



Annual Report 2009

**SANDEMA
EDUCATIONAL
RESOURCE CENTRE**

Regd. Charity 1062444

**ANNUAL
REPORT
AND
FINANCIAL
STATEMENT
2009**

Of the six billion people on our planet, roughly two billion are in extreme poverty. They have no access to clean water and decent sanitation, they lack adequate health services and get no formal education. Malnutrition, illiteracy, high infant and maternal mortality and epidemics all take their toll. This is the situation in Sandema.

Our educational trust looks beyond the official statistics of "economic growth," beyond the praises heaped on Ghana by the rich and powerful. We witness extreme poverty and we tackle it, not by means of charitable handouts but by enabling young people to develop their potential and help themselves. We are small and this enables us to closely monitor our various activities and assess their impact on the community. "Small is beautiful" may be a platitude but it underpins our educational principles. Sandema's children are born into poverty; we give them a fair chance in life. According to Barack Obama, "There is no stronger weapon against inequality, no better path to opportunity, than an education that can unlock a child's God-given potential." The Sandema trust provides precisely that type of education.

This year a record number of sixteen apprentices successfully completed their training in weaving and tailoring. Their passing out ceremony was lively and colourful, attended by hundreds of well-wishers and many extremely energetic musicians. Over three hundred junior and senior secondary school pupils attended our remedial classes to help them pass their exams. The well stocked library has so many books unobtainable elsewhere that it attracted readers not only from primary and secondary but also tertiary educational institutions. Some readers came from as far away as Accra and Kumasi. Seventy damaged books were re-bound and over two hundred new books added to the stock.

With nine full-time and thirty part-time staff, our project helps to develop the creative and dynamic force of young people. Central to this is the unique impact of the community radio station, Radio Builsa 106.5 FM, "Voice to the Voiceless." Run by volunteers to benefit local people, the radio is a powerful educational tool

creating awareness of local and international issues. Through it, people have become less marginalised and more critical. Challenging political lethargy, they now ask more questions, seek clarifications from local government and keep it "on its toes." Schoolchildren devise and run their own programmes. Musicians perform on air. Local dignitaries participate in lively debates over controversial issues. Members of the public phone in to the studio to contribute ideas. Interactive radio has become a major educational force. .

B*y the end of the year, financial support from the German Development Service ended. So our charity will have to pay the monthly allowances of the volunteers running the radio. We were fortunate to receive a very generous grant from an anonymous donor, together with ongoing support from Zephyr Trust and Ghana School Aid, resulting in a record end of year balance of £17,343. But a note of caution is needed: in recent years our monthly payments to the project have been roughly £800. Unfavourable changes in the £ - cedi exchange rate, coupled with increased running costs, particularly the radio station, are likely to raise monthly payments in excess of £900.*

T*he year 2009 saw our project making an even greater developmental impact on the community. It remains to be seen whether the momentum can be sustained.*

Denise Lepore, chair.

