

# Newsletter

Supporting education, equality & development in Northern Ghana

November 2012 Issue 1



## Brief history of Ghana Education Project (GEP)

Ghana Education Project (GEP) has a long-standing relationship with Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School where the charity's founder, Gill Norris MBE, worked for many years - latterly as Head of Science. In 1997 she took a group of Sixth Form girls to Nkwanta to volunteer on a conservation project and GEP was born.

It was whilst she was in Nkwanta Gill realised local schools needed much better resources and teacher training. Soon after, she set up the UK registered charity which is now known as Ghana Education Project.

### Moving to Ghana

Gill continued to take groups of girls to Ghana every year until she retired and moved to



Local Nkwantan girl.

Nkwanta in 2004 where she lives on her teachers' pension and works as the charity's Project Manager. Nowadays TWGGS selects a group of pupils to go on a volunteering expedition to Ghana every two years, with pupils and their families fundraising for the charity as part of their commitment to the project. GEP operates an NGO within Ghana with a local Board. The UK charity's Trustees are supported by a small team of volunteers.

### Local community

The charity is deeply embedded within the local community in Nkwanta and works closely with the Ghana Education Service. It runs literacy programmes and teacher training schemes (often in collaboration with other NGOs) and has set up educational initiatives such as the Nkwanta Award which is based on the Duke of Edinburgh Award. GEP has also conceived and implemented various capital projects,

for example building and equipping the Kyabobo Guest House and the Kyabobo Centre which provides community and sports facilities and boasts one of the largest conference centres in Ghana. The Guest House and

Centre will shortly become mutually self-sustaining. GEP's most ambitious capital project to date is a pioneering girls' secondary school which will open its doors to pupils next year ■

## 'Progress on the Girls' Secondary School'

**Four years ago it was just a piece of land in one of the hardest and most difficult terrains in Northern Ghana. Now GEP is putting the finishing touches to the main block of the school.**

have had to abandon their education owing to a lack of money and family pressures. The new school will offer six years of no-fee education to 300 girls who show potential and commitment to learn. They will be supported

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The project is the culmination of Gill Norris's dream to provide girls aged 11 – 17 with a good education and equal opportunities. There is around a 77 per cent illiteracy rate amongst women in Ghana because many



The school showing the veranda.



Local Nkwantan schoolgirl

through the GEP 300 fundraising campaign which aims to encourage schools, community groups, individuals and businesses to raise £300 annually to fund each place.

### Full marks for Gill

Gill has project-managed the building work with all the dedication and enthusiasm which she has brought to other capital projects. She has even done some farming, planting

maize on the school grounds in an effort to tame the land as well as grow some food for the ducks and goats.

The great effort by the 2010 and 2012 teams and their sponsors means that Phase 1 of the school build is nearing completion, after which furniture can be put into place and the charity can plan the opening next year. The first 75 girls will attend the Junior High School from September 2013 ■

# Fundraising Updates

## TWGGS 2012 team overtake previous 2010 record

**The 2012 TWGGS team recently overtook the previous fundraising record of £50,000 (set by the 2010 team).**

Their fundraising events have included a very ambitious and successful sponsored walk which raised almost £16,000, bag-packing in Morrisons supermarket (£327), a sushi evening (£240) and a lot of cake-baking, including a raffle of 2012 Trip Leader Mr Breeze's legendary brownies (raising £255).

As well as launching the GEP 300 campaign in the Spring, the Trustees have set about finding 3 – 5 other secondary schools in the UK to adopt the TWGGS model of fundraising and send their own groups of teens to volunteer in Nkwanta on a regular basis.

### St Bede's sends team

St Bede's School in East Sussex sent its first team in 2011 and is planning to return next year and GEP is also in talks with one of Kent's new Academy schools. In addition, applications are being



● **Top:** The Main Block in the shape of an 'E' ('E' for education), under construction. Picture shows that the shutters are in place and together with the roofs, will allow the air to blow through the buildings to keep them cool.

● **Bottom left:** The basic structure of the main block. Currently, the floor is being put in and the shutters installed.

● **Bottom right:** Shows an artist's impression of how the school will look and features the 'E' Main Block that is nearing completion for the first intake of pupils in September 2013.



TWGGS 2012 girls' team get into full fundraising swing before their Nkwanta volunteer trip on October 21st, with cake-baking frenzy.

made to Trusts and Foundations and contact is being made with other UK charities. It is hoped that these contacts will lead to joint funding applications and know-how sharing.

### Big thanks

Finally, GEP would like to give a big thanks to the Accra Brewery in Ghana, who have generously sponsored this year's Nkwanta Award. Inspired by the UK's Duke of Edinburgh Award, this popular GEP initiative actively encourages 500 children per year to take part in sport, learn a craft and about their local community and environment ■



Setting a new record, the 'TWGGS 2012 girls' team' before their volunteer Nkwanta trip, raising the stakes and overtaking the whopping £50,000 made by the 2010 team.

**Big thanks to Accra Brewery in Ghana**

*A refreshingly good beer*



who generously sponsored this year's Nkwanta award

**Thanks from GEP**



# LocalNews

Despite strong support from the UK, Gill still has to overcome her fair share of challenges in Ghana.

## Moving materials

Rough terrain and heavy rains.



Moving building materials from Accra along the 200 miles of unmade road to Nkwanta is very difficult. In the rainy season, a 10 hour journey can take 36 hours because of mud and enormous pot holes. However the good news is that work will soon begin to reconstruct and surface the 200-mile stretch with tarmac

and some of the biggest pot holes have already been filled.

### 4-wheel drive

Thanks to some additional fundraising efforts the charity has recently facilitated the part-exchange of the 4-wheel drive Gill uses in Nkwanta - an essential tool for her work within the community. She is extremely grateful to those who helped raise funds for this and reports that the newer car has excellent tyres!

### Power cuts

Power cuts in Nkwanta look set to continue. The power supply comes from a nearby source but is often interrupted, leaving the town without power for days on end. This is part of everyday life for Gill and the local people, so candles and torches are always on hand! ■

## OtherNews

## GEP builds deeper relationship with GES

GEP is building a deeper relationship with the Ghana Education Service (GES) in Accra and was recently invited to take part in a National Policy planning forum for Sport.

Gaining a better understanding about how GES policy is formed and having an influence in this arena will be of long-term benefit to GEP, especially once the new school is up and running.

### Large donors

Much of the education system seems to be driven by large donors such as UNICEF and USAID but these do not have a presence in Nkwanta and

another NGO, SNV, has recently moved away from the Volta region. Therefore GEP needs to work hard to gain funding within Ghana and relies heavily on its UK support ■



Local Nkwantan schoolgirls.



## Successful Ghana trip

The TWGGS 2012 Team, with teachers Matthew Breeze and Mercedes Muddle, arrived back from their recent successful and enjoyable trip to Nkwanta in Ghana.

Gill and the children in Nkwanta very much enjoyed their visit. They spent two weeks teaching in local schools and visiting people and different places in the community, including the town chiefs and the hospital.

They then spent a week travelling around the south of Ghana, where they went to an ancient fort, took a nature walk to one of Ghana's largest waterfalls, and learnt how to make batik on the beach at Cape Coast ■

## GUBA (awards) Julie Robinson gives inspiring speech

Julie Robinson, one of the GEP Trustees, recently attended the press launch for the Ghana UK Based Achievement Awards (GUBA) and gave an inspiring speech about the plans for the new school. GEP was awarded the Best Charity award in 2011 and the speech was warmly received by the guests, generating some great new contacts for the future ■



Julie Robinson at the GUBA Awards.

This Newsletter was produced by Ghana Education Project (GEP). Writers include: Richard Tribe/ Claire Longley/ Julie Robinson/ Gill Norris/ Anna Gallagher/ Sara Parker. Photographers: Jane Tribe/ Gill Norris. Illustrators: Philip Norris/ Christopher Norris. Design/ Layout/ Artwork: Christopher Norris. GEP would like to thank all the other contributors that helped with this Newsheet. We hope it will generate feed-back and ideas. Website: <http://www.ghanaeducationproject.org.uk> The Ghana Education Project, 2B / 4B Hawkwell Barn, Hawkwell Business Centre, Maidstone Road, Penbury, Kent TN2 4A. England, UK. Registered Charity No. 1079399.

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