

# **THE GBAKAMA FOUNDATION**

## **SIERRA LEONE, WEST AFRICA.**

Annual Progress Report on the Operational, Management and Administrative Activities within the period February to December, 2009.

Presented to the Headquarters office, London, United Kingdom.

### **INTRODUCTION.**

In a bid to achieve the aims, objectives and aspiration of the pioneers and founding members of the Gbakama foundation, the Sierra Leone officers and board members of the charity have undertaken some useful activities during the period under review. With the meager funding provided the management staff vigorously carried out activities which have made some indelible marks and impact in the development of the targeted communities in war devastated Sierra Leone.

The following are the high lights of the activities undertaken under the sponsorship of the Headquarter office in London

#### **1. MOBILIZATION OF A TEAM OF VOLUNTEER STAFF.**

Upon the receipt of mandate from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the country Director mobilized a team of patriotic Sierra Leoneans who gave up themselves to work as volunteers. Since February, 2009 they have been committed, cooperative and rendered their valuable voluntary services which made the aims and objectives of the charity a reality.

#### **2. PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF VITAL DOCUMENT FOR THE FOUNDATION.**

The voluntary management team in Kono (Sierra Leone) started the activities of the charity by writing out a concept paper and the constitution both of which were sent to the Headquarter Office in London. These documents were reviewed and updated to international working standard. The reviewed constitution was used by the management team in Kono to do the legal preliminary (local) registrations with the Sierra Leone Government line ministries in Kono District namely: The Ministry of Rural development and Local Government, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and children Affairs; and the Kono / New Sembehun city council founds used for the registration in the respective ministries were reviewed from the Headquarter office in London (UK)

#### **3. OFFICE ACCOMODATION**

Presently, the foundation has not got office accommodation on its own. It is sharing a small office (two rooms and parlor apartment) with another sister organization at Number 35 Sansie Street, Bungalow, Tankoro, Koidu City, Kono District.

All operational, management and administrative activities are carried out in this small congested office.

#### **4. Financial Management**

For effective, efficient and transparent management and safe – keeping of funds, the management team opened a current bank account with the Sierra Leone Commercial Bank, Koidu, Kono District. The amount required for opening the account was provided by the founder / chief executive officer of the foundation from London (UK).

## **5. LETTERS OF COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT.**

In order to be able to collaboratively work with the other organization, Government line Ministries, Donor Agencies, and Parastatals, the management team wrote and distributed letters to the appropriate bodies. The letters solicited collaboration and also partnership support in various areas of development. The bodies to which the letters were addressed to included ministries of Agriculture; Health and Sanitation; Social Welfare, Gender and children Affairs, Education, Youths and Sports; and also to Embassies including America, British council.

## **6. OPERATIONAL LOGISTICS.**

A 125 motorbike with registration number AEE 579 was bought by the founder / chief Executive officer in March, 2009. This is presently the only mobility the charity has, and it has been very helpful in the implementation of the numerous activities. But with the continuous expansion of the programme activities, which presently cover four (4) districts (Kono, Kenema, Kailahun and Bo) this means of transportation has become inadequate. Due to continuous use over long distances on rough story roads the bike is frequently put under maintenance.

## **7. ACQUISITION OF LAND FOR THE PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES.**

Being conscious of the many programme sectors that would be implemented in Kono District, which is supposed to be the head quarter for the charity in Sierra Leone, the management have acquired fifteen (15) acres of land from the Tankoro chiefdom authorities in Kono District. This piece of land will be utilized for the construction of administrative offices and various structures for the different facets of the foundation. The structures constructed will provide adequate facilities for health centre, vocational centre, orphanage, formal schools, Recreational activities, Agricultural office and store, etc. The site has been completely brushed and the chiefdom authorities are presently mounting pressure on the management of the charity in Kono to start construction on the land otherwise they would demand the use of the land by other development agencies.

Authorities in Keneme District, another part of Sierra Leone where the charity has operated the pilot phase of its project last year, have made an appeal and are quite prepared to receive similar facilities.

## **8. THE DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD CELEBRATION, JUNE, 16, 2009.**

In collaboration with the Ministries of Social Welfare Gender and children Affairs; Education, sports and youths; and International and National Non Governmental Organization concerned with children affairs, the Gbakama Foundation commemorated the Day of the African Child in Koidu City, Kono District. The commemoration was done by a large gathering of children, youths and adults brought together by the charity. Three community and non Government assisted schools which have high rate of disadvantaged children were selected as the direct beneficiaries of the occasion. This was done in response to the theme for 2009 “coming together for child survival”, The three selected were primary schools in Koidu City domain, namely: The New Apostolic Mission Primary Schools, Yaakongo section; The mortayorma Nursery and Primary School, koeyor section; and the kankallay primary school, sukudu section.

The direct target beneficiaries of the occasion consisted of 100 pupils, 7 teachers and 17 parents / guardians. In addition, a large number of community leaders and members attended. The activities performed by the target beneficiaries included concert, skits, drama and video show all depicting child labour torture, and other forms of child abuse.

The charity intends to replicate the commemoration of the occasion next year (2010) in other parts of the country.

## **9. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES DELIVERED TO INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS.**

Since its inception, the foundation has been rendering vital professional and technical services to community – based organizations and institutions in Kono District. These services included counseling and guidance adult literacy and numeracy, training of grass root peasant farmers in modern farming techniques and methods; trading workshops in basic business management; organization of youth groups to undertake viable development projects for their empowerment to achieve self – reliance and productive life.

Some organizations / institutions that benefited from these services were Eastern Rural Youth development movement and training centre; The koidu school of commerce and Technology; The Bongaloo Youth Organization, the members of which were formerly wasting their time idly in ghettos; The koidu Blind school; The polio victims; The Amputees and war wounded; and the Grassroots farmers multi – purpose co – operative society.

## **10. NEEDS ASSESMENT SURVEY (NAS).**

NAS exercises have been carried out in the operational areas. The main focus in the survey targeted the physically challenged persons, vulnerable school going children, street children and child beggars, vulnerable and unsupported peasant farmers living in deplorable conditions in the villages. These surveys clearly indicated some acute problems or issues to be immediately addressed.

1. Scholarship support.
2. Shelter, water and sanitation facilities in vulnerable communities.
3. Skills and vocational training for career development and empowerment.
4. Need for teaching and learning materials for schools and adult Education centers.
5. Provision of wheel chairs for the disabled, and polio people
6. Agricultural input support to school gardening and organized farmers groups.

## **11. RADIO DISCUSSIONS AND ADVOCACY PROGRAMMES.**

Thirty minutes air space was acquired from Eastern Radio, Kenema where in the aims and objectives of the Gbakama foundation were explained, and the audience in the entire eastern region were allowed to give their responses, comments and suggestions made about the programmes objectives were very interesting and educating. The organizations concern about children especially the vulnerable primary school children were highlighted. Also explained was the support given to some of these type of children in some schools in the four targeted district. The format and mechanisms used in the selection of the children, and the kind of support were also explained.

It was vividly pointed out in the discussions that the charity would actively advocate for all children to be sent to school and to ensure their stay in and completion of school in safe and comfortable atmosphere. In their advocacy for child welfare, it was stated that all the activities of the charity would be guided by the provisions of the Sierra Leone children right act of 2007.

This Act has proved to be taking big strides as it has become instrumental in pressurizing the Sierra Leone Government to provide the required facilities for the children such as building more schools and furnishing them, providing good water and sanitation facilities in the schools, supplying adequate recreational facilities, and teaching / learning materials. In order to this move effective and efficient, the Government is encouraging charitable organizations like Gbakama foundation to be involved in providing those basic services, as a way of complimenting Government efforts.

The charity child Right Advocacy is timely in Sierra Leone as it has increased the urge in the youths who are out of school and employment in the operational areas, to be trained for livelihood. It is now a big challenge for the Government and development agencies to provide technical and vocational training for the unemployed youths. The intervention of the charity in this regard on a large scale would be highly appreciated. Most of the vocational training centers in the Kono District presently are ill equipped and not helping much to reduce the unemployment rate of the youths. The provision of training equipment and materials to this centre as a form of grant – in – aid will be of tremendous help.

The foundation branch in Kono has recently received a video camcorder camera from the Headquarter office in London (UK). This will help enhance the preparation of appropriate, transparent and effective reports on the charity activities.

## **12. SCHOLARSHIP GIVEN TO UNDER PRIVILEGE AND MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN KONO, KAILAHUN, KENEMA AND BO DISTRICTS.**

To make practical the objective of the Gbakama foundation concerning children welfare, an intensive survey was done last year in order to identify and register vulnerable primary school children for sponsorship. The field officers registered hundred (500) of those children in each of the four (4) districts targeted (Kono, Kailahun, Kenema and Bo). They were verified but due to lack of funds only a total of fifty – nine (59) were sponsorship by the organization in the four districts as a pilot phase of the project.

Selection of the vulnerable children in dare need was done through a method we call “Community participatory Approach” whereby a cross – section of the entire community was involved in each district. The field officer held sensitization meeting with stakeholders in the community and involve them in the selection process. These included the local chiefs, the chiefdom ward councilors, the youth leaders, the women leaders, the head teachers, the class teachers of the respective classes in the schools targeted; parents / guardians and the community – Teachers Association chairman. After selecting the potential beneficiary children for the scholarship, these stake holder meet together to verify the suitable ones based on the criteria explained to them in the sensitization meeting. This method proved very effective and successful.

The scholarship offered to the children approved covered one year school fees, two sets of school uniforms; a dozen exercise books, a pair of shoes, a pair of crepes, geometry set, pens, pencils, one ruler and a school bag. To ensure the proper use of those materials and to follow – up on the performance of there children, the field officer visited each school twice each term. During the follow – up the field officers also made home visits to assess the living conditions and their educational care at home. The Education supervisor visited the schools at the end of each term and collected information about the children’s performance and attendance in the schools, which he forward to the progrmme coordinator.

This project component has proved successful. In order to improve and intensify the delivery services the foundation management team envisage a special training apparatus and programme be designed for training of field officers and community stakeholders so that they can be educated on the proper management of the resources provided and for monitoring the children.

If the charity management is able to acquire funding there are plans made to conduct in-service training (INSET) for the untrained and unqualified teachers in selected schools during the long vacation (July to August ) this academic year. The management team is aware of the constraints of these teachers in the classroom, and therefore intends to equip them so as to make them able to help provide quality education to the children.

## **13. STIPEND AND TRAVELLING ALLOWANCES.**

Much was not done in this regard due to lack of funds but the staff continued to be patient, cooperative and committed. However some amount was disbursed to staff members from time to time as stipends in recognition of the good services rendered. Field offices going out on special assignments in the interest of the organization were given allowances to cover transport fare, feeding, lodging and medication. These incentives served as encouragement and motivation to the staff for volunteerism.

#### **14. GENERAL MAINTENANCE OF THE MOTOR BIKE AND THE STATUS OF THE K.V. GENERATOR LOANED.**

The motor bike had to be maintained after a long trip each time because of the bad condition of the laterate roads. As it was the only means of transport for the organization it has almost gone beyond repairs.

Even the K.V. Generator and computer on loaned to the organization had to undergo frequent repairs. But both have now been withdrawn from the organization. We are presently without computer services and it is difficult for us to prepare any serious document for now.

#### **15. MEDICAL AND FUNERAL ASSISTANCE.**

A few cases of sickness affected some members of staff and we lost one hard and devoted member by death. A daughter of one staff member suffered from typhoid fever and sickle cell anemia. The organization made contribution towards her treatment. Another member of staff had accident on a bike and broke his leg, whilst on active service. The organization took the responsibility for his treatment. Also, the programme coordinators in – law fell from the palm tree and died. He too was given some financial assistance.

Very sadly, we lost our former finance officer by death, late Stephen T.K. Sandayama, in November, 2009. That is a big blow to the organization as he was very dedicated and hardworking. Though not much, the organization presented some token of funeral, rite according to our custom in Sierra Leone. May His soul rest in perfect peace!.

In spite of our present constraints the management team of the organization, Sierra Leone Branch, has demonstrated great concern over the individual staff members. We live as members of one family.

#### **16. ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES PRESENTLY CONFRONTING THE SIERRA LEONE BRANCH.**

In the midst of our success, we have many challenges. It is expedient to mention a few of them for your attention, as we strategize to surmount them. The most pressing ones are the following.

1. Lack of funding for the foundation to meet its commitment to sponsor the school children selected for scholarship in the four (4) districts for this academic year (2009/ 2010).
2. The urgent need for an equipped central office that would be used to maintain confidentiality, security of documents and assets, and also enhance effective and efficient management of the organizations affairs.
3. Lack of communication and transportation facilities for the field and administrative staff to would enable them do effective work.
4. In service Training (INSET) is at this moment imperative for both the untrained and unqualified (UU) teachers in the target schools, and the organizations staff members for capacity building and career development. This will help the organization to grow fast and be accepted recognized in the operational areas.

5. The organizations staff welfare and maintenance in terms of remuneration and other incentives.

## **17. RECOMMENDATIONS AND SHORT TERM PLAN**

In consonance with the mounting confidence that the beneficiaries, local authorities and government officers in our areas of operations have built in the organization activities, we, the management team, do crave the indulgence of partners and donor organizations to come to the aid of the organization in order to visualize its aims and objectives. In this vein, we recommend the following to be accomplished as short term plan.

- i. That the organization be fully registered in Sierra Leone to gain its full status as a legal entity.
- ii. That an office that befits the status of the organization be established at Kiodu and Kono District. Sierra Leone.
- iii. That the appropriate logistics be provided for an effective and efficient implementation of the organizations activities.
- iv. That the pending scholarship grants to beneficiaries for this academic year (2009 / 2010) be paid to ease that tension mounting on the management staff.
- v. That the June 16, Day of the child commemoration next year (2010) be carried out in other operational areas of the organization.
- vi. That the acquired 15 acres of land for the organization activities be secured and protected. Some kind of work should be started on the land in 2010 otherwise that local authorities might put up some embarrassment.

## **18. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.**

For the successful implementation of this pilot phase of the organizations programme (February to December, 2009) the services of certain personalities need to be acknowledged. Without their valuable services, commitment and support the organization would not have attained the present standard within this short time of the operation.

The efforts of the following personalities need to be acknowledged and appreciated.

- i. Mr. Eric Gbakama who initiated the idea and introduced the vision. He is recognized as the founder and chief Executive officer of the organization.
- ii. Mr. and Mrs. Joseph K. Gbakama, who identified me to served as the country Director and spear – head the affairs of the organization in Sierra Leone
- iii. Mr. Sahr E. Ngegba – Jonsie, the current co – coordinator of the progrmme who is going all out and working collaboratively with me the country Director, Rev. Kelvin A. S. B. M’bayo’s to see that the organizations programmes succeed.
- iv. Other staff members who are to be commended are: Late Mr. Stephen T.K. Sondayama, former finance officer; Miss Fatmata Rosaline Musa, Rev. J. T. Lebbie, Mr. Paul Samu, Mr. Gasimu ISaka, Mr. Victor S. Kanu, Jeneba Amara, Musa Lawa, Margret Kpakowa and Sia T. Ngauja.
- v. The counselors and advisers: Mrs. Mary S. Musa, Mrs. Kumba Kellie; Mr. A. K. Lamin, RT. Cornel Gabriel Mani;

- vi. The paramount chief P.C. Paul Gaba, Saquee and the Tankoro chiefdom authorities who offered free land for the establishment, development and progress of the organization programmes.
- vii. All institutions and organizations that collaborated with us and contributed towards the establishment and implementation of the organization programme in Sierra Leone.
- viii. Finally, but not the least, our profound gratitude goes to all the officers and supporters of the Headquarters office in London (UK) for their tremendous effort and support in strategizing the plans and raising the required funds for the implementation of the pilot phase of the programme.

Faithfully submitted

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**REV. KELVIN A.S. M'BAYO**

**COUNTRY DIRECTOR, SIERRA LEONE.  
WEST AFRICA.**