide furniture for the kindergarten pupils. The photos show the new tables and chairs being put to good use!

Techimantia TI Ahmadiya Basic School, Brong Ahafo

This school needed funds to complete a classroom block begun by the PTA some years previously but not finished due to lack of money. The GSA committee awarded £1000 for this work. Following feedback and photos of the progress a further £1000 was provided to supply doors, windows and floors. The Headteacher, Musah Fosu, sent us photos and a letter reporting that:

“The building now has doors and windows. The floors of the three classrooms have been casted. The good news is that, the once abandoned building has now become a comfortable classroom block thanks to the fund received from GSA.

We owed you a big thank you as a school and I wish to use this medium to thank you and the entire GSA committee members on behalf of the

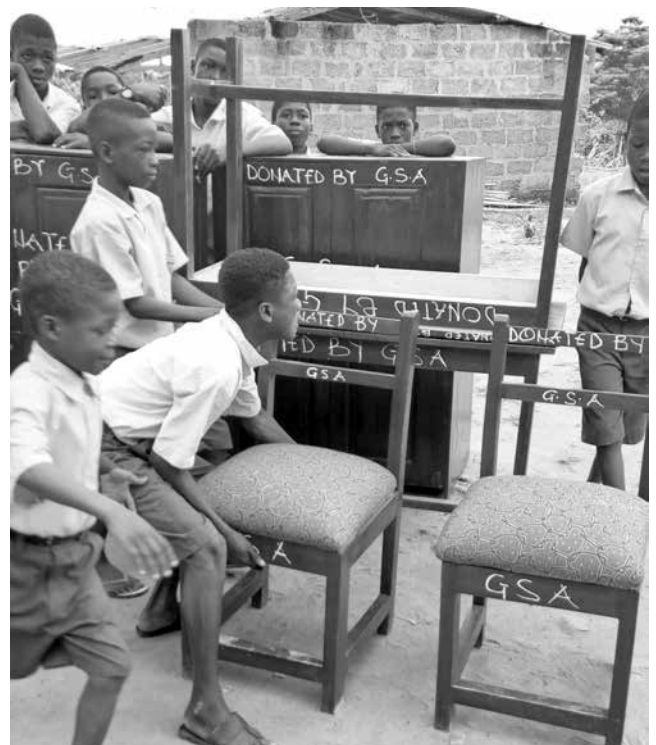


GSA funded a new classroom at Techimantia TI Ahmadiya

school and the whole community. Thank you for providing us a safe place for learning. Thank you very much. We really appreciate your efforts towards the completion of this building.”

Asikaso D/A Basic School, Eastern Region

This school was in desperate need of furniture, especially teachers' tables, chairs and cupboards to store books and materials safely. Many books were damaged or destroyed due to being stored on the floor of the classrooms. Teachers had nowhere to mark pupils' work properly or prepare lessons. The school has no electricity and the area is one of mainly peasant farming and high unemployment. The GSA committee agreed a grant of £500 to cover the cost of 6 tables and chairs and 9 storage cupboards. The school sent photographs of the new furniture and stated that they had subsequently experienced a large increase in enrolment.



Asikaso school children unloading the new furniture

Yilonaayili Anglican Primary School, Northern Region

GSA gave this school £650 in 2019 for furniture following a request through our representative, Salifu Baako. We allocated funds for flooring in 2017 which was reported in the 2018 Newsletter (p14) showing photos of the children sitting on the new floor! The school was able to provide 43 new metal dual desks which they promise to maintain well.

Tibung D/A JHS, Northern Region

This school was visited by Alhassan Salifu Baako in early 2019. He reported that:

“Tibung D/A JHS is another remote school in the Kumbungu District of the Northern Region, has a population of a little more than 200 students with 8 teachers. According to them their teachers have no accommodation at all in the Community but have to travel to Tamale to sleep on daily basis after school. This negatively

affects academic work greatly and they have no option than to come out with this project even though it is very tough for them but there is no alternative. According to Mr Abukari [Headteacher], the Primary and KG of the school has a teachers’ quarters for their teachers but the JHS teachers have not.”

The school and the PTA had struggled to build 5 rooms so far of an accommodation block up to lintel level but needed help to complete the building. On Baako’s recommendation the committee awarded £800 for roofing materials. The photos show that this was promptly used to good effect. Additional work is required to complete the building fully and a further £685 was agreed at the February 2020 meeting.



Above right: Alhassan Salifu Baako (GSA Rep), Adam Hizikil (HT) and Yakubu Abukari (PTA Chair) at partially built teachers’ block at Tibung JHS. Above: The almost completed teachers’ accommodation

Kenyasi No 1 RC Basic School, Brong Ahafo

The committee received a request from a teacher at this school with photographs showing a good building but a clear lack of furniture and a poor roof. The letter described the situation:

“Kenyasi No. 1 R/C Basic School was established in the year 1965. The school has three stages of classroom blocks (KG, Primary and JHS) with a population of three hundred and twenty eight students. The ages of students in this school are from five to sixteen years.

The school is facing so many challenges but the most urgent one is in KG. The furniture at the KG is insufficient. Even the ones we are using now (benches and plastic chairs) belong to a church nearby. Pupils either perch or lie on the floor to write whenever we don't get these chairs from the nearby church. Secondly the roofs leak badly anytime it rains. Sometimes the KG department has to close down on the sight of the rain.

The security of the furniture would surely be guaranteed should you assist us since we have [a] classroom with good lockable doors. The poor socioeconomic background of most children in the school makes the collection of school levies difficult. A major reason for the poor infrastructure in the school. I would be very grateful if through my application the school gets the following items from GSA:

- 1. 10 set of KG round tables and chairs*
- 2. Two Teacher's table and four Chairs*
- 3. Five packets of roofing sheet.*

The main occupation in this area is farming and illegal mining (Galamsey). The effect of this

illegal mining on the community is the increase in teenage pregnancies therefore making most children vulnerable in schools..... Kenyasi No.1 Roman Catholic Basic school is a Public School run by the Ghana Education Service (GES). It uses the GES approved curriculum for instruction. The main source of funding for the school is the government of Ghana capitation grant to schools.”

GSA provided a grant of £860 for roofing panels and wooden furniture for the pupils at this school.



Top: Kenyasi No 1 Basic School showing the old rusty roof. Above: The new roof being repaired

Dumso-Bethal Primary School, Brong Ahafo

David Antwi-Boasiako, a teacher at this school, applied for a grant to provide more desks for the 189 pupils from a poor farming area. The village community support the school and undertook to maintain the furniture in the future. GSA sent £750 to supply dual desks. In September 2019 we received an email expressing their thanks:

“This is not just a good news but overwhelming, great and excellent news. I am very happy to inform you that the furniture work has being completed and have been transported to the school.

On behalf of the staff, the pupils, the community and myself, we are most grateful to you and GSA for this great support to remedy this learning needs of ours. Now we can boast of comfortable furniture for our pupils, to improve pupils enrolment and effective and efficient teaching and learning.

We accept and will always abide by your child protection policy as we practice in my school and I will make sure it is intensified in my school as we practice.



Dumso Bethel Primary asked for new desks

We say God richly bless you all and your hardworking rep Mr. Kofi Ohene and Jo for having patience with us when our account was having problem.”

Kumosa M/A Primary School, Brong Ahafo

This is a Ghana Education Service school, like so many in a poor rural area, requesting help to renovate their basic school building graphically shown in the photos provided. The Headteacher wrote that:

“The classroom blocks are in a bad shape with rusted roofing sheets and uncemented floor. This is obstructing teaching and learning because teachers who are posted there to teach do not come, and those who come do not stay for long because of the shamble nature of the classrooms.

The PTA, the staff and the community are strongly involved in this....application to seek for quality education for our children.”



New desks being made for Kumosa Primary School

The GSA committee granted £750 for roofing materials which was in fact spent on new furniture because, in the meantime, another NGO provided a new building!

TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT 01/04/2019 - 27/03/2020

by Nigel Dennis, Treasurer

INCOME	£
Regular Donations	4,160.00
Legacy from Neil Bax final instalment	5,379.48
Legacy from Edna Howard Mason	10,000.00
Legacy from Elizabeth Bennett	3,060.13
Donations in memory of David Arthur Parks	456.50
Donation from The Morel Trust	500.00
Donation from The Chapter of the Order of the Holy Paraclete Central Funds, Whitby	200.00
Donations in memory of Janet Sewell	500.00
Donations for Let's Read laptop library	4,350.00
Donations through Just Giving	106.90
Donations through MyDonate	414.40
Donations through PayPal Giving Fund	3,221.33
Donations through Virgin Money Giving	130.00
Interest from COIF Deposit Fund	94.27
Income from Annual Lunch Bookings and Donations 2019 including Raffle	1,127.00
Income from Annual Lunch Bookings and Donations 2020	<u>563.00</u>
TOTAL INCOME	<u>34,263.01</u>

EXPENDITURE	£
Grants to projects in Ghana	29,548.00
Grant to Let's Read for laptop library	4,250.00
Bank transfer fees	16.00
Bank Fee	10.00
Expenses of officers in Ghana	50.00
Expenses of Annual Lunch and AGM 2019	148.35
Expenses of Annual Lunch and AGM 2020	205.00
Expenses of Newsletter April 2019	<u>467.00</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>34,694.35</u>

FUNDS at 27th March 2020	£	£
NatWest Current Account Balance 1st April 2019	5,458.33	
COIF Deposit Account Balance 1st April 2019	<u>14,000.00</u>	19,458.33
Deduct Expenditure less Income	£34,694.35 - £34,263.01 =	431.34
TOTAL Balance at 27th March 2020		<u>19,026.99</u>

Nat West Current Account Balance 27th March 2020	1,976.99
COIF Deposit Account Balance 27th March 2020	<u>17,050.00</u>
TOTAL	<u>19,026.99</u>

GRAND TOTALS 1986 – 27th March 2020	INCOME (£)	EXPENDITURE (£)
1986 – 31st March 2018	289,646.91	268,373.28
1st April 2018 – 31st March 2019	<u>41,084.20</u>	42,899.50
1st April 2019 – 27th March 2020	34,263.01	34,694.35
Total	<u>364,994.12</u>	<u>345,967.13</u>
Income less Expenditure	£364,994.12 - £345,967.13 =	£19,026.99

OBITUARIES

Evan Lewis 1924 - 2019

From a tribute by Branwen Abbott

Evan Lewis was a Gold Coast District Commissioner between 1951 and 1959. He served in Burma with the RAF and then qualified for the Colonial Service in 1951. He was posted to the Gold Coast and served mainly in the north until his departure in 1959.

His daughter Branwen writes: *“my father held many dear memories of his time in what became Ghana during his tenure, and my sister and I were brought up to love the country despite never having been there! His many stories of Keta, Tamale, Accra and the Northern Territories, of Togoland (both British and French), and my mother’s experiences of teaching for a period at Achimota School, were precious to us and we learnt to respect and revere the people for whom he had such a high regard.”*

Keith Fisher

Keith, who died in 2019, and his wife Audrey were founder members of GSA, attending the inaugural reunion in 1986. They moved to Cape Coast, Ghana in 1960 where Keith had a three-year contract as a biology teacher at Mfantshipim School and then as Head of Science at Adisadel College. Following a return trip almost 40 years later, he contributed an article to the Newsletter in 2016 (p.6).

He wrote of his time teaching in Ghana: *“This was a fantastic experience for me, working with*

staff of different nationalities in laboratories well-funded by the Ghana Government. Another experience gained was in working with the newly-formed West African Educational council to develop a Biology syllabus relevant to the experiences of local school children. When I arrived in Ghana we were expected to teach the Cambridge Local Syllabus which included the buttercup as the standard specimen to study...”

Due to the ill health of one of their children the Fishers returned to England in 1963. Their return trip to Ghana decades later impressed them with the modernisation of the country and the way it has thrived leading to a *“colourful and happy country which makes visitors welcome and is now an established tourist destination.”*

IN MEMORIAM

We remember with gratitude all Ghana School Aid members who have recently died. Many have left generous legacies to continue our work which we do in their memory: Neil Bax, Edna Mason, David Parks, Janet Sewell, and Helen Kimble.

They are all sadly missed.



Ghana School Aid



PATRONS

HE Papa Owusu-
Ankomah, High
Commissioner for Ghana

The Rt Hon Lord Boateng
of Akyem Ghana and
Wembley, London, DL

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Chair: Edward Mayne

Secretary: Jo Hallett

Treasurer: Nigel Dennis

AGM organisation & website

administrator: Penny Sewell

Newsletter: Jennifer MacDougall

Representatives in Ghana: Kofi Ohene,
Alhassan Salifu Baako, Patrick Nyanteh

Other Committee Members:

Letitia Boateng, Eric Earle, Rita de Graft, Sue
Hewlett, Susannah Mayhew, Beatrice Monney,
Mary Owusu, Kate Regan, William Spooner

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ANNUAL REUNION LUNCH AND AGM

The 2020 Annual Reunion Lunch has been cancelled but the AGM will be held online via Zoom on June 25th 2020 at 2pm. We invite everyone to join in - please contact our Secretary for details at jo.hallett74@gmail.com



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