

# ROBONKA UPDATE - DECEMBER 2009

## Rain, Rain, Go Away

The 6 months of rain that began in June are finally coming to a close. The village of Robonka has been working in the rain to clear away the trees and brush from the site where the new school funded by TVCS will be built. The block-making press has been moved to the village and the men are ready to begin making blocks for the new school as soon as the soil dries. We expect Robonka block-making and school construction to begin in December and be completed by the end of May.



## New School Uniforms for Robonka

The uniforms supplied by TVCS have improved morale and given the Robonka school a sense of unity and expectation for the good things to come with their new school. Thank you TVCS!

## Textbooks

This year, students have been using textbooks purchased by TVCS. For most students, this is the first time they have used textbooks!

## Teacher & Student Training

Our employee, Stephen Gibateh, is helping to train the Robonka teachers in the use of their new textbooks. He is also assisting the 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher to prepare the students for the National Exams in May. Only students who pass the exams are eligible to attend Junior High School.



## Latrines

Before the rains began, TVCS money built two latrines for the school. This was good practice for the villagers in using the block-making press and using the combination of cement and native soils that we believe will produce a weather-tight and inexpensive building. The same methods will be used for the school.

## School Fees

December is a time when many kids drop out of school. To help keep kids in school, TVCS money will be used to pay school fees for some who cannot afford fees for the next school term (which begins in January) and for some students who have done particularly well in classes. Also, TVCS will supply scholarships to help some of Robonka's 6<sup>th</sup> graders attend Junior High next year.

## School Supplies

Robonka is using school supplies sent from Boise last February for this school year. Supplies sent by St. Mark's Vacation Bible Class will arrive in December. TVCS money will be used to buy supplies for the next school year – the first year in the new school.

## Hot Lunch Program

The Roman Catholic Church in Sierra Leone has approved funding for a lunch program for Robonka. This is great news for the students of Robonka! TVCS money may be used to help the program get started.



## Projects Still to Come

Drilling the water well will begin around April when the village workers have completed most of the school construction. April is also the best time to drill because it is near the end of the dry season when ground water is at its lowest. In addition to the well, TVCS money will also be used to start an emergency medical fund, to hold immunization and health care clinics in the village, and to teach health and hygiene classes to adults and children.

## Upcoming Visit

In early January, Jon Bart, President of Village Hope, will be returning to Sierra Leone. He will be very busy working on projects in Robonka and our other 5 villages! He is working on loan programs for small businesses, agriculture improvement, education, and construction projects in each of the villages.