



Ghana Together AhleSunna School Proposal **Axim, Ghana (West Africa)**

Note that potential donors can act on this project proposal through either Ghana Together, a US-registered 501c3, or through Western Heritage Home, a Ghanaian-registered NGO based in Axim, Ghana.

Title: AHLESUNNA SCHOOL REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Who? **Ghana Together**, a US-registered 501c3 charitable non-profit working in Axim, Ghana together with **Western Heritage Home** (our partner Ghanaian-registered NGO in Axim), and **the Ghana Education Service**.

A reliable partnership with a Ghanaian organization is in place. **This is THE KEY REQUIREMENT when working in Africa.** We have developed this project together. Ghana Together has worked with Western Heritage Home (WHH) since 2006. WHH is a registered Ghanaian NGO (non-profit). We have completed many successful projects together. Our President, Maryanne Ward, and our Vice President, Tom Castor, are Advisory Members of the WHH Board. We have developed the skills and trust needed to work together effectively.

What? **Construct in the town of Axim, Ghana (West Africa), a six-classroom primary school to replace the current three “bamboo walls” school buildings.** Include a headmaster’s office, KVIP (compost type) toilet/urinal, small teacher’s room, library, and small supply-storage room. This new school will replace the current AhleSunna Primary School buildings and will serve about **260-300 primary students** in two shifts.

Ghana Together Board members have visited this school several times over five years’ time, and have ascertained the need directly themselves.

Why? This **public/government school** is the poorest and is in the worst physical condition of all Axim’s nineteen schools. It is located next to Axim’s poorest, mostly Muslim neighborhood. About **45% of the children are Muslim**; the rest are Christian or traditional.

Although the Ghanaian government is now funding tuition for all children through junior high level, they are sorely short of school buildings. Ghana Together believes **primary education is basic to development**. We are committed to augmenting Ghanaians’ own efforts to provide adequate primary schooling, **including viable school buildings**.

Most of the primary schools in Axim were built by Christian missionaries in the early 20th century. With funding from the UK and elsewhere, they could afford cement building blocks, cement floors and walkways, corrugated steel roofs, wooden doors, and window frames with screens to repel malaria-bearing mosquitoes.

The **parents in this traditionally mostly Muslim neighborhood** did not have the advantage of such outside funding. Wanting a school for their children, they **built three buildings with materials at hand—bamboo and rattan**. These buildings are now completely inadequate, due both to the increase in the number of children in this neighborhood and the dreadful condition of the aged buildings.

After independence in 1957, Ghana Education Service (GES) took over the missionary primary schools and also AhleSunna School, making them all public/government schools. Some years ago, GES constructed a cement block 4-classroom building on the AhleSunna campus. That building is being used today, with double sessions, but it is inadequate. Of 518 primary children enrolled in AhleSunna School in Jan 2012, 258 are attending 4-classroom school in the cement block building in double sessions, but **260 are attending class in the three “bamboo schools.”**

Facts

1. The land is already owned by the Ghana Education Service, Nzema East-Axim District.
2. The campus is within easy walking distance of more than 500 primary students.
3. There is a dedicated staff with headmaster Mr. Ebrahim Yunusu Ali and qualified teachers hired and paid by the Ghana Education Service.
4. WHH and Ghana Together will oversee construction. A Ghana Together Board member will be on the scene in Axim during at least part of the construction. Ghana Together trains and requires bidding on contracts, signed contracts, receipting for expenditures, and regular bookkeeping reports.
5. Drawings and the Bill of Materials/Cost Estimates are in hand. These are standard plans developed by the Ghana Education Service, and are being used all over Ghana. Contractors are familiar with these plans. Construction will utilize hydraform brick technology, using **local materials and labor**.

6. The **KVIP toilet** (Kumasi Ventilated Improved Pit, compost-type) also will be built with plans used commonly in Ghana and readily available.
7. **GES will furnish the school building** with desks, etc. from the old “bamboo” schools plus additional desks built by local carpenters.
8. GES will **maintain the building** in future.

Finances: Cost will total approximately \$80,000 US for materials and labor, excluding value of volunteer labor estimated to be about \$8,000 US.

*Note that because local folks typically have no personal tools and few DIY carpentry skills, volunteer labor can only be counted on for the unskilled tasks such as tearing down the old buildings, hauling away debris, smoothing earth, hauling sand, etc. **The people are very willing to help within their capabilities. The AhleSunna Parents Group and the Methodist and Mosque young adult groups have already volunteered to help in whatever way they can.***

The accompanying photos demonstrate the need. Note especially:

- Totally inadequate square footage for number of children
- Uneven bamboo walls that don't enclose the space, leaving room for rain, malaria-bearing mosquitoes, rodents to encroach on the classrooms.
- Inadequate roof allowing for only sporadic day-by-day instruction in the rainy season (April-July)
- Broken concrete or dirt floors
- No walls for blackboard, maps, posters, etc.
- 3-4 children squished into seats meant for two
- No textbooks at all
- No roof or walls that protect from weather, or ability to lock up the buildings, so it's not possible to have textbooks, or any learning materials, to say nothing of computers (their dream!).
- Only a small blackboard hanging from the ceiling
- One two-space seep-type urinal, for more than 500 children.
- One small bucket arrangement as a hand-washing system

Background

Axim is a town of about 25,000 in Western Ghana on the Atlantic Ocean. It is the capital of the Nzema East District and has some government offices and a court.

Axim's economic base is fishing and subsistence agriculture. It is the cultural center for Nzema-speaking people, who traditionally live in far western Ghana and eastern Ivory Coast. The people are a mixture of Muslim, Christian, and traditional. Literacy, especially among the women, is very low. The town is basically impoverished, and its per capita income is well below the World Bank and other estimates for Ghana as a whole.

Ghana has in the last few years instituted tuition-free primary and junior high education. Thus, the "government" schools are packed, averaging about 50 per class and running double sessions (we've seen as many as 70/class). There is an acute need for more classrooms, especially at the primary level.

The curriculum at AhleSunna Primary School is same as in all the other primary schools with the exception of Arabic, rather than French, as a foreign language class. Until Grade 2, instruction in all Axim schools is in mixed English, Fante, and Nzema (local "home" languages) and after that, instruction is in English, the official language of Ghana. AhleSunna School lets out on Friday afternoon so the Muslim kids can attend mosque.

Based on the local economics, it will be years before AhleSunna School is replaced, if it waits on Ghanaian resources alone. Currently, the Ghana Education Service has prioritized replacing village schools still meeting outdoors under trees. The GES recognizes the need to replace existing schools, such as AhleSunna School, but they must make hard economic choices. Hence, we and other charitable organizations are stepping in to try to help fill the need and speed the process in towns across Ghana.

Please refer to our website at <http://ghanatogether.org> to see our past accomplishments, mission statement, and other documentation.

Please request detailed Bill of Materials with cost estimates, drawings of the proposed school, or any other information.

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