



The Dream (Ringing the School BeLL)

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There is a village in Ghana named Adawasa. It is a distance from Accra, Ghana's capital, and in the past was connected to the rest of the world only by its dirt road that is impassible during the raining season.

It is late in the day Serwa is still working at Adawasa's school. She is doing the final edit of the *Adawasa Times*, her village's new weekly newspaper. Serwa does a spell-check and then nervously hits "Print". This is her first time as editor. Always before Elizabeth, her teacher, has done this.

Serwa is pleased with her first edition and is eager to see how the rest of the village responds. Kofi has written a nice piece on last week's football game, which their team lost. A visiting nurse has dropped by a piece on mosquito netting with an announcement that free nets will be available at the school next Saturday. Serwa's article is about the expansion of the School BeLL to include a documentary about small scale farming in Kenya. Nine year old Tano has written this week's children's story about his pet goat. Serwa has also included an announcement of next Friday night's village movie - the Ghana vs Ivory Coast game in the AFCON 2012 semi-finals.

Serwa picks up a copy to take home and leaves the rest on Kofi's desk for him to post around the village later this evening. She smiles as she walks down the dirt path to her home. She has planned for weeks this edition of the newspaper. Next week she will help someone else do it. She knows her father and her mother and her grandmother, and Elizabeth, are proud of her.

School has gotten much more interesting since Elizabeth and her school, Adawasa M A Primary, enrolled in the Ghana LITE program a year ago. Before, Elizabeth had spent most of the day lecturing to her students. Everyone, including Elizabeth, thought it was pretty boring. Ghana LITE introduced a whole new way of learning. At first the Ghana LITE coach came to the school twice a month and stayed several days. Now she is coming a lot less. Elizabeth and the students have learned a lot about learning. They have seen themselves on videos taken by the coach as they have tried out new ways of teaching and learning. They have learnt how to coach and how to use coaches and how to make good use of their new digital library, the School BeLL.

Serwa and her classmates are now actively involved in projects and self-paced learning teams. Their school house with its School BeLL contains open and free textbooks, videos, educational games, pictures, and music, is abuzz all day long. They print out individual workbooks based on Ghana's national curriculum and every day each of the students has an opportunity to use the school's wireless hand-held devices linked to the School BeLL to work on their basic verbal and math skills. They especially like the Khan Academy math videos, Intel Skool and Elearning For Kids interactive literacy programs.

The rich learning resources in the School BeLL have opened the whole new world of knowledge to Serwa and her classmates – as well as the rest of their village. Serwa's parents and other adults from her village have started coming to school in the evenings, learning to read with the School BeLL's adult ESL programs. All of this is something none of them could have dreamed of before.



Eleven-year old Serwa is the first person in her family to learn how to read and write. As the oldest of sixteen students in the village school, Serwa has spent more and more of her time as an unofficial assistant teacher, coaching her younger classmates in reading and math. Her primary school leaving exam placed her in the top two percent of Ghanaian primary school leavers so she will be going on to secondary school next year with a scholarship. Serwa thinks she wants to be a teacher, or maybe start a newspaper.

—————Editor’s Note

So what do you make of the story: Serwa’s dream, our dream. Do you share in The dream? Do you think this dream could be a reality?

The Ghana LITE (“Learning Innovation Teams for Education”) introduces new activity-oriented learning materials closely aligned with Ghana’s educational standards and examinations in a bid to make The Dream a reality. LITE coaches will work in classrooms with teachers and students to implement project-oriented learning involving children working in teams with their teacher who coaches them rather than lecturing.

Each LITE school will have its own customized School BeLL (Basic e-Learning Library), a digital repository containing a terabyte of open educational resources (OER) that can be revised to meet local conditions and either printed or projected for use in the classroom.

Schools will be encouraged not only to access the high quality content of the School BeLL but to create and publish their own content, including a weekly community newspaper. One key feature of Ghana LITE is the use of inexpensive HD video cameras for teachers and students to film themselves as they learn these new approaches to learning and to compare their work with models contained in the School BeLL.

The School BeLL is being developed as an Africa-wide tool for improving the quality of learning throughout the African continent and making The Dream a reality. Anyone interested in participating in this development can sign up at [Africa School BeLL Network](#)