

**PAABINAA MERIGA PEACE INITIATIVE  
(PAMEPI)**

**SCHOOL FOR ALL**



**ENVISIONING A FUTURE AFRICAN CONTINENT WITHOUT ILLITERACY**

**SCHOOL FOR ALL PILOT PROJECT REPORT (June 2010-March 2011)**

## **CONTENTS**

1. **Authors**
2. **Editors**
3. **Acknowledgement**
4. **Introduction**
5. **Body**
6. **Conclusion**
7. **Annex**

### **REPORT AUTHORS**

Mr. Fuseini Yakubu  
Dr. Sheldon Gellar  
Shani Mawia  
Rev. George Baaye Gyasi  
Adama Bukari  
Netta Kubitsky  
Frederic Kono Larbi  
Abdul Rahaman Zakaria

### **REPORT EDITORS**

Dr. Sheldon Gellar  
Rev. George Baaye Gyasi  
Fuseini Yakubu  
Frederic Kono Larbi

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We owe a great debt of gratitude to Rev. George Gyasi Baaye and Dr. Sheldon Gellar for their enormous efforts towards the compilation and editing of the "School for All" pilot project. Their insightful judgments, ideas, suggestions and other crucial contributions, especially Dr. Sheldon Gellar's professional knowledge, indeed greatly impacted the whole project.

We also wish to thank Alhaji Chandiba Alhassan Abubakari, Chairman of our organization's board of directors who temporarily offered his car for the staff use in response to transportation challenges encountered during the implementation process. We greatly appreciate his generosity.

To Dr. Hilla Addo, Sheik Dr. Mohammed Amin Ibrahim, Professor Abdulai Iddrissu and Mr. Abdulai M. Shiraj, board members of PAMEPI, we acknowledge your diverse support and say thank you, not forgetting also the enormous sacrifices and contributions of PAMEPI staff, volunteers, staff of Saakuba primary school and the entire Saakuba community.

The African Workers Union in Israel was the first International Organization to support the "School for All". Our sincere appreciation therefore goes to their Director, Mr. Swaray Alusine and the Chairman, Mr. Fred Uwa Ehioghae.

The participation and contribution of Professor Galia Sabar, Chair of African Studies at the Tel-Aviv University enormously enhanced the project. Hajia Meriga Seidu on whose honor our organization was founded and Professor John S. Nabila Naaba Wulugu, the President of Ghana House of Chiefs and all members of the program's Council of Elders who offered counsel and other contributions, we say thank you.

We further wish to thank Mr. Kannyiri Bayen, the National President of the students' volunteer program for his patience, sacrifice, selfless dedication to the "School for All" Phase 1. We acknowledge Dr. Saalia Kwesi, patron PAMEPI University of Ghana Student Chapter for his great contribution.

We would like to thank the head teacher and staff of Tamale International School for adopting Saakuba primary school. Mr. Hillary Amenzo a staff of former President J.J Rawlings office and Mr. Frank Agyekum the spokesperson of former President John Agyekum Kufour all served as the intermediaries between the project facilitators and the two former Heads of our state. We indeed recognize their quick response and the good attitude towards the project.

We are also acknowledging the following people for the favorable response we got from them:

1. The former Vice President of Ghana Alhaji Aliu Mahama
2. Papa M.D. Sène, Regional Director for Africa Cooperative League of the USA (CLUSA/NCBA).
3. Professor Kaku Sagary Nokoe the former Vice Chancellor of University for Development Studies and current Principal of Wisconsin International University College-Ghana
4. Professor Haruna Yakubu the current Vice Chancellor of University for Development Studies.
5. Dr. Amos Sawyer, the former Interim President of Liberia
6. Dr. James Kojo Adomako, students Dean of University of Ghana Legon
7. Mr. Kwesi Pratt Jr., Editor in Chief of Insight Newspapers.
8. Mrs. Gladys Amaning. Metropolitan Director of Education, Kumasi

Despite already recognizing the contribution of the staff of our organization, we wish to again state emphatically that without the selfless sacrifice of the following members on the ground, the efforts of the project leader and entire team would have been difficult if not impossible:

1. Shani Mawia the project coordinator
2. Kannyiri Bayen the National President of the students volunteer program
3. Fuseini Rashid public relations manager
4. Miriam Bawah Activist and assistant coordinator of "School for All"
5. Abubakari Muhaisin Acting Country Director of PAMEPI

6. Netta Kubitsky "School for All" foreign observer and the "African Community Model program Coordinator
7. Mr. Adama Bukari "School for All" Campaign Manager
8. Mr. Abdul Rahaman Zakaria the Head Teacher of Saakuba Primary School.

Overseeing the operations of various teams including the mobilization of human and material resources for the successful completion of the project was noted during the implementation process as daunting task to the Executive Director of PAMEPI and leader of "School for All" project. Thank God Dr. Sheldon Gellar and Rev. George Baaye Gyasi did not abandon him but rather stood with him through the implementation process by offering counseling, moral support and above all, making sure that every idea and word from him matches with the conceptual models of the program. We are very grateful and wish to add that forever, you will be remembered as the bedrock of "School for All".

## INTRODUCTION

In recent times, calls for educational enhancement have been tunes ringing from all corners of the globe. These calls have been necessitated by the fact that developing nations and the rest of world are not doing enough to address the educational challenges that has locked millions of children out of school. A UNESCO report states that " only one out of ten children in Africa has access to pre-primary school institutions and four out of every ten primary-age children do not go to school". According to UNICEF global databases, 2008, and UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre, 2008 46 million primary-school-age children are out of school in sub-Sahara Africa.

Endemic issues like poverty, high population growth, wars, civil conflicts and corruption among others, remain some of the greatest obstacles to the permanent realization of education for all in Africa. Consequently, governments lack succinct intervention measures, strategies and resources to address issues like holding classes under trees, classrooms without roofing sheets, broken chairs, absence of amenities and facilities.

The outcome of research findings from the "School for All" proposal conducted on African countries like Ghana, Ethiopia and Kenya cited examples of how children's educational needs have been inadequately addressed. It was to contribute to the addressing of the aforementioned that Paabinaa Meriga Peace Initiative (PAMEPI) a non profit, non governmental organization (NGO) operating in Ghana, came out with the School for All proposal.

The "School for All" project is an educational outreach proposal that seeks to address the challenges confronting Ghanaian and African children in general especially, those in the rural sector. The main objective of the "School for All" project is to assist children who ought to be in school but are not; motivate those already in school to stay and help in addressing issues confronting teachers in order to make teaching and learning a pleasurable encounter.

To weigh the merits of the proposal, we embarked on a pilot project in the Northern Region of Ghana which began on June 2010 and was completed on March 2011. Tamale the capital city of Northern Region was designated as a donating community and Saakuba as the receiving entity. Mobilization of volunteers, resources, project planning and training all took place in Tamale. The materials were then donated to Saakuba primary school whose community residence population stands at 1,398. By the end of the pilot project, 23 NGOs, associations and unions had embraced it.



Saakuba School Children in the classroom

The pilot project concentrated on collection of funds and reusable materials, initiating the schemes and the programs, conducting field questioning, gathering data, creating lobbies and strengthening existing educational institutions like the PTA. It also focused on empowering the people of Saakuba through the establishment of a community education development fund. The phase 1 ended up creating awareness about the educational challenges, reaching out to children who are in need, encouraging those in school to stay, emboldening the parent teacher association and building an atmosphere that fostered reconciliation and peace in Saakuba community thus affirming our "School for All" conceptual models as possible alternatives to foreign based models which are becoming too expensive for the ordinary citizens.

### **VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL FOR ALL PROJECT (June 2010-March 2011)**

The execution of the pilot project could not have been possible without the involvement of 10 volunteers consisting of 4 females and six males all drawn from the Tamale Metropolis. It was heart-warming how each and every one of the volunteers readily accepted the challenge to mobilize their own resources in soliciting donations for the project.



School for All volunteers in action

#### **Training & Orientation**

To enable volunteers understand the vision and mission of School for All project, a 1-week training and orientation session was held at the offices of School for All project in Tamale. During the session, the facilitator in the person of the Coordinator provided insight about PAMEPI's vision and mission. Further, volunteers were equipped with inter-personal and effective communication skills. Volunteers were also reminded to be sensitive to the opinions of people who may initially oppose any request for donations and to use persuasive rather than judgmental language to gain their support. The session played a crucial role as volunteers were able to deal with the foreseeable challenges.

#### **Materials mobilization strategy.**

The volunteers identified and targeted certain individuals within the Tamale Metropolis. They then arranged meetings with them during which time they introduced themselves and the organization they represented. Upon clearly articulating the intent of the organization, most of the benevolent individuals readily offered their support.

## **Motivation of Volunteers**

Within the nine month period, volunteers were consistently on the field mobilizing and galvanizing support for the project. Considering the immeasurable sacrifices expended at the project, it would have been worthwhile to reward volunteers in monetary terms but that could not be done due to inadequate budgetary support. However, volunteers were happy to be part of the project and registered their continual support.

One thing that remains deeply touching is the revelation by the volunteers as they commented on what motivated them to take part in the project. All volunteers indicated that their affiliation with the project was borne out of their experiences as children growing up in deprived settings where they themselves lacked adequate learning materials. To have encountered such a challenge before made it morally compelling for them to put smiles on the faces of other children whose future depended greatly on the quality education. One of the volunteers remarked that; “if I can’t come out financially to help, I have to contribute my time in support of such a worthy cause”. It was equally touching to hear one volunteer state that “I have always been hungry to serve the needs of kids in whatever form based on my experience as a volunteer a few years ago”. With such a high sense of intrinsic motivation, the future of "School for All" project can be guaranteed especially as efforts are being made to motivate volunteers extrinsically.

## **COLLECTION MECHANISMS**

Due to budgetary constraints, the organization was unable to establish a permanent Collection center for the duration of the Phase 1 pilot project. The volunteers who took part in the campaign used their own residences as holding centers. With the help of the supervisory committee, adequate measures were put in place by the organization to ensure the proper utilization of the materials and funds raised. Nevertheless, the organization remains convinced that the establishment of a permanent Collection Centre remains the best option.

## **EVALUATION OF SCHOOL FOR ALL PROJECT: Headmaster of Saakuba Primary School**

Saakuba Primary School is the only public school in the Saakuba village of the Tolon Kumbungu District of the Northern Region of Ghana. Its current enrolment level stands at 326 pupils with an average age of 13 years.

With no meaningful economic activity at Saakuba, about 99% of the parents are engaged in peasant farming activities. The absence of social amenities makes the school the only place to engage the pupils whilst their parents work on their farms. As a public school with no income generating activities, Saakuba Primary School except for its classroom building is deprived of basic learning materials. This is worsened by the fact that parents are unable to provide their wards with pens, pencils and exercise books. The lack of these basic materials negatively affects the quality of teaching and learning and as well does not motivate pupils to stay in school.

The level of deprivation makes my normal day so hectic and it was on one of such a busy day precisely the 7<sup>th</sup> of July, 2010 as I was thinking about how to deal with the challenges confronting the school when two gentlemen walked into my office and introduced themselves as staff of Paabinaa Meriga Peace Initiative. I received their intent to come to the aid of the school with skepticism because a number of international organizations have on several occasions made such gestures with none honoring their promises.

### **Prior to the School for All Project**

Prior to the intervention of PAMEPI, pupils at Saakuba did not only lack learning materials but also they had no sporting accessories such as footballs. Furthermore, the school had no chairs for visitors. Another major challenge was the lack of co-operation between parents and teachers of the school.

### **After the Intervention**

Today, pupils have adequate learning materials especially pens, pencils, erasers and exercise books. Indeed, the fact that pupils can write and do home work exercises have considerably changed their response to school. Daily attendance has increased and the aura on the faces of the pupils show how they appreciate PAMEPI's intervention. It was enlightening when one of the pupils remarked that, "I now enjoy coming to school because I have books and pens to study with and at break we can play football on the football field". The project has also bridged the gap between parents and teachers of the school.

### **Supervisory Committee**

To make sure the donations are not misused, I have instituted a 3-member supervisory committee comprising of two teachers and the District Assembly representative of Saakuba with their mandate being that of monitoring the wise usage of all donated items and to report any abuse for corrective action to be taken.

### **Conclusion**

I express our profound thanks to PAMEPI for their timely intervention. That Saakuba Primary has been selected among the number of deprived schools in the Tolon Kumbungu District make us exceedingly grateful for your gesture. Today, pupils are happy and willing to stay in school. We now have chairs for visitors. The football field gets busy as pupils can play football to exercise the body and as well as for pleasure. We would however be grateful to receive the set of football jerseys and other sporting equipment as promised and hope that in the near future, we shall benefit from more donations.

### **SAAKUBA COMMUNITY EDUCATION FUND**

As presented in the School-For-All proposal, a community education fund has been opened for Saakuba. The community education fund scheme design envisioned a one-year period for implementing the desired intervention after which it will be evaluated. The fund has three objectives:

1. Addressing the educational needs of the students of Saakuba- purchases such as school uniforms, books and other education materials.
2. Providing incentives for the teachers of Saakuba Primary School in order to motivate and cultivate a quality teaching staff.
3. Assisting struggling residents of Saakuba to obtain loans by using the fund as collateral.

The dues meant to provide these objectives come from three sources:

The first is a communal farming plot. As stated in the original proposal, all proceeds from the communal lands will go directly into the Saakuba Community Education Fund. Ten acres of land have been acquired for the Saakuba communal farming plot for crops of corn and groundnuts. The plot will be managed by residents of each section in Saakuba, and the work load will be divided among sections by the section leaders.

In addition, residents of Saakuba trying to obtain a loan will be able to do so by using the fund as collateral. In order to do this, each resident using the fund as collateral will pay a fee for doing so that will go directly into the account for the Saakuba Community Education Fund.

Lastly, social and cultural events like weddings, funerals, Dagombas festivals in the community are taxed by the community education fund. Weddings have already been taxed. As designated in the original plan, the other social events listed above will be taxed in the next Phase.

The fund is managed by the board of trustees that consists of three representatives:

A staff member of PAMEPI

A Staff member of the Tolon Kumbungu District Education Unit

The Chief of Saakuba.

The fund is also been monitored by the supervising committee that consists of six representatives:

Saakuba Primary School Prefect

A staff member of PAMEPI

A staff member of the Tolon Kumbungu District Education Unit

The Chief of Saakuba

The leader of the School-For-All project in Saakuba

The Head teacher of Saakuba Primary School

### **ROLE OF PARENT-TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**

The amount of PTA meetings has been increasing. Prior to PAMEPI intervention, said meetings occurred twice a term. They now occur at least three times a term, and parent involvement is gradually being promoted. In the previous PTA meeting, attendance reached approximately 50 parents and the following were the main issues discussed:

- a. The need for parents to contribute towards creating a learning inducing environment for their children—e.g., defining time for afternoon revision, creating time for moral talk sessions with their children and creating general structure for their children's life.
- b. The need to assist the school by contributing food items, building new urinal pits for the students and providing canteen fees on time.
- c. The need for parents not to rely on their children to take care of their younger siblings during the school day as many pupils arrive at school carrying a young child.

A school roster is being compiled, including names and contact numbers of the entire school staff and parents. This will facilitate improved parent-teacher communication on an individual basis.

### **PARENT TEACHER ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE**

The teachers of Saakuba Primary school employed under the National Youth Employment Program have not received their salaries since they were hired in August 2010. The PTAC in the "School for All" proposal is a task force that deals with such issues and is now seriously working to address the aforementioned problems.

### **POST SECONDARY STUDENTS' ROLE IN "SCHOOL FOR ALL"**

Paabinaa Meriga Peace Initiative (PAMEPI) student chapter at the University of Ghana, Legon, contributed immensely in raising awareness about the "School for All" pilot project held in the Northern Region of Ghana through radio programs, campus meetings, dissemination of information, raising of educational materials and introducing the program to some of the diplomats residing in Accra.

Out of the 40 registered students, 17 are now volunteering in their respective communities such as Kalsegra in Naadoli District, Wa the capital town of Upper West Region, Tema and Accra etc. The student volunteers also played a crucial role in gathering data on a number of Schools within Tolon Kumbungu District who lacked qualified Teachers.

A selected number of students are currently going through an orientation program to prepare them for Phase 2 of the project which will begin in June 2011. In phase 2, students will be highly engaged in data collection, strategizing plans for material mobilization, door to door campaigns, volunteering in schools and other activities.

### **ROLE OF FOREIGN INTERN IN SCHOOL FOR ALL PROJECT**

Since embarking on the pilot project, the Tel-Aviv University African Studies Department, chaired by Professor Galia Sabar, has been monitoring the program. It was also the first foreign department to partner the efforts of the "School for All" program. Through the department's involvement, a student from Ort Hashomron Binyamina in Israel joined the program. Today that student serves as School for All African Community Model Coordinator and part time teacher in Saakuba Primary School. Her contribution to the development of Saakuba primary school and the community clearly demonstrates the significance of involving foreign students and experts in the program. Some of her ideas and suggestions have been incorporated thereby enhancing the original work plan set for Parents Teachers Association concept.

### **PARENT-TEACHERS ASSOCIATION (PTA) WORKSHOP HELD AT SAAKUBA PRIMARY SCHOOL**

As a follow-up visit to assess the impact of the pilot project, a workshop was held on the 14<sup>th</sup> of January, 2010 at the Saakuba Primary School. The workshop brought together Teachers, Parents and opinion leaders from the Saakuba community and officials of the School for All project.

Opening the workshop, the headmaster of the school Abdulai Ziblim-Abdul-Rahaman welcomed officials from both Tamale and Accra offices of PAMEPI. He recounted the impact that the donation under the pilot project was having on pupils and academic exercise in general. Of particular mention was the fact that pupils were now motivated to attend classes; a situation which hitherto was not the case.

#### **Campaign Manager's Remarks**

In his address, the Campaign Manager for School for All reiterated the organization's commitment to alleviating the educational challenges confronting the pupils. He indicated that PAMEPI will do its best to ensure that the pupils who constitute Ghana's future leaders would not be deprived of education which undoubtedly is a major tool in empowering the citizenry. He charged parents, especially men, to provide for the social, economic, physiological and educational needs of their wards adding that it was a godly obligation for parents to be responsible towards their children.

#### **Comments from Teachers**

It was a moment of truth when teachers of Saakuba Primary took turns to recount the difficulty with which teaching and learning activities were conducted prior to the intervention made by PAMEPI. It was revealed that due to the lack of writing materials, children shared a few pencils among themselves implying that a pen or pencil was passed on from one pupil onto the other and wondered what meaningful learning could take place under such conditions. Unequivocally, the teachers lauded the initiative adding that now, each child could comfortably write class exercises and complete homework assignments; a development that is giving meaning to effective teaching and learning in the school.

#### **Comments from Opinion Leaders**

The excited opinion leaders of Saakuba representing the entire community were full of praises for the initiative. The leaders affirmed their support for the project and promised to help in whatever form they could. They attributed their inability to fully support their wards to the lack of any meaningful economic activity in the community except for their peasant farming activities; proceeds from which were woefully inadequate.

## **Closing**

Closing the workshop, the headmaster sided with the Assembly Man on the need for parents especially the men to support their wives in providing for the needs of their innocent children. The headmaster appealed to PAMEPI to help extend potable water to the school premises. He further indicated that though there is some electricity in the Saakuba village, the school has not yet been connected to the national grid and hoped that the organization could help in that regard. He assured participants that the Supervisory Committee put in place would continue to ensure that all items donated would be used for the very purposes which they were intended. The workshop ended with a conviction of mind that the initiative was a God-sent intervention.

## **SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE**

A five member committee comprising a representative of PAMEPI and four other representatives of the groups and organizations that embraced the "School for All" program were selected to act as supervisors. They worked hard along side the PAMEPI staff in ensuring that goals set were achieved within the designated time frame. They audited and validated the sources of the materials and funds raised by volunteers. They took part in meetings, offered counseling, served as observers during door to door material mobilization and were actively engaged with both PAMEPI staff and the volunteers. Since the collection centre was not set up to store materials raised, volunteers had to use their residences as holding centers, which really posed a challenge to the organization and all involved. But the supervisory committee was able to come out with suggestions and ideas to help the organization identify weaknesses and lapses that could have opened doors to waste and mismanagement of the resources. Last but not least, the committee supervised the donation of collected materials to the Saakuba primary school. Their participation greatly contributed to the smooth implementation of the Phase 1.

## **PHASE 1 PROJECT CHALLENGES**

Budget: Due to budgetary constraints and other ongoing commitments, Paabinaa Meriga Peace Initiative (PAMEPI) was only able to allocate US \$5,000 to the start up fund for the "School for All" Phase 1 pilot project which covered administrative management, transportation, volunteers, meetings, radio programs, T-Shirts and other expenses

Administrative Management: The "School for All" pilot project was run primarily by volunteer staff of PAMEPI. Because of family and professional commitments, some volunteers sometimes were not able to meet all of their commitments to the project. The volunteer staffs in question were not professionals or experts in organizational operations. Some of them could not properly narrate the activities or document events independently which posed a real challenge to the project.

These and other issues emanating from inconsistent attendance at times disrupted the smooth continuation of the project's activities and contributed to expanding the duration of phase 1 of the pilot project.

Despite these shortcomings, the overall efforts of the unpaid volunteer staff deserve enormous recognition, as most remained steadfast in their determination to continue their respective duties and were able to turn up later days to continue their respective duties. Moreover, volunteers did an excellent job in incorporating their ideas, suggestions, and resources which facilitated the success of the project.

Transportation: Prior to the launching of the "School for All" pilot project, PAMEPI as an organization was using one car to carry out its activities. Unfortunately the car broke down during the early weeks of the program which placed a strain on the funds that were allocated to the project. Volunteers had to use their own motor cycles to circulate and execute their duties. The organization's inability to repair the car or provide one for the volunteers diverted project funds because volunteers had to tap into the monies from the project fund in order to fuel their bikes and hire taxis. The absence of the car also made staff movement difficult thereby resulting in cancellation of several meetings.

Meetings: The organization is understaffed and above all overstretched by its many ongoing activities. Only 17 meetings were documented and staff's inability to adequately take stock of events during

meetings also accounts to some of the project's problems. It was cumbersome to re-train a staff when the one in charge was absent. If meetings had been properly documented, it would have been easier for the next in charge to follow the patterns from previous meetings and have less difficulty in documenting meetings.

Radio Program: Informing the public about the "School for All" pilot project was crucial to the success of the program. However, budgetary constraints hindered us from utilizing the electronic media. The original plan called for having a radio program once in a week, but we ended up putting on programs only once a month or once every month and a half. More radio coverage would have helped greatly in galvanizing the support needed to reach the broader populace. Lobbying for support and sponsorship from business houses took a great deal of time and energy since the staff were not professionals and lacked the full orientation and training that could have equipped them to market the program.

Shirts and ID cards: Twenty T-Shirts were printed to meet the needs of the Volunteer staff and the "School for All" volunteers whose official number stood at 10. The organization was unable to provide extra-T. Shirts to meet the demand of unregistered volunteers whose number stood at 53. Lack of funds explains why the organization could not provide I.D Cards to the volunteers. This made their identification as members of the project difficult thereby limiting our capacity to reach out and complicated the process. The supervisory committee and the organization developed a strategy that ended up easing the problems. However, much time was lost because volunteers sometimes had to call a staff of the organization to authenticate their role in the project to the donor.

Funding: One of the obstacles that faced the project implementation was funding. The level of the people's understanding about organizational operations was very poor. The volunteers could not raise enough funds because the people were saying that they only knew about organizations that gave funds rather than asking for funds from the people. Tamale has seen many international organizations with well staffed and paid workers. This made it difficult for people to understand why the PAMEPI project needed their financial help to support the initiative. The few who were convinced donated their widow's mite. As the project is a continuous one, we intend to use the electronic media to educate the people about the essence of community funding organizations operating within them.

## **CONCLUSION:**

The schemes and programs initiated during the project implementation were framed around four core elements-- self-awareness, self-empowerment, self-initiative and all inclusive community participatory models as an alternative approach to foreign models, which are heavily dependent on eternal funding and are often not adapted to local conditions. Thinking outside the box prompted PAMEPI to construct the School for All conceptual model which may be more suited to the African environment.

The pilot project was implemented over 9 months from June 2010 to March 2011. One of the major objectives of the Phase 1 project was to test ideas stipulated in the "School for All" proposal and to examine its relevance to the participatory communities before replicating the project to other communities.

As the Phase 1 project progressed with time, it incorporated new ideas and suggestions consistent with the "School for All" conceptual model to overcome some of the obstacles and improve project performance. The all inclusive community participatory model espoused in the "School for All" proposal succeeded in encouraging community members to participate in educational decision making and to putting forth their ideas and suggestions to improve the project

The favorable response from the people of Tamale and Saakuba and organizations and volunteers who embraced the program sheds light on what can be achieved if the community is included in educational decision making while the enormous contribution and participation by the leadership of the two communities involved reaffirm the roles leaders can play in addressing the educational challenges.

The Phase 1 project was also positively impacted by the sacrifice and contribution of the students from University of Ghana, Accra and an international student from Ort Hashomron, Israel. Their participation supports our assertion that secondary institution students and foreign volunteers can contribute to help solve educational challenges facing Africa in general and Ghana in particular.

The self-initiative and self-empowerment concept espoused in Phase 1 of the "School for All" project succeeded in establishing a community education fund for Saakuba. There was also evidence of behavioral change in Saakuba as the people are now farming on community farms, taxing activities like weddings, funerals, etc., as ways of investing to sustain and expand the education fund in order to meet their children's future educational needs.

Phase 1 also introduced programs that transformed the educational approach in Saakuba primary school thereby enhancing teaching and learning. It indeed reached its target for the donations of the reusable and new educational materials and funds to the less privileged children. It also played a vital role in increasing enrollment, encouraging staying in school, more PTA meetings and getting more people to take part in the educational decision making process.



SCHOOL FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

Despite the challenges and difficulties enumerated in the Phase 1 outcome reports, the project indeed succeeded in realizing most of its goals and profited from the experience to improve the "School for All" conceptual model which can be presented as an alternative approach to foreign models. While both foreign models and our "School for All" model aim at delivering education, the "School for All" concepts has other merits. For instance the "School for All" model has the following unique features:

- a. Doesn't require a large professional and paid staff
- b. Is not primarily dependent on foreign funding and resources
- c. Is less expensive because it recycles old materials
- d. Focuses directly on targeting needy members
- e. Depends heavily on community input for assessment of needs and who is needy
- f. Encourages and is based on dialogue and social solidarity

To sum up, the institutional framework of the project was established by PAMEPI, the main educational actors, and the community rather than introduced or imposed by a foreign donor or project.

The success of this is evident as seen in the functioning of the Parent Teacher Association, the establishment of the Parent Accountability Committee, Educational Fund, and District Educational unit, increases in school enrollment and the number of children who benefitted, the high number of PAMEPI staff volunteers and university student volunteers, the large number of groups and organizations joining the program, and the favorable response from the community.

Also notable was the creation of a lobby to improve conditions for teachers, the collection of data to identify schools without qualified teachers and children in need, and a student volunteer program which is reaching out to other school communities in the country.

Despite the challenges that prolonged the project lifespan, it was able to meet its targets. The goal of Phase 1 was to create public awareness about the educational challenges, increase student enrollment, discourage child drop out, promote public participation in educational decision making and to use the lessons learned as a foundation for Phase 2 implementation.

The number of organizations and entities that embraced the pilot project in Northern Region stands at 23 coupled with individuals who donated materials and funds. The 73 children who could have dropped out of school in Saakuba are being motivated by the materials and funds provided by the project to stay in school. Enrollment in the Saakuba primary school has increased and street children, orphans, and children in Tamale are now having access to quality education as a result of the Phase 1 intervention measures. Relationship between parents and teachers in Saakuba primary has improved. As a result of Phase 1 intervention a community education fund was created and today the people of Saakuba are managing and benefiting from it which was not the case before our intervention.

The favorable response from high profile members in Ghana like Professor John S. Nabila Naaba Wulugu, the President of Ghana House of Chiefs, former Vice President of Ghana Alhaji Aliu Mahama to the very ordinary people like the Tamale Butchers Union is also a clear indication that the project did indeed inform the public about the educational challenges.

The Phase 1 results could also be a reminder to governments of developing nations that any developmental project that is geared towards the permanent realization of education for all that lacks all inclusive community participatory models is likely to fall short of meeting its target. We believe that if the initiators of the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015 would incorporate models of our type into their approach, they would make greater progress towards meeting this goal. We at PAMEPI remain convinced that an all-inclusive participatory approach promotes accountability, transparency and good results.

The fact that community participation brought in resources and social capital which PAMEPI could not afford to provide is an important factor demonstrating the value of continuing the project.

Phase 2 of the project will begin on June 2011. It will seek to sustain community and volunteer interest in Saakuba, strengthen the structures and institutions built during the Phase 1, Pilot Project, evaluate the outcome of the Phase 1 project, and find solutions to the problems encountered there. For example, Phase 2 will encourage the government to allocate the use of government buildings and schools for collection centers.

Phase 2 will seek to encourage the application of the School for All conceptual model to other parts of Ghana. To do so, it also conduct preliminary feasibility studies in other communities, re-examine the diverse roles of organizations, institutions, and religious bodies in ensuring that education for all in their respective communities is realized and elaborate strategies and plans for institutionalizing the project throughout Ghana, and eventually to other parts of Africa.

## **ANNEX I**

### **Support of School for All Project by Opinion Leaders in the Tamale Metropolis – The Donating Community**

Officials of PAMEPI led by the Campaign Manager visited the chiefs and religious leaders in the Tamale Metropolis which is tagged as the “donating community”. Key among the leaders include Paabinaa Meriga (the philanthropist in whose honor PAMEPI takes its name); Mallam Basha (a renowned Islamic Scholar) and the Regent of Lamashegu. Their comments below reflect their opinions regarding the School for All Project.

#### **Hajia Merija Seidu**

The visit to Hajia Meriga Seidu; the 85 year old female philanthropist extraordinaire in whose honor PAMEPI takes its name took place at her residence at Hospital Road; a suburb of Tamale. In her old age, her lucid voice echoed her appreciation for the setting up of the organization. She was especially happy that the initiative has matured from a dream to that of a solid organization seeking to reach out to the entire African continent in general and Ghana in particular. Paabinaa Meriga could not hide her feelings when she was told that the Author of the School for All Project was a beneficiary of her philanthropic gestures. The passion with which Paabinaa Meriga reiterated her blessings for the project was heart-warming and it was obvious that but for her aging legs and visual challenges, she would have loved to be on the field galvanizing support and donations for the projects. To have the blessings of such a benevolent lady has really energized officials of PAMEPI to continue with the good works.

#### **Mallam Basha**

The visit to Mallam Basha was of extreme importance because of his reputation as a religious scholar whose acceptance cuts across both Christian and Islamic followers in the Tamale Metropolis. Known for his objectivity and deep insights into religious affairs, the visit offered the opportunity to the scholar to share his perspectives with regards to the project.

Mallam Basha warmly received the Campaign Manager and other officials to his chamber where his lieutenants were fully represented. In an oratory posture, the Islamic scholar lauded the initiative stressing that it was in tandem with the Islamic faith. From his perspective, Islam makes it obligatory for both boys and girls to seek education and that failure to do so would incur Allah’s displeasure. He was of the view that the situation where females were relegated to the background in terms of education was not an Islamic decree but rather a reflection of societal prejudice against the female gender and that it was the responsibility of true Islamic scholars to advocate for a change from this retrogressive mindset and allow for equal attention on girl-child education. He indicated that secular education was good as it broadened the horizon of the individual making him a productive member of the workforce. He urged Muslim families to endeavor to open up educational opportunities to their children without any form of discrimination. It was instructive when he charged officials of PAMEPI to remain truthful, faithful and committed to the cause of assisting needy children in deprived communities. He was of the conviction that the efforts of PAMEPI would raise champions and future leaders for the benefit of mankind.

#### **Regent of Lamashegu**

In the serene palace of the Regent of Lamashegu was the venue for the meeting with the middle-aged chief. Welcoming officials of PAMEPI, the Regent applauded what he described as a human-centered initiative and pledged his unflinching support to the cause of giving back to society especially children in deprived communities. The Regent was of the view that education was crucial in the socio-economic advancement of society especially the people of Tamale Metropolis which is the regional capital of the Northern Region. Officials of PAMEPI left the palace completely convinced that the initiative had won the heart of the Regent who indicated his support to the project.

NAMES OF ORGANIZATIONS, ASSOCIATIONS, INSTITUTIONS THAT JOINED "SCHOOL FOR ALL"

- 1 Diamond FM
2. CREP (NGO)
3. Sababas Art
4. Gbewaa Daughters
5. Northern Ghana Youth Network for Development
6. Tamale All Stars Football Club (FC)
7. Tamale Galaxy Football Club (FC)
8. Tamale Al- Itifaq Football Club (FC)
9. Real Tamale United Football Club (FC)
10. Tolon Kunbungu District Education Unit
11. Tamale Metropolitan Assembly
13. Tamale butchers Union
14. Tamale traders association
15. Tamale Ghana National Regional Tailors & Dress makers Association
16. Chandiba Enterprise
17. Dipaliya Enterprise
18. Ghana Private Road Transport Union
19. Tamale International School