



PAMBE GHANA

Partnership for Mother Tongue-based Bilingual Education in Ghana

SPRING 2016

Graduation of Inaugural Class



La'Angum Learning Center graduating class of 2016.

PAMBE Ghana is proud to announce the impending graduation of its inaugural class of students. These 25 children, who were part of the first class of 40 pre-schoolers who joined La'Angum Learning Center in September 2008 (the other 15 inaugural students were younger and will stay with LLC another year), will graduate from the sixth grade in July 2016, and move to junior high school. Based on the success of the educational model provided by PAMBE Ghana and La'Angum Learning Center, the area District Assembly has committed to building a junior high school to serve the Bumboazio area. Ground has broken on this project, and it is hoped that it will be completed in time for our graduates to enroll in the fall.

“The child is both a hope and a promise for mankind.”

~ Maria Montessori

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Looking Back, Looking Ahead

By Alice Iddi-Gubbels

Reflecting on the impending graduation of La'Angum Learning Center's first enrolled preschool class, I considered PAMBE Ghana's first annual report, which we titled "Looking Back, Looking Ahead."

In that 2008 report, we shared information about the hard work of beginning this educational project: raising funds from friends to provide the seed money and tools needed; choosing Bumboazio as the right community in which to place the school, despite the complete lack of school infrastructure there; confirmation that the decision was a good one, when despite being the busiest time of year for this farming community, the people showed up with unwavering resolve to break ground and build the first classroom, office, latrines and pavilion; developing a system by which the first class of 40 preschool students could be chosen equitably from a field of more than 100 candidates; finding and training two teachers and



First days of the school, 2008.

a program coordinator; organizing the community to provide and prepare a daily meal for the students; adapting key principles of the Montessori teaching method to the local community; and meeting with groups including the Ghana Education Service and District Assemblies in the East and West Mamprusi Districts, the Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translators ("GILLBT"), Ghana Health Services, Northern Region Water and Sanitation Program, and Catholic Relief Services - to name a few - to explore collaboration. In that regard, I worked with two local experienced teachers and highly respected traditional leaders to create a robust Advisory Committee which was key to early development and putting down community roots. The Advisory Committee visited para-

mount chiefs in each district, starting with the King of Mamprugu, participated actively in visibility studies and facilitated contacts with the GES.

Bumboazio was chosen as the site for the school in May and by September, the classroom, office, latrines and pavilion had been built; the classrooms furnished with materials; and the first group of 40 children arrived with trust that La'Angum School would educate them. "Looking back" at these ambitious first steps, it is hard to believe that 25 of these children are about to graduate and are "looking ahead" to a transition to junior high school. The collaborative efforts on both sides of the Atlantic behind this achievement could fill this entire newsletter. Thank you to each one of you who took part in this grand project.

Our school has grown in these eight years to encompass 16 teachers, a head of school, more than 200 students — all thriving on a campus of seven classrooms, a kitchen, offices, a library and computer lab. The challenges for the future include raising funds to support equitable teacher compensation, provide training, improve the deteriorating water catchment and storage system, and assist our graduates in their transition to junior high school. We hope you will join us as we move forward into the future.

Scholarship Fund: La'Angum Learning Center graduates off to junior high school

La'Angum Learning Center's first graduates are moving on to junior high school! Run by the Ghanaian Education Service ("GES"), the junior high



Two students of the graduating class.

school will cost students approximately \$120 per year, which is no small sum to these rural families.

Please consider contributing to the

scholarship fund to sponsor a member of La'Angum's inaugural class as he or she moves to the next phase of education. What your funds could provide:

Supplies

exercise books - \$5.25

pens and pencils - \$5.25

mathematical set - \$1.30

uniforms - \$26.00

footwear - \$15.75

NHIS annual premium - \$5.25

Health and sanitation (female students only) - \$31.25

Exam fees

Additional exam fees in the amount of \$30 will be required throughout the three years of junior high school.

Total annual fees for one student are \$120 (including third year exam fees)

Please note "scholarship fund" on any contribution.

The Water Dilemma

As many know, the challenge of providing sufficient water to support the school is daunting. In remote northern Ghana, women and girls are typically tasked with the labor of bringing water from streams or distant wells, by hand and on foot. To lessen this burden and take advantage of the annual rainy season, PAMBE Ghana has installed guttering along most school structures to catch water and built 6 concrete tanks to store the water captured. However, it has been discovered that these tanks have deteriorated so badly that much of the water is being lost through seepage, causing the school to lack adequate water supply.



Crumbling, leaking water tank in need of repair.

Contractors have submitted a good plan to remedy the situation, but at a cost of \$14,886 which is not in the budget. PAMBE Ghana would welcome any support to help pay for the remedial construction work necessary to provide water for the school.

Paseo Arts Festival

Announcing **PAMBE Ghana's Global Market** at the 40th Annual Paseo Arts Festival, a three-day Memorial Day weekend celebration **May 28-30** in the Paseo Arts District of Oklahoma City. You can find our PASEO Fest market featuring fair trade goods at the Rainbow Fleet office on the southeast corner of Paseo/Dewey Avenue and NW 30th in Oklahoma City. The Global Market provides major financial support for PAMBE Ghana's educational projects at La'Angum School in remote northern Ghana. Please consider dropping by PASEO Fest and shopping at the Global Market! For more information, see www.pambeghana.org or the www.paseo.com/calendar/paseo-arts-festival.

The Motor King arrives at La'Angum



Of the many logistical obstacles faced by the staff and students of La'Angum Learning Center, one is the difficulty of moving basic supplies between the closest major towns to remote Bumboazio, where the school is located. The distance is long and the roads are in very poor condition, more akin to rutted dirt tracks. When Board members and friends visited La'Angum Learning Center in the summer of 2015, they experienced this logistical transportation problem first hand. Traveler Sam Bowman undertook the personal mission to raise funds to obtain a "Motor King" for La'Angum Learning Center, a useful vehicle the travelers

observed being used in other spots in rural Northern Ghana. The Motor King is essentially a three wheeled vehicle with a large bed, perfect for hauling. It's built to withstand the punishment dealt by the dirt roads in the area.

Sam's fundraiser was successful and the Motor King arrived at the school in early March to much excitement and fanfare. Many thanks to: Linda and Curtis Nigh, Kay and Kenyon Morgan, Bill and Ruth Bowman, Carol and Frank Garratt, Kelly and Paul Pearson, April Bowman, Barbara Echtenkamp, Jane Wheeler, and Sam Bowman!!

In The Works

Replacing Early Readers.

With the help of GILLBT in Ghana and Bricktown Rotary in Oklahoma City, PAMBE Ghana produced the first "early readers" in Mampruli, the language spoken in Bumboazio. These beloved readers, used daily by the youngest La'Angum students, have become very worn. We are raising funds to purchase replacements! Total cost is \$500.



Worn early reader in need of replacement.

PAMBE Ghana Fest at St. Paul's Cathedral, April 9 from 6-9 p.m.



Join us in St. Paul's Cathedral East Garden for our Third Annual PAMBE Ghana Fest. Enjoy musical performances by Jahruba and Steve McLinn, drumming and dancing.

Taste an array of foods prepared with international flair and peruse the PAMBE Ghana Global Market for fair trade items from around the world. Bring your own blanket or lawn chair. Come rain or shine!

Individual tickets are \$8; \$15 per couple; children under twelve are free. RSVP@STPAULSOKC.ORG

Meet Three Sixth Grade Students

Kalifa Issah

My name is Kalifa Issah. I come from Bumboazio. I am a school girl. I am 12 years old. My father has four goats, two sheep, one cow, and we have many hens. I am the second child in my family and have three sisters and five brothers. My father loves children. I started school in La'Angum Learning Center in kindergarten and am now in primary six. I would like to go to junior high school when I leave La'Angum School. I like my school because we have many teachers and many books, pens and pencils. There are many classes and an office, library and many computers. The school classes are full of materials. The school has a kitchen and toilet rooms and urinals. We have water tanks. The classes have plates for food. I love the school teachers. They are teaching well. La'Angum Learning Center is a beautiful school. I like the school teachers and head teacher very much. When I finish school I would like to be a banker.



Paul Sandow

My name is Paul. I come from Bumboazio. My father's name is Sandow, and my mother's name is Lamisi. I am the first child from my mother. I have two sisters and their names are Shella and Abigail. I don't have a brother.

I started school in La'Angum Learning Center in 2008. I started classes in kg1 and now

I am in p6. My sister Abigail also started attending LLC school four years after. Abigail and I are the only people attending school in my family.

I like my school because the teachers are teaching very well. I like my school because they are not caning. We have reading centre and computer lab. I like my school because they cook lunch, and we eat at school. We do not buy books, pens, pencils and erasers.

When we have a J.H.S in La'Angum Learning Center it will be better than going to Langbinsi School. Before I leave LLC I would like to do a quiz competition with a different school. I want to test myself so I know what I can do and what I cannot do.

When I leave La'Angum Learning Center, I want to continue to junior high school.



Nafisah Musah

My name is Nafisah Musah. I come from Bumboazio. My father's name is Musah, and my mother's name is Memuna. I am the first girl going to school in my family. We are 12 children altogether. I like to read books from the library and in the class. Our teachers are teaching very well. They do not cane us. I would like to do a quiz with another school before I leave LLC. When I grow up, I would like to be a rich woman. I will build another school in Bumboazio and give money to my father and mother to help themselves.



Coming this summer

Experienced Montessori teacher and trainer Patti Yonka recently returned from her second lengthy visit to La'Angum Learning Center, during which she observed classroom activity, trained teachers in the Montessori method, and deepened relationships with the teachers, students and communities involved in the school. Our Summer 2016 Newsletter will feature an in-depth interview which will share the experiences Patti and her husband had with these vibrant communities participating in PAMBE Ghana's educational projects in northern Ghana.



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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Inaugural Class to Graduate

- The first La'Angum Learning Center students in 2008 prepare to graduate.
- Alice's *Looking Forward, Looking Back* column reflects on milestones.

IMPORTANT DATES

Paseo Arts Festival

May 28-30 in the Paseo Arts District
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