

# SET Letters

In June, 2013, a survey was conducted in Asso and Agbelouve with about 13 students at each school. Answers varied considerably between the two schools. Children in Asso had almost no expectations of going to secondary school. In Agbelouve parents worked as mechanics, dress-makers, farmers, while in Asso all adults worked to cultivate the soil. Children in Asso ate one meal less than their peers in Agbelouve who ate a more varied diet. Instead of just the dough and sauce eaten in Asso, Agbelouve children's meals also included rice and beans.

## Letter from Asso student, Adjibandé Voxi

Dear SET readers,

I have one brother and three sisters. I walk 500 metres to school. I go to school to learn about life, to be smarter and to learn to take care of myself. Our new school is open to both boys and girls and because it is big it means girls now have equal opportunities with boys.

At my house we don't have any water. In the dry season we drink from tiny springs and from a pond. Our daily food is made from dough which we eat with sauce. It is difficult but my parents manage to feed us two times a day.

Our wishes for our community are to have a health centre, a school canteen, some more school supplies and solar energy lamps to help us study at night.

I do not really believe I will go to secondary school because my parents don't have enough money to support me there. Both my parents are farmers.

Yours truly,  
Adjibandé



Join with us at SET

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Letter from key community members in Atchonveglovo requesting a school



Dear Sir,  
President of SET Canada,

We, the inhabitants of the village of Dzrekpo, Atchonveglovo have the honour to provide you with the background of our school. Created in October, 1996 the school today divides into two educational groups: A and B. The two groups total 431 students of whom 201 are boys and 230 are girls. Seven teachers work with the students in one building for all.

Due to the condition of the building we must dismiss the children when it rains. This situation slows the normal progress of the curriculum.

In the face of this situation we ask you to help us solve the problem by building a school of three classrooms with a room for the director and a storage room.

From the moment this work begins, all the village will organize themselves to be by your side. We will utilize our large labour force.

The village promises to care for this potential school through the annual collection of 100 F (the equivalent of 20 cents Canadian) per student.

In waiting for your favourable answer please accept our profound respect.

Each of the four signers including the Village Chief, the Principal and the Presidents of the Community Associations stamped the letter with their official seals.

# SET & TOGETHER

FALL 2013

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## SET To Keep Going

Building on rock-hard values gives strength to any structure. Be it a physical structure like a school, a relationship structure like a family, or a financial structure like a charity, strength comes from simple principles simply and consistently followed.

Values determine each decision at each step Support Education Togo (SET) takes to construct new schools in the small west-African country. Perhaps first, why choose Togo?

In 2011 on a trip to deliver bed kits (mattresses, mosquito nets, fabric for school uniforms, backpacks and notebooks) for Sleeping Children Around the World, brothers Don and Bob Barclay and partners Simon and Anne Carette took note of the abysmal conditions of most of the schools they visited. From lean-to huts to vastly overcrowded classrooms they witnessed how the Togolese struggled to give children an education. And then there were the communities without any schools at all.

For the four founders of SET the value of addressing genuine need became patently obvious.

According to **The Washington Post**, Togo places dead last in the 2013 U.N. Development Program Survey for Life Satisfaction. The country's literacy rate remains stuck at 57 per cent.

But at the local level how does SET address genuine need when so much exists? Is building schools in an environment of near-universal poverty like trying to drain the Great Lakes, one teaspoon at a time?

"Sure, the task to build schools throughout Togo is monumental, but instead of focussing on what we can do, we focus on what the SET Communities can do for themselves," says SET President, Bob Barclay. "By building a school we provide the community with a physical and symbolic centre that helps empower all community members."

SET looks to the community to express its own need for a school as well as its willingness to build the school and support it. In SET's **value of local empowerment**, meetings with community leaders and educators are held. Contracts are drawn up based on the enthusiasm and vision to succeed that often emerges in the community's request letter. [See back page.]

No matter how pressing the need, SET will only commit to funding the building of the school once every penny toward the cost has been donated. A strict emphasis on **the value of no debt** for every project, including smaller projects such as the building and supplying of desks to a school. SET prides itself on **the value that every dollar donated to Togo is spent on schools in Togo**.



Taking land survey for new school



With money raised and need firmly established, the construction of the new school begins. Land surveys and measurements taken, the blueprint for the school design is drawn up. Figures, drawings and costs are sent to SET's Canadian directors for approvals. **The value of keeping tight financial controls.** Labour costs are determined at fair Togolese rates. Workers who make some effort earn one dollar per day. Workers who put in a lot of effort receive two dollars per day. In a country whose daily per capita GDP is \$1.60, such pay can make a significant difference to workers, their families and their communities.

At last! By hand, labourers dig the foundation for the new school. In the next issue of SET Together the value of local labour and local materials will be explored.

# Join with us at SET

As a regular feature in **SET Together** we honour our funders focussing on special stories that have come to our attention.

The definition for 'neighbours' expands in today's shrinking world. Neighbours of Don and Bob Barclay in London and Mississauga have committed their dollars to the global view. All seven of these donors reaffirmed their strong support for **SET** stressing how much they value the fact that one hundred per cent of their gifts go to building Togolese schools. One man had already given a significant donation. After reading the first issue of **SET Together** he came to Bob's front door with another cheque, reaffirming his belief in a global neighbourhood.

Your contribution can be made to **SET**

Mail your cheque to Robert Barclay

1423 Tecumseh Park Drive Mississauga, Ont. L5H 3P1

**OR** [Donate online at www.supporteducationtogo.org](http://www.supporteducationtogo.org)  
Where you can also see how your donations are making an impact

**OR** Telephone: 1-905-891-5031

You can join with us for dinner and comedy at the Lambton Golf and Country Club in Toronto on October 19, 2013. Along with a gourmet meal, Parker & Seville will provide hilarity with their comedy routine. Drummers from West Africa will set the heart beat of Togo. Tickets are \$125 per person, and can be obtained by writing [set.togo@yahoo.ca](mailto:set.togo@yahoo.ca)

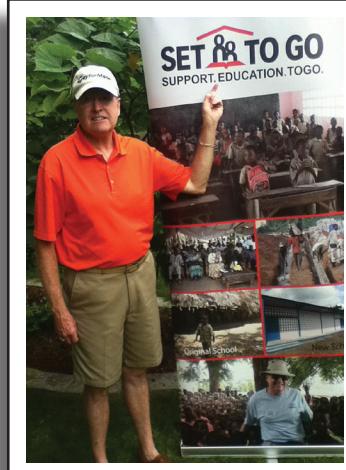
## Pace SETters

### SET Makes the "Links" at Syngenta Customer Appreciation Day

Don Barclay, Secretary-Treasurer of **SET** spoke to 41 of Syngenta Canada's key golf course customers on July 10, 2013. Syngenta's Customer Appreciation Day was held at the Redtail Golf Course, one of Canada's most exclusive clubs.

"Syngenta believes in doing it right and doing it well," a value it shares with **SET**. This commonality of values helped **SET** to be chosen as the first featured charity at Syngenta's new event. Both organizations strongly believe in giving back to the community, locally and globally. Another link for **SET** and Syngenta relates to their parallel belief in the value of education.

Each of the people invited to the event was asked to donate \$200 to **SET** in return for 27 holes of golf, breakfast, lunch and dinner. Chris Dew, superintendent of The National Golf Club of Canada in Woodbridge, Ontario, Canada's preeminent course said, "It was enlightening to learn about **SET** within the context of a great Syngenta sponsored day of networking and fun. I feel privileged to be able to support such a worthy and meaningful organization."



The money raised, \$8200, will provide a good start to paying for **SET**'s sixth school.

## SET's Three Musketeers

**SET** in Togo has its own version of the Three Musketeers: Dosseh Sowoubo, Segnon Dekalikan, and Messenah Sowoubo. The three men in their twenties work closely with their uncle, Laurent Dekalikan of Action Enfance et Développement (AED), **SET**'s Togo partner. The Three Musketeers attend to details, ensure safety of visitors to the country, oversee construction projects, keep the financial books and do any, and everything that needs doing.

All three are educated in accounting. However, the unemployment problem in Togo continues to be so severe that despite their high level of academic achievement, they have been unable to find permanent work.

When **SET**'s directors met the Musketeers in 2011, their commitment to making everything work as smoothly as possible became a factor in deciding on AED as the key **SET** Togo partner.

"They stayed with us at every step. When we tried to suggest they take a couple of hours off," says **SET** director Anne Carette, "they would show up anyway to be of help."

"Extremely good at sensing what needs to be done, the Musketeers do it. Their dedication creates a level of comfort and security for people like us, who are visiting Togo," Simon Carette, **SET** director, adds.

Just as the original Three Musketeers did, Dosseh, Segnon and Messenah do everything together. They live, eat, sing, and best of all, laugh together. Knowing how well-educated, how positive and what comprehensive learners they are gives **SET** enormous confidence for its future.



## SET Partnerships



Ryan's Well Foundation, a Canadian agency, provides clean water and sanitation "as an essential way to improve the lives of people in the developing world". Like **SET**, Ryan's Well aims to build facilities that will empower local people.

Ryan's Well has worked within many countries of the world including Togo. This agency worked with Action Enfance et Développement, **SET**'s Togolese partner, before **SET** was founded. Sooner, rather than later, the two agencies have paired together.



After building the Asso School, the need for water at the school became clear to the **SET** team. With Laurent Dekalikan's proposal Ryan's Well approached this shortage not just as a school problem, but as a community-wide issue.

At the school they constructed a rain-harvesting system which provides water for drinking, as well as for the latrines and hand-washing stations they constructed.

Ryan's Well also repaired the existing well in the village which can supply potable water to be transported to the school in dry weather.



Using a Ryan's Well pump to access clean water

As each **SET** school is planned, Laurent puts a proposal for clean water to Ryan's Well. Ryan's Well has earmarked \$40,000 specifically for 2013 projects in Togo. The agency will provide water for Agbelouve, **SET**'s first school, completed in September, 2011. Next project -- most likely for the newest school at Ametonoukondji, to be completed in Fall, 2013.

For many of us it might be hard to imagine life without access to clean water or to a local school, but in Togo such necessities are never taken for granted. To have both in one location, people express deep thanks.



## SETtings Ametonoukondji

**SET**'s newest school in Ametonoukondji makes a total of five schools built since 2011. Ametonoukondji's population is around 5,700 people. 376 children attend school but not all children in any village go to school. Due to financial constraints not all parents can provide uniforms and notebooks. Parents of students have pledged the equivalent of 20 cents per child per year to help maintain the school.

The school in Ametonoukondji replaces a rough lean-to made of palm branches and leaves. After a visit to the site by the **SET** president in April, 2013, the go-ahead for construction was given. Three classrooms, a principal's office and storage room have been built of cement blocks made in the village itself.

Completion of this fifth school brings the total of Togolese children attending **SET**-constructed schools to 1400.