



## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CAPE MOUNTAINIANS IN THE AMERICAS, INC.

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*Abraham G. Massaley-National President*  
*Dr. H. Momo Fahnbulleh-Vice President*  
*Abu Zoeduah- Secretary General*  
*Jebbeh Jangaba-National Treasurer*

June 4, 2008

Attention:

Superintendent Catherine Watson-Khasu  
Senator Abel M. Massaley  
Senator James K. Momoh  
Representative Matthew V. Z. Darblo  
Representative James A. Benson  
Representative Mohammed A. Ware  
Minister Eugene Shannon, Lands, Mines and Energy  
Commissioner Philip Quaye, Porkpa District

Dear Leaders and Fellow Stakeholders,

The purpose of this letter is to solicit your help, support, and commitment to complete the bridge over the Konjah Creek, which will remain for years to come, a monument to the self-initiated efforts of the people of Grand Cape Mount County. The National Association of Cape Mountainians in the Americas (NACA, Inc.) took a bold step in February 2008 to kick off the construction of a bridge over the Konjah Creek in Porkpa District, which is an item on the county infrastructure assessment list. We were inspired to undertake this project following a visit of our Reconstruction Chairman to the Konjah area in January 2006 during which, the residents appealed for assistance to build a bridge over the creek. The stories of the people residing on the other side of the creek, recounting how they are cut off from the rest of the country especially during the peak of the rainy season, thereby resulting to scarcity of basic items such as food and medicine or unnecessarily exorbitant prices of these essential commodities where available, as well as the absence of basic health care, motivated us to something.

Progress to date is attributed to the hard work, generosity, and commitment of a number of people and organizations that have caught a hold of the vision of what is possible when citizens unite to overcome major challenges. Over \$US60,000.00 has been expended on this project, including \$US30,000.00 donated by Green Pastures, headed by Mr. Simon Taylor. The cost of local materials including sand and crushed rock, as well as labor and equipment rental is not included. We are thankful to other companies operating in the county for their technical assistance. The contribution of labor by the residents of the area is outstanding and the completion of the bridge will serve as a tribute to their hard work and sacrifice.

We are enormously grateful to Superintendent Catherine Khasu and the entire county administration for the technical guidance and support, Senator James Momo, for championing this project, the engineering team as well as our very capable field coordinator, Abass Kamara who also serves on the board of the Cape Mount Development Foundation (NACA's implementation arm in Liberia, a Liberian registered NGO). Mr. Kamara is the Project Manager for the Konjah project, and we truly attest to his competence and trustworthiness. We are certain that anyone visiting the project site will fully appreciate the level of work that has been done and will be inspired by the determination of the volunteers to help complete this project in July 2008, as scheduled. We are satisfied with the photographs we continue to see from the construction site, capturing the work being done.

No doubt, this project has been a major challenge to NACA and to all those who are devoting their time, labor and effort to its completion. However, everyone has remained equally determined to overcome the challenges as they surface. The cost of the project has far exceeded the initial estimate. While the local residents have continued to volunteer since February, we believe that they have gone beyond what was expected of them, and it is only fair to provide some minimum compensation so that they too can attend to their basic needs as they volunteer on the Konjah bridge project.

While NACA will continue to solicit support from our base here in the United States, we offer the following recommendations to you as leaders from and of the county to help generate the equivalent of \$20, 000 (US) in funds and materials to complete this project.

1. Secure from President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf a conditional lifting of ban on scrap metal retrieval and sale for the purpose of funding the completion of the bridge project. The project manager has informed us that some piles of scrap metal have already been identified which are enough to generate the needed funds.
2. Request and secure cash or material donations from companies operating in the county, especially those companies that will significantly benefit from the construction of this bridge.
3. Seek assistance from President Sirleaf by contributing resources of the national government as a way of encouraging these kinds of citizens' development initiatives.
4. Secure a long term commitment from companies exploiting resources in the county to support development projects.
5. Invite President Sirleaf to the official opening ceremony of the bridge

The attached report captures the spirit and progress of the Konjah Bridge initiative. NACA, in partnership with Strongheart Fellowship (a US based non-profit organization), the Mano River Association in the US, and Green Pastures (a company operating in Cape Mount) have committed over \$60,000 (US) in getting the project through phase 1 and phase 2. To complete the bridge, an additional \$20,000 (US) is estimated to cover manpower compensation, additional materials and food.

Phase	Description	Status/ Amount
1	Engineering design, Site clearing, construction of abutments, transportation of sand, crushed rocks, cement, tools, etc. to site	Completed/Paid
2	Construction of mid-span pillars (2 of 4 completed)	In progress/Paid
3	Bridge floor, final inspections (materials)	Partially paid for/\$7,000 remaining to purchase 600 bags of cement for final phase
	Compensation (to supplement tremendous volunteer efforts)	\$6,500
	Professional service	Partially paid for/\$3, 500.00 remaining
	Additional Food	\$1,500.00
	Transportation of materials to the site (truck rental)	\$1,500.00

The success of this major undertaking depends on all of us as Cape Mountainians and the pride of such accomplishment will be enough to fill all of our hearts. In partnership, possibilities are unlimited.

Respectfully yours,



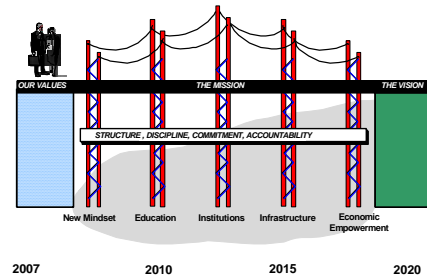
Abraham G. Massaley  
National President, NACA, Inc.



Willie A. Givens, Jr.  
Chair, NACA Reconstruction Committee

Attachment - 1: Konjah Bridge Project Overview

# THE KONJAH BRIDGE INITIATIVE OVERVIEW



## Background

The return of peace to Liberia after 14 years of civil war has encouraged thousands of Liberians to go back to their towns and villages. These people have returned from refugee camps in neighboring countries and some were internally displaced. They have gone back determined to pick up the pieces and to rebuild their shattered lives. Some of those towns and villages were significantly destroyed while others were completely burned down.

The Mano River community in Grand Cape Mount County was one of those areas of the country that was significantly destroyed. But in the last three years, more than 10,000 inhabitants have gone back and have resumed farming which is their main occupation. They have also begun the painful process of rebuilding. However, they are faced with a complex problem. The community is completely disconnected from the rest of the country. The only road leading to that area is inaccessible to motor vehicles because of the Konjah creek which now divides the highway. During a visit to the area last January by the chairman of the Reconstruction Committee of the National Association of Cape Mountainians in the Americas (NACA), the area residents and citizens appealed to NACA for help in constructing a bridge over the Konjah creek. The local representatives of citizens of the Mano River region told our NACA representative that they desperately need the bridge so that essential commodities and relief assistance can reach them.



A follow up meeting was held on April 28, 2007 between the citizens and two representatives of the Cape Mount Development Foundation which is the implementing agency for NACA projects in Liberia. The meeting convened in Kongo Town, Mano River. Approximately thirty-five town chiefs, elders, women and youth leaders from the various towns and villages in the area attended. The meeting was convened to establish a steering committee that will coordinate the participation of the citizens in the bridge project and to identify local resources. The Chair of the Council of Elders, Mr. Jemgbe Seitua was selected to chair the committee. Elder Seitua said constructing the bridge will be like giving birth to a child after a prolonged labor pain.



While NACA decided to champion this initiative, our intent is to engage the government at the national and county level to ensure maximum cooperation and compliance with all standards and codes.

## Work Plan Overview

1. NACA established a Konjah project implementation team (including government/county administration advisors).
2. Develop bridge blueprint and review with county engineering expert.
3. Outline materials inventory and project management process
4. Technical personnel to develop plan for stage-wise construction to insure structural soundness, durability, and maximum utility according to funding, material, and environmental constraints.
5. Bridge life expectancy, maintenance, policing (i.e. ensuring capacity is not exceeded), and other aspects of this endeavor will be determined and communicated to stakeholders as part of the entire management process.

## The Challenge

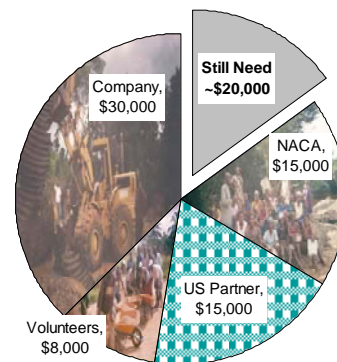


## Progress and Current Status

**In short, the Konjah Bridge Project is on course!**

This project has been a tremendous challenge. The first engineer grossly underestimated the project cost and the level of work that was required. From reports we have received from the new engineer that stepped in, this project is estimated at >\$80,000.

Konjah Bridge Project (>\$80,000 Cost)



The cost of equipment and truck rental alone is over \$10,000.00. The cost of materials including cement, steel rod, and timber is about \$60,000.00. In February when this project was launched, the cost of a bag of cement in Monrovia was about \$9.00. We have received reports that the price of cement has gone up to \$12.50 per bag and continues to increase. The estimate is about 2,700 bags to complete the project. The labor has been provided by local volunteers. Otherwise, it would be another significant expense.



However, we have been fortunate to receive the support and contributions that are coming in for this bridge project. A \$30,000.00 pledge by a company in Liberia called Green Pastures was deposited into the account of the Cape Mount Development Foundation, our implementing arm in Liberia. Another company operating in the area is providing the front end loader you will see in the photo below, a welding machine and other equipment.

Another company has provided trucks to transport the sand and crushed rock to the construction site. Of course, the local women have been digging sand and gathering it near the river for trucking to the site. The men have been gathering the crushed rock from the Mano Mines. We are not paying for the crushed rock. A company once operated an iron ore company up the Mano mines which is now shut down. We also needed water pump, steel benders and steel cutters. All of these have been obtained.



It would not have been possible to construct the bridge without the heavy equipment. The digging of the abutments and the removal of curvets were going extremely slow because it was manual. After two weeks of very little progress, Abass Kamara and Senator Momo requested assistance from a local company. That company responded positively.



It took over a week to cut the curvets in pieces for removal by the heavy machine. At one point, the welding machine that was doing the cutting developed problem, which took a few days to repair. But the locals, the company, Abass and others were determined to clear the area so that actual construction could start.

In the May-June 2008 timeframe, we hope to proceed with the final phase which is constructing the bridge itself. The engineer said that once the abutments and pillars are complete, there will be no problem to complete this work even when it begins to rain. Mr. Sherman was the engineer that worked on the Lofa Bridge over the Lofa River on the Tahn Highway in Gola Konneh. That is currently the second largest bridge in Cape Mount. He has constructed several bridges in Cape Mount. Therefore, he has pretty good experience here. In fact, he has said that once those curvets had been removed, the bridge project will be expedited.

**Moving Forward and Making Progress..... Yes We Can!!!!**

