

Report of the Global PeaceMakers Program in Cote d'Ivoire  
Blanfla, July 11 – 26, 2009

Service For Peace Africa Region organized its first international GPM in Cote d'Ivoire from July 11 to 26. It was a wonderful and amazing experience for 24 volunteers from United States, Europe, Ghana, Benin to join local participants in Cote d'Ivoire to address the needs of the locality of Blanfla. Blanfla is a small village of 5000 people, it's 15 km from the city of Bouafle and almost 300 km from the capital of Abidjan. There, the children are in a real need of a positive education atmosphere. The actual main building of six (6) classrooms cannot contain all of them. The current class size is 80 kids in a small classroom of 20 m<sup>2</sup>. There is no toilet, water and electricity in the school. The kids use the bush as toilet which is dangerous for them because they can be bitten by snakes. When it's raining or it's too hot, they have to go home. Because of the lack of facilities and a good education atmosphere, a lot of kids prefer to work in the farms rather than go to school. The poverty is highly seen. In the entire village, there is only one nurse and the community health care center is not provided in medicine. Even 80% of the houses don't have toilet. It is in that kind of locality SFP decided for a 1 year period to face a new challenge to make difference in people life. For 7 days, the volunteers worked side by side with the community members to build a canteen and toilets for the kids of the primary school. During their stay, the volunteers learnt from community culture and shared their own with them. The schedule was reflection early in the morning, service work from 9AM to 1PM, education in afternoon. It was a combined of leadership training and service learning. Sightseeing and cultural exchange were part of the program. The Community as well as the President of the General Council, the local Governor and the Mayor of the city of Bouafle was highly supportive throughout their contribution. The participants returned back to their countries with the commitment to promote the project, recruit volunteers for the next steps and continue the service in their communities. On July 24, a conference was held in Abidjan on the Topic: "Volunteers for Global Peace initiatives through service" More than 100 youth leaders, corporations, International organizations such as UNV, Unicef, Rotaract, and local NGOs attended. Some organizations promised to support the Blanfla project and the NGOs decided to send participants as volunteers to the project site. One of the speakers, Georgina Hernandez from US invited participants to love and serve their nation as Americans do. Philbert Seka, SFP Regional Director called the participants to join the National Volunteers Corps created by Service For Peace and 2 others local NGOs. The National TV covered the event and 3 Newspapers reported it. The GPM this summer was the kick-off event for a series of activities aiming to build by a Community of Peace, one in which the spirit of service and cooperation prevails. The service and leadership training project are the initial phase of developing a community model school. Services will expand to all community members for education programs, such as literacy and entrepreneurship from September 2009 to June 2010. The GPM next year in end of June 2010 will be to celebrate the work that will done.

*Philbert Seka  
Africa Regional Director  
Service For Peace*