

Back to School: November 2013

Once again, we at Nukoko are pleased to be back with our Education 4 All program this year! We are a Canadian based, volunteer run non-profit organization that works in close collaboration with REJED (Réseau des jeunes pour le développement), a grassroots organization based in Togo that works in the field to raise local awareness on the importance of education and health, promoting the benefits that our program can bring to rural communities. This is one of the poorest regions of Togo, and access to education for girls is at a low.

Our Education 4 All program provides education opportunities to young girls living in rural Togo, in West Africa. We currently run our program in five different schools in the village of Namaré and its surrounding area. The students that we sponsor range from the equivalent of Grade 2 (CP2) through to the end of primary school, when they write the CEPD exams (Certificat d'étude du premier degré).

We are this year completing our first full cycle of primary school sponsorship, and are happy to provide you with the following report, based on the Back to School mission undertaken by members of REJED in November 2013.

Introduction

This year is one of transition for the Education 4 All project after the completion of the first primary school cycle by our girls from 2007 to 2013. REJED and its partners Nukoko, World Class Project, AGAIB-Savanes (l'Agence d'Appui aux Initiatives à la Base de la Région des Savanes au Togo), as well as donors from around the world have continued to assist the community of Namaré during this period of reflection and preparation

for the upcoming cycle of Education 4 All, starting in the fall of 2014. It is for this reason that a mission trip was undertaken between November 18 - 22, 2013 to the region of Namaré to check in on the program and its stakeholders.



Namaré region

Mission

The objective of the mission was to deliver classroom materials to those students completing primary school in the five schools covered by Education 4 All. REJED took advantage of the opportunity to exchange ideas and concerns for the upcoming cycle with local stakeholders such as the regional chief, teachers, parents, and local development groups. This report outlines the mission's actions and outcomes.

School Support

Class materials of books, pens, pencil crayons, erasers, rulers, geometry sets and notebooks were distributed to sponsored students this year. Each school was provided with a first-aid kit containing rubbing alcohol, cotton, gauze, acetaminophen, medical tape, anti-malarials, iodine, and de-worming medication. Teachers received teaching materials as well. REJED members toured each school to inquire into current operations, the state of the students, and to determine any existing needs.



REJED distribute supplies

Discussions

REJED held meetings with education leaders from all five schools under Education 4 All sponsorship including school principals, teachers, and parent-group association members.

The main concern from the principals was that of quality education and student literacy. Supplementary after-school tutor courses seem necessary for students in grades one, two and three. Volunteer teachers could oversee these courses, with the supervision of school directors, twice a week for 2hrs each.

It was proposed to pay these volunteer teachers approximately \$23 each, per month. Each of the five schools could provide three voluntary teachers, teaching extra courses from January to May, when exams begin. This would benefit students, and also help to financially support the 20 volunteer teachers between the five sponsored schools.

To effectively support teachers and allow them to improve their living conditions within the community, REJED proposes to support the establishment and development of AGR (Activités Génératrices de Revenus), an income-generating project focused on agricultural production such as corn, trade commodities, and animal husbandry. Each of these avenues will be further investigated for its potential within the communities.



A teacher giving lessons

Meetings with Community Members

REJED was able to meet with various stakeholders involved with community development, like the regional chief, the local Mother's Club, and two women's groups (each comprising of 30 women). The mission team was also able to meet with the Coordinator of AGAIB-Savanes.

Discussions with the chief focused on the prospects of REJED's work in the community. The chief assured the team that he would be fully supportive and help facilitate the work of REJED and its partners to the benefit of his population.

The Mother's Club considered the AGR income-generating project to be a worthy promotion in the region, encouraging community empowerment. It would give people a chance to take charge of their own development and that of their children. Needs identified related to land leases, the supply of quality seed and fertilization, and other actions that could strengthen organizational capacities of involved groups.

With AGAIB-Savanes, discussions focused on attitudes towards the Education 4 All program and equipment in a local Namaré clinic, constructed in 2006 with

the help of REJED. The mission team presented the AGAIB-Savanes coordinator with the AGR's income-generating activities and its ability to support the care for local children. AGAIB-Savanes promised to support this project. Creating a community structure to help them better access financial gains is the first step.

Conclusion

REJED would like to thank all its partners who contribute from near and far to the implementation of the Education 4 All program. Challenges and ideas for the future help to improve its success to provide basic quality education for all.

This year's Back to School mission proved to be a success. The team met its goals and gathered information from officials and parents that will help the program as it grows. Our agenda continues to be one of educational support for young girls in Togo, and to promote equality and empowerment through this channel.

Thank you from Nukoko to all who have contributed to this year's 2013-2014 edition of Education 4 All. Generous sponsors continue to support our organization and help to ensure that 100% of individual donations are given directly to our projects.

REJED and Nukoko are always looking to encourage others to join us to support basic education for all! To learn more about our initiatives and how you can get involved, visit us online at www.nukoko.org



Thank you!!