

PROGRESS AT THE BUEA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

June, 2013

Since our last news edition on this site, progress at BSD has continued at a steady pace. Enrollment has now been stabilized at about 110 students. Improvements to the school site move ahead at an impressive rate. In addition to the first three classroom buildings, a kitchen was completed early in 2012. Prior to this time, all meals were prepared under an outside shelter, using one or two large kettles. Now there are cookers installed inside, and more recently a modern stove so students can learn updated baking techniques. A simple sink and faucet provides a reliable water supply to the kitchen. Thanks to a joint venture between the Charitable Foundation of the Energy Bar Association and AES Sonel, electricity now powers the water pump rather than the original generator, and before that, the hand pump.

A large room for students to eat meals has been added as well. This room doubles as a multipurpose room. In fact, it served as a staging area in the spring of 2012 for a medical mission conducted by Dr. Georgette Bibum and a colleague from Franklin Square Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. Impressively, the team made the trip at its own expense. They provided check-ups for the children and their families, dispensed shots and basic medicine and conducted health education sessions.

The area of campus enclosed so far, Phase I, has been graded and cleared of rocks. Landscaping now helps to keep the courtyard more attractive, and most of all, less muddy in rainy season. Current plans include paving an area of the courtyard to provide the opportunity for enhanced recreation activities such as volleyball and basketball.

By the end of 2011, donors made it possible to establish a computer lab. Students are now a step closer to learning in a more modern educational environment. (However, they are still not connected to internet, a goal for the near future). Orange, the local telecommunications company, made a significant donation of desks and chairs for teachers, classroom supply cupboards, and student desks. Later in 2012, BSD received a donation of microscopes and science textbooks from the Model Secondary School for the Deaf in Washington, DC. Meanwhile, FoBSD donated a projector, captioned educational DVD's and other supplies to help enrich student learning.

In May of 2012, thanks to the generosity of the Handsel Foundation in Washington State, a much needed bus was purchased for BSD. Because the school is some distance from the main road, this fulfilled a longtime dream. Staff and visitors now have daily access to relatively easy transportation to the school site each day. Students also take advantage of the bus for field trips. Then, there is the annual bus ride for students taking the national exam at the end of the academic year. (Last year, students scored another 100% pass rate for those graduating the primary level).

Toward the end of summer, building of a fourth classroom structure was undertaken. A wooden building this time, three new classrooms now provide separate space for the secondary level students. Also at this reporting, upgraded toilets and bathing areas have now been completed.

Meanwhile, Orange has committed to begin constructing a block of classrooms intended for training in carpentry, seamstress skills, hairstyling, and other occupations. During the spring of 2013, an extensive project of constructing a security wall around Phase II of the school site was completed. This has made it possible to finally begin construction of a much needed dormitory. In spite of the amazing progress made in just three years at the new location, moving students

from current nighttime accommodations in several classrooms to an actual dorm is still a dream to be realized.

The slideshow, above, chronicles the astounding success already made. Along the way, there have been large and small individual donations as well as a gallery of organizational donors: foundations, non-profits, and corporations. FoBSD and BSD extend sincere thanks for the remarkable generosity already shown. With your ongoing help, we will continue on this journey to educate not only Deaf children, but to enhance understanding in the broader community of the abilities Deaf children are developing for their futures.