

AHKOM SCHOOL UPDATE – 14thth JULY 2024

BACKGROUND

The 2023/2024 academic year was a mixed batch for Ahkom School and Tec Voc.

The positives

- a) Examination results for the 2022/2023 national and subregional examinations were good. In the former ie National Primary School Examinations (NPSE) and the Basic Education Certificate Examinations (BECE) for junior secondary schools, Ahkom, in each case, achieved 100% pass rates. In the latter ie the subregional West African Senior Secondary Schools Certificate Examinations (WASSCE), Ahkom achieved a 98% pass rate. The “two percent” were absent but unlike previous years when non-sitters were logged as “absent”, the West African Examination Council now logs them as “failed” on the result slips.

Students have sat to the 2023/24 NPSE and WASSCE examinations. At the time of writing, BECE examinations are in progress. All results will be out between August and early September.

- b) Pupils from the junior and secondary schools participated throughout the year in a series of academic activities where their performance was noted and acknowledged with praise.
- c) Ahkom school (nursery, primary & secondary) and tec voc, jointly held a very successful sports meet spanning two days in the earlier part of 2024.
- d) The sports meet was followed by an open day organised by the primary sector which featured skits, cultural show and readings by pupils. The open day was in turn followed by Thanksgiving again organised by the primary sector. It was a colourful fun affair comprising a march past by the nursery/primary students to the accompaniment of three separate marching bands.
- e) At a conference organised by the Ministry of Higher & Technical Vocational Education held in Kenema city, eastern province, Ahkom was proud, along with the two-government owned technical vocational institutions in Kono, to be the

only ones on the ministry's database as recognised technical vocational training centres (out of 19 participating skills training centres from the district). This recognition began to be earned from the year 2002 when Ahkom tec voc occupied a huge 19 roomed storey structure in Koidu that had to be abandoned when the owners decided to hike the rent by over 1,000 percent with immediate effect. We later learnt the structure had attracted a flurry of interest from international NGOs flooding into the district during that period that were offering rent payments way above our own.

- f) The tec voc has opened a small sector offering training in catering services. Its early days yet but the interest being shown by community members is encouraging.
- g) On the agricultural front we planted about three acres of cassava at the school farm/ A+ site in Boroma, Koaquima which are doing well. The seeds from the UK has suffered considerably from the excess rain we're experiencing this year. Over 99% of the seeds which sprouted subsequently rotted. It may be advisable to concentrate on purchasing local seeds in future. A variety of these – pepper, carrot, onion, beans, lettuce, cabbage and so forth, can be obtained at various sales outlets in Freetown and Kono or from the local Kono branch of the ministry of agriculture.

At the Lei farm we have replaced cashew plants killed off by fire during the last dry season. We have also planted dozens of pepper plants, around 150 plantain suckers, 39 kolanut trees, several orange and lime trees. We shall endeavour to raise funds to fence off the entire 75 acres with concrete poles and barbed wire to ward off destructive encroachers. We'll create lockable openings at regular intervals on the heavily forested portion of the land. These shall be left open on three hourly basis, round the clock, to facilitate entry and exit of existing wild life.

We are on the search for organizations prepared to fund a project like ours which honours the protection and promotion of the environment, its flora and

fauna; while also recognising the need that people need to be fed through controlled agricultural activity.

The negatives

- h) The principal and headmistress are following up our request to the ministry of education for the primary and junior secondary sectors to revert to private status. We expect to receive a formal response from them shortly. The failure of government to honour their promise to place our teachers on government payroll has constrained our ability to carry out much needed maintenance work on school infrastructure, or to complete unfinished classroom constructions.
- i) The fledgling catering department at Ahkom tec voc faces a dearth of catering equipment. We have acquired some locally made items, but they do not adequately meet our requirements.
- j) On a sad note, we lost one of our bright secondary school pupils - David Tenga, of SS2 Science. David, from a very impoverished background, was the eldest child of his parents.

IN CONCLUSION

At Ahkom, we have never lost sight of the humanitarian drive which formed an integral part of our vision. The desire to help the poor and vulnerable remains implacably in our hearts. We are still on the look out for sponsors for two of our disabled dependents: Rita and little Rebecca.

At this juncture we wish to thank all those who, over the years, have stuck by us through thick and thin. They have made it possible for many children and young adults, through their sponsorship, to attain employable skills and education which otherwise might not been. But life is life and, as the old nostrum goes, "Time and tide wait for no man". And so it holds true also for Ahkom: existing sponsors will move on to new challenges; existing friends will find new ventures. But irrespective, we shall never forget you and shall always wish you well. God bless.

David Sandi, Director, Ahkom

AS SOME OLD FRIENDS HAVE ALREADY LEFT AND OTHERS MAY FOLLOW SOMETIME IN THE NEAR FUTURE, PERMIT ME TO ENTERTAIN YOU WITH PICTURES OF AHKOM, PAST AND PRESENT. SOME YOU MAY HAVE ALREADY SEEN



1. Mr. Turay & family. Teacher: Agriculture/Finance. Bursar. His children attend at Ahkom



2. Pastor Cole & family. Principal. Teacher: Math, Further Math, Physics, Biology



3. Judith Mbriwa & family. Headmistress of the Preparatory & Primary School



4. Ami below left, and Esther below right, are orphans who's secondary and university education were facilitated by sponsors. Both attained the rank of Head girl at the school. Ami is completing her degree at Milton Margai University. She's studying Civil Engineering. Esther is on a degree course in Public Health at Njala University.



5. Hannah, immediate below left, sat to her National Primary Secondary School Examinations (NPSE) earlier in the year and awaiting results. Hannah is under sponsorship.
6. Francess, next to Hannah, gained promotion to form two.
7. Faith, next to Francess, is a final year Senior Registered Nurse (SRN) student at Njala University. She hopes to embark on a BSc Nursing degree thereafter.

8. Rebecca, far right, is one of Ahkom's latest wards. She's a bubbly child. Her teenaged mother abandoned her to her grandparents. Her current whereabouts is still unknown. There is no record of her father. The grandparents passed away during Covid. Other helpers were forced to withdraw support due to the dire economic situation. Ahkom stepped into the breach and seeks a sponsor for her.



9. Rita and her daughter Franciss



Rita was sponsored by the director of handicap international. Under his auspices she was able to sit to her WASSCE and attained passes and three credits. Her sponsor left during the outbreak of covid and never returned. Ahkom took over care of Rita and her daughter in 2018. Rita prays for sponsorship to help her complete her studies and hopefully enter gainful employment. Her daughter attends at Ahkom.

Classmates visit the late David Tenga's home. His mother is wearing the cotton print



Right to Read – our first group of adult learners



Primary school cultural fashion show



Two contestants for the primary cultural fashion show



Ahkom contestant (winner) at the schoolgirls public speaking competition

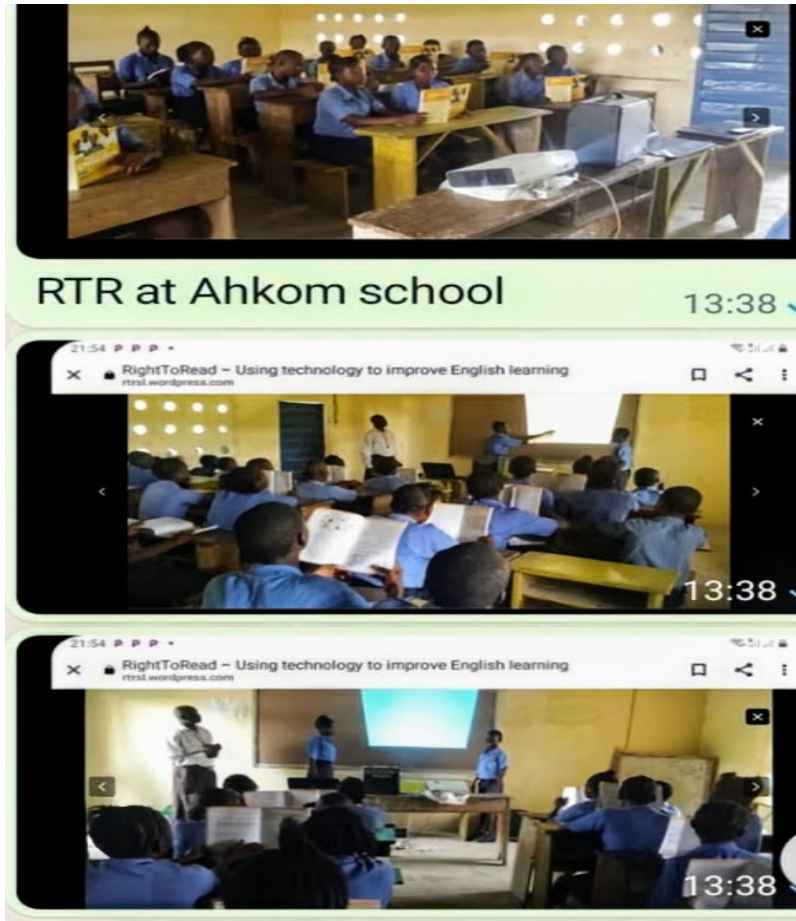


Happy graduation day at the Tech Voc



Ahkom scouts at the school sports





Lunchtime at Ahkom School



Unfinished A+ Academy building at Boroma



Currently our only access to Lei farm and for school children from several villages beyond. It floods over when the rains are really bad and younger children have to stay at home



Part of forest portion at Lei farm



Ahkom Shorts

