



S·A·B·R·E
CHARITABLE TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT 2007/2008

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Annual Report 2007/08

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Chapter

1

WELCOME

Chairman's Message

This year's report covers the period from August 2007 to March 2008 to fall in line with our new accounting year.

Over the course of these 8 months a great many new initiatives have developed and solid foundations have not only been laid but expanded upon with much success.

The first of these was the decision to give the Charity a much needed 'face-lift', a complete re-branding and a corporate presence. To this end, the endeavours of Liz McQuillan and her brother John from McQuillan Marketing, resulted in dramatic improvements to our website, as well as printed and presentation materials. A truly worthwhile investment!

In October of this year we launched the formal School Project Expedition programme with Chesham High School, a partnership which has been developing over the last four years. This programme aims to fulfil one of the charity's key objectives by broadening cultural education in schools, both in Ghana and the UK. This initial programme generated a great deal of interest, which bodes well for its future development.

Liz McQuillan also began an 8 month consultancy contract with us as Education Director, furthering research into the need for a revised and coordinated approach to kindergarten teaching, the foundations of which began last year. The success of the Sounds Together programme is yet to be quantified, but initial indications from the Headteachers, teachers and long term volunteers is that it is a resounding success. We look forward to implementing a 'checks and measures' system next year.

Sadie Davies began her full time role as Country Projects Manager in October and consolidated our presence in Ghana, developing relationships with the British High Commission and other locally based companies. The volunteer management systems were enhanced massively, and ensured that volunteer efforts fully supported our core programme work.

Dominic Bond, co-founder of the Charity, began work as a part-time volunteer director in January and helped to formalise our objectives and lay out a plan for how we achieve them. This involved a systematic review of all that we do in Ghana and the UK. From that our Whole School Improvement Programme evolved as the basis for our work.

Esther travelled to the UK in November, visiting several partner schools and many past volunteers around the country. In eight days she travelled from Fleet to London to Brighton to London to Manchester to Newcastle to Sheffield and finally back to Fleet! A thoroughly rewarding trip for us, and the realisation of a personal dream for Esther! Shortly after her return to Ghana, Esther announced her engagement – we wish her the best of luck for her wedding and hope she will remain involved with Sabre in the future.

Aggrey, Ama, Fred and the rest of the team in Ghana continue to function well. With an expected increase in the number of international volunteers as well as more building projects next year, the team will be busy and I very much look forward to be part of it.



Aubrey Malcolm-Green

Chapter 2

OUR WORK

Core Programmes

Over the last few years, the SCT has been involved in a huge variety of projects and activities, and whilst these were all successfully implemented there was a distinct feeling that we were a little disjointed in our approach. In addition, it became increasingly obvious that we were primarily working in the field of education, which in turn seemed to have a part to play in every aspect of community development. By the end of this year (March 2008), we were able to consolidate those activities and formulate coordinated programmes that respond directly to actual need as stated and required by local government and community members.

The following programmes evolved to ensure we fulfilled our aims and objectives in a structured and coordinated manner. The Whole School Improvement Programme and the Schools for Schools Programme form the foundation of everything that we do.

Whole School Improvement Programme



This programme of activities has been developed as a result of the projects we have successfully undertaken over the last four years, since we first became associated with Brenu Akyinim, and more recently through our relationships with Besease, Egyei Krom and directly with the Education Office. The programme is intended to wholly support the Ghana Education Service's own operations and approach to the education sector:

Infrastructure Development Projects

Objective:

Supporting the building and refurbishment of classrooms and associated facilities such as canteens, washrooms, libraries, staffrooms and sports areas. Going forward, we hope to specifically focus on the kindergarten sector as we understand that this falls outside of the

remit of the Government's school building programme.

Before we do that we need to look at the ways in which these building projects are run. We have learnt from experience that there is a delicate balance between achieving a real and equitable partnership with a community and getting the building constructed within a reasonable time-frame. A one size fits all approach will not suit every community and we will work with each community to understand their needs and resources in order to develop a viable project framework.

Progress

Brenu Akyinim JHS*

The final work was completed on the JHS in early 2008. As this was the school's 50th Anniversary and their UK partner school was visiting in July, the inauguration of the building was delayed until late August. This actually gave us time to make the finishing touches and ensure the usual teething problems with a new build were ironed out before the school took proper control of it.

One outstanding issue on the JHS at Brenu is our concern over the roofing material selected by the community. The school block has been roofed using asbestos sheeting, a common building material in Ghana, despite the widely documented health issues surrounding its degradation. As the sponsor of the school building, we feel it is our responsibility to ensure the safest possible school environment and therefore will be financing the substitution of the asbestos sheets for aluzinc roofing sheets, at no cost to the community. Closer monitoring of infrastructure projects in the future will ensure that only approved building materials, consistent with the Sabre Trust's Sustainable Building Policy, are used.

Besease KG

The excitement seems to be building within the community as the focus on resurrecting their KG building project becomes stronger. The elders have committed to provide labour, water, sand and hardcore materials for the build. Aggrey will oversee the project and ensure that the local masons function as a team.

The first phase has been to replace much of the existing block work and extend the foundations to make three rooms. By March, the building was up to lintel height and we hope that the community will focus on getting it completed before the start of the next academic year.

Egyei Krom KG

In the previous year much was achieved by the community as their KG building rose to window height very quickly. However, as they were managing it on their own and using their own contracts manager, with very little direct involvement from SCT, certain things seem to have been overlooked. The main problem has been the lack of plans: the community decided to build a much larger structure than was initially devised and as a result the funds raised by Marden High School, which were sufficient for the first plan, were exhausted very quickly.

We have regrettably withdrawn our support from this project for the time being, and we understand that the community has secured funding through the government Micro-Projects Programme to complete the kindergarten.

Teaching Methodology

Objective:

Supplying well qualified teachers and classroom assistants to support and mentor kindergarten

* The government renamed the Junior Secondary School (JSS) to Junior High School (JHS) this year.

teachers, and help them to effectively deliver the GES curriculum for kindergarten. This draws on our experience of using synthetic phonics to aid literacy development, and encouraging learning through play in the kindergarten classes at Brenu Akyinim and Besease.

Progress:

Besease KG

This project has been expanded to the Besease KG and is being implemented by a volunteer called Julie Clark. The challenge facing her is not to be underestimated, as the community has some significant social issues that directly affect the school. The most notable is a very high rate of teenage pregnancy. Whilst we have no statistical data to support this, the reality is apparent to all visitors. This means that the number of children in the KG school is very high.

We have also noticed that the attention span and discipline of the children is extremely poor, whether this relates to young parents or not is unclear, but classroom management is a key challenge. Through Julie's efforts over the 8 months she was in Besease, significant advances have been made and future volunteers stand a much better chance of integration.

Brenu KG

After the successful implementation of the Sounds Together project in Brenu under the guidance of Matthew Horne and Morrigan Scanlon, subsequent volunteers have found it much easier to slot into the programme and support the teachers where they need it most. Syliva Allen and Carrie Starbuck involved themselves busily and it is evident to see that the teachers and students have benefited from the structured approach. As such the need for direct classroom support at Brenu should decrease over the next year.

Learning Materials

Objective:

Ensuring that pupils have the materials they need to engage in lessons, helping them to achieve their learning potential. We realise this through the donation of toys and books from the UK to establish toy libraries and book libraries in schools in the KEEA District. We have also supported head teachers to provide the classroom basics: pens; pencils; chalk; exercise books; and exam papers.

Progress:

Throughout the course of the year a large volume of learning materials have been brought out to the schools by visiting volunteers. Additionally, the Sabre Trust funded the provision of basic teaching and learning materials at Besease school which the school management committee was unable to purchase due to the delayed receipt of their capitation grant. With the initiation of the School Bus Run resource deliveries in 2008, we will be able to significantly increase our support for this area of the programme.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Objectives:

Providing support and resources to teachers for extra-curricular activities such as sport, music, drama, arts, crafts and cultural visits. Currently much of this has been down to the individual enthusiasm of volunteers who work directly with teachers. The ever hopeful aspiration is that what volunteers leave behind in terms of ideas, enthusiasm and materials will be taken forward by local teachers.

Progress:

This year we developed a project designed to improve school attendance through the provision of better quality football coaching in schools. The “*For the Love of the Game*” project was launched in January 2008 with a series of coaching clinics for school teachers, who have responsibility for football coaching at school. The launch was timed to coincide with the Africa Cup of Nations tournament which was held in Ghana, and the project is designed to capitalise on the football fever which gripped the country during the tournament and ensure lasting benefits for future generations of Ghanaian children.

Football is widely recognised as having the power to boost school attendance, bringing children who would otherwise abscond, back into school to extend their education. For non-academic pupils, the lure of football can be critical in ensuring they reach sufficient levels of education to enable them to find work and gain skills for the future. The “*For the Love of the Game*” project works through existing school sports structures in collaboration with the District Education Office. By integrating the project into the other aspects of the Whole School Improvement Programme outlined above, the Sabre Trust is also helping to ensure that children receive the best possible education whilst at school.

Since January 2008, 48 coaches from 39 schools across the KEEA district have received basic coaching skills training and 210 footballs have been distributed as part of the coaching packs which accompanied the training programme. The project was extremely well received by the teachers, pupils and education authorities, and we are keen to build on this early success by expanding the quality and availability of the coaching skills programme to all of the 117 schools in the district, and enhancing the quality of football equipment available in schools.

School & Community Healthcare

Objectives:

The aim of this aspect of the programme is to provide healthy & hygienic sanitation and hand washing facilities to reduce the spread of disease and infection in school. Additionally we will support the development of school farm projects that can supplement and reinforce the Government School Feeding Programme, whilst also offering an opportunity to teach children about agricultural principles, the relationships between environment, climate and food, and the importance of good nutrition.

Progress:

The commencement of health based volunteer placements from next year (2009) will see the effective implementation of this project.

Schools for Schools Programme

The aim of this programme is to improve cultural, technological and environmental awareness between UK and developing world schools.

Objectives

- Creating North-South partnerships with kindergarten, primary and secondary schools
- Provide introductory talks to all year groups in both northern and southern schools
- Provide learning resources, materials and lesson templates that fit into the academic curriculum for schools
- Initiate joint projects termly or annually within subjects and year groups
- Monitor, review and develop the outcomes of curriculum based projects
- Provide opportunities for groups of students to take part in exchange visits

- Engage the wider communities of both schools

We essentially act as facilitators on the ground ensuring the partnerships achieve their potential. To support this programme we have developed the following opportunities – all of these are viewed as self-supporting in a financial capacity when up and running.

Brenu - Chesham Partnership

Throughout this period the partnership has been cemented. With Esther's visit to Chesham and the resoundingly successful launch of the School Project Expedition at Chesham in October, there are exciting times ahead. Good communication is fundamental to the success of this project and with such a good working relationship between the staff at both Chesham and Brenu we have an excellent basis on which to build. A Memorandum of Understanding will be drawn up and signed by the Education Director and link teachers of both schools. This will not only confirm the current project plans, but lay out the longer term goals and objectives.

Amongst the many achievements of this pilot school partnership are: the recording and exchange of daily photo diaries using disposable cameras; the regular exchange of penpal letters; a fantastic Ghana Day in Chesham High School; the establishment of Oware tournaments in both schools with trophies for the school champions; a very successful slavery project shared between both sets of students; and the recording of questions and interviews for audio exchange through the [SoundAffects](#) programme.

Cultural Masterclasses

Cultural awareness and skill building programmes are designed to add a new and different dimension to vocational training courses. The all embracing aspects of each tailored itinerary are unattainable in home countries. This series of placements are based in local village and town communities. Community entrepreneurs, local people, Chiefs and Elders welcome this innovative programme of sharing skills, for young college adults to experience and build new areas of expertise. Topics include, Art, Catering, Childcare, Construction, Eco-Tourism, Hairdressing, Music & Dance and Sports.

During the course of this year, the background research for these projects was completed in the UK, what remains is to set up the infrastructure and management processes – this will be undertaken next year.

Project Expeditions

The expeditions are based around sustainable community and environmental projects supporting locally driven initiatives. Expedition volunteers are made up of staff and students and are led and managed by an experienced team both in the UK and overseas. Each expedition engages with Ghanaian students and teachers on the project work, which tends to involve one large and several small projects selected by both parties. All projects are funded by the UK partners.

As already mentioned above, the inaugural expedition has been launched at Chesham High School. Moyra Zaman, the International Coordinator at the school, has been influential in ensuring this project started well. Over the coming months the training programme will increase in intensity and later this summer the team hope to complete the building of a dining room block at the new JHS and Primary school site in Brenu Akyinim.

Mobile Learning – Techno Truck

This project aims to bring the students closer together through interactive lessons, immediate communication and visual learning by using the World Wide Web. Fundamental to the success of this project is a guaranteed internet link. In the UK this is guaranteed in 99% of schools. In Ghana, the opposite is true. Local commercial internet cafés exist in large towns and cities but

these are subject to electrical and connection issues. Their location also adds to the problem of transporting school groups on the off chance that they can access the internet.

Our solution is to equip a lorry with multiple computers, satellite dish, broadband modem, plasma screen, printers, webcams, generator and solar panels to enable mobile and independently guaranteed internet connection.

The need for this facility has arisen due to the government's recent inclusion of ICT into the JHS curriculum. Electricity in many schools is non-existent and unlikely for the foreseeable future. This is a project which we intend to implement gradually over the next two years.

Partnerships

Our UK partnerships with GVI, Twin Abroad, Chesham High School, Bradfield School, Marden High School, Dragoman and LabAid continue to develop. We hope to formalise our first corporate sponsor for 2008/09 early in the next financial year and through them implement a Kindergarten Design Programme.

Websites and online projects

We now operate three public facing websites, www.sabretrust.org, www.supportourproject.org, and www.volunteerghana.org.uk.

All of these are functional, but need close attention to work together. This systems integration is underway and we hope to have a fully integrated online project, volunteer and donor management system next year.

Plans for 2008/09

Over the following year the charity aims to fulfil the following objectives:

- Expand the board of trustees
- Appoint to full time posts a Development Director and Operations Director
- Appoint to part-time post a UK based Fundraising Manager
- Generate annual income of £125,000
- Design a sustainable Kindergarten School to be adopted by the Government of Ghana and be appointed as the implementing partner
- Become an implementing partner to the USAID and government of Ghana TLMP – a joint collaboration on a KG and Primary Phonics Syllabus
- Launch the www.busrun.org website and run 2 resource delivery expeditions
- Re-launch the Ghanaian Experience – a 2 week volunteer and holiday experience
- Establish a permanent office in Elmina