



PPRC News – Volume 15 – Oct-2020

Greetings from the Padre Pio Rehabilitation Centre (PPRC) in Ahotokurom, Ghana. I hope you are all keeping safe and well? Outlined below is a brief update on our recent progress and how we're surviving the Covid-19 situation.

We are living through challenging times, but God's work for the vulnerable in our society must continue. Our lack of core funding is now even more acute due to the Covid-19 situation.

We've worked hard over the past six years, to become self-sufficient and eco-friendly. We have focused on helping our clients to become more independent, and we've had many successes. An excellent example of this are the many young adults from St Elizabeth's who've started successful livelihood projects. We hope and plan to do more livelihood projects and to continue to reduce the dependency culture. This doesn't come easy and it challenges many people's expectations.

We are very aware that we could not continue without the generous support of our international donors. This is much appreciated, and we will continue to strive to meet your expectations.

Our mission is to achieve the best possible outcomes for each of our clients, within the

constraints of the resources available, both financial and human. It is vital for us to find new funding sources and new ways to reduce expenses, to avoid over-reliance on our existing supporters.

We remain most grateful to all of our many friends for your loyalty, friendship, and support for the most vulnerable people in our society.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Mark Mantey, CEO





COVID-19 Impacts:

Ghana continues to experience low hospitalisations, low death-rates, and declining cases; but we can't afford to underestimate this pandemic or relax our 'Infection Prevention Measures' – there is too much at stake! We know that we have to stay focussed on these measures to win our fight against the virus.

The virus and especially all the required 'prevention measures' has had a big impact on our lives at the Centre; it has been going on for six months, and it hasn't been easy on our clients and employees.

But, so far so good, fingers crossed, we're surviving, and we're all praying that we'll keep safe and this will soon come to an end. We continue to adhere strictly to social distancing and mandatory wearing of facemasks at all times on the compound and handwashing with soap under running water.

We have strictly limited all travel to and from the Centre: for staff, residents, and especially all visitors to St Clare's.

We had cancelled all public gatherings in Ahoto, including Mass; however, the government recently increased the number of people that can attend church, so Mass is now held at St Elizabeth's, but with stringent infection prevention measures. Sadly, none of the residents at St Clare's are allowed to attend Mass.

We were delighted to receive €14,000 from Misesan Cara for COVID-19 infection-prevention at PPRC. We are working closely with the local Elmina Polyclinic and are supporting them with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Layoffs and Retirement:

Due to COVID-19, we've had to close St Elizabeth's, until it's deemed safe to re-open.

We've had to reduce our workforce due to a shortage of funds for day-to-day operations, and eight members of staff have been temporarily laid off.

We hope to provide once-off payments, to assist those laid-off to set up sustainable livelihood projects, to help them earn a living in the interim.

Three staff are in the process of retiring as they've each completed four years beyond the general retirement/pension age (Bernard, Rose, and Yaa Fobe), and we are hoping to provide them with severance packages, if possible.



Monica T. using a handwashing station





St Clare's Nursing Home:

This has been one of our key focus areas and challenges during the pandemic. There is a high risk of severe illness among our vulnerable residents, and most of them are vulnerable – many of them are over 60, and all, including the young adults, have underlying health conditions

The severe visitor-entry restrictions were a challenge for some of our residents; however, over time, they have accepted them and become used to the idea. Fr Philip has coped well with the situation, even though it was difficult for him when the restrictions were first introduced.

We continue to carefully monitor the daily and weekly status, locally as well as that in Cape Coast, Elmina, and the Central Region. We have to ensure that there is a stock of all necessary medicines and food supplies for the residents and make sure the people eat well to fight coronavirus.



Our Covid-19 Team

St Elizabeth Day Care & Outreach:

During the shutdown, there were times when we were unsure what to do for our special-needs children and young adults, especially when home visitation was initially forbidden.

In recent weeks, we have ramped up our home visits and outreach, and we're looking into innovative ways of staying in touch with the children. We're also supporting the parents at home, especially those who need extra help; we have two outreach teams, each of two employees, regularly visiting families

Feedback from the outreach teams is that: "St Elizabeth day-care children are well looked after by their parents at home" and "the majority of the children are in good health"

However, the parents are also looking forward to the day the children will return to Day Care

St Joseph's Child Care & Outreach

The six children (young adults) remaining at St Joseph's have been home from school for more than six months. In July, the government asked final year Junior High School (JHS) students to return to class to complete their final year's studies.

Four of the children (the Quads), aged 14, just recently completed their Basic Examination Certificate Examinations (BECE), and we hope and pray that their results will be good.

This is a significant milestone for them and for PPRC, as they will soon be moving on to the next stage of their education; they'll be Senior High School (SHS) Boarders by Jan-2021 – depending on their results and the virus situation.





It is important long-term that the Quads should be more closely integrated with their family and community; so, we've started work to prepare them for successful independent living, within the Ghana culture, in their home village. We will need to invest time and effort into this re-integration plan as they have been in residential care in PPRC since soon after their birth.

Almost a year ago, Kojo Gabriel, aged 13, moved from St Joseph's to live with Gladys and Mark in Peace Avenue; he's responding well to care in a family setting; appreciates the importance of boundaries and his social skills are much improved.

The twins, orphans aged 18, will begin their JHS final year in Oct-2020 and, when the Quads move to boarding school, they'll be the last two residents in St Joseph's. Helping the twins move on to independent living will be another important project for us, and we've already engaged professional help in planning for their future.

All of these developments are gradually bringing the residential aspect of St Joseph's to an end; a major milestone for PPRC. After that, our focus will be exclusively on outreach, i.e., supporting children and families within their homes and communities.

The Child Sponsorship Scheme has been a huge help in enabling us to support the education of the children and young adults at the Centre and through outreach.

Rainham Scholarship Scheme:

Due to COVID-19, all government and private schools were shut down; this impacted the Rainham scholarship scheme, in term of candidates having to stay at home, and also cost.



Watermelons grown on our farm this year

Organic Farm – Produce and Protection:

Our farm project has three main aims: a. provide quality organic food for our residents, b. generate income to support this work, c. enclose the area to protect our produce from local animals (mainly goats) and local communities.

Early this year, we received funding from Misen Cara for a project to protect/fence our organic farm.





The farm was quite productive this year, growing lots of corn, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, watermelon, cocoyam, and plantain; we sold lots of coconuts, fresh corn, pumpkins, tomatoes, okra, charcoal, and watermelons (500+).



Ploughing in the Farm

We were disappointed with the rains this year, which were unpredictable, but we continued to improve our farming skills and techniques.



Installing the New Fencing



Corn Growing in the Farm

Our mango plantation will also soon need fencing as we expect the trees to start bearing fruit this year.



Repairing the Boundary Markers





Enyinndakurom Village:

We've continued to work with Enyinndakurom during these challenging times, providing advice and basic PPE, but we're still worried about the possible spread of the virus in the community. Continuous and careful implementation of 'Infection Prevention Measures' is critical, even with decreasing infection-rates nationwide.

With assistance from PPRC, the people have managed to fix the old corn-mill which was donated by Fr Andy Campbell some years ago; we hope this will bring renewed vitality to the community

There is an ongoing discussion about a cooperative 'Car-Wash' venture, and we're looking forward to discussing how we can encourage the community to take more responsibility for themselves, especially the younger generation

We've just completed a village census that shows that the population continues to decline, and we'll share more detail with you soon

Solar Project Sustainability Update:

It's now 18 months since the solar project went live (March-2019); the good news is that the plant is running well, and to-date we've generated more power than we've used – a net gain!

We've generated ~34 MWh and saved ~34 tons of CO₂; (for more details, see Table 1 below), and our estimated total net savings to-date are ~€3,000.

Solar Plant To-Date	Total
Weeks in Operation	80
Months in Operation	18
Units Generated (kWh)	33,780
CO ₂ saved (tons)	34
Savings (GHS)	20,268
Savings (€)	3,025

Table 1. Solar Plant performance to-date

We had a cable flooding issue in Sep/Oct last year, but we've recovered all our losses since then, and the plant has been running well since Dec-2019.

We're planning to install a cable between St. Clare's and St. Joseph's to fix a load imbalance issue; we've already received funding for this work and hope to complete it this year.



Solar Power Plant





Road Maintenance Project:

With funding from the Adjoa Foundation, we recently fixed potholes and resurfaced many of the roadways in the compound. It now looks much better. We also took the opportunity to fix some serious flooding problems with our access road through Kuful village.



Kuful Village Roadway Repairs – Before



Kuful Village Roadway – After



Ahotokurom Road Repairs – Before



Ahotokurom Road Repairs – After





Borehole Project: Our current mains-water supply is expensive, unsafe, and unreliable. We use about 200,000 litres per month (~140L/person/day), and it costs us about GHS13,000 (€2,000) per year. The water is not safe to drink without filtering and is frequently unavailable for multiple hours or days at a time.

Last year (2019) was a particularly bad year. We had multiple day-long outages and we had to endure one period where the supply was totally unavailable for three weeks. This caused us a lot of hardship/disruption and we had to revert to using our existing borehole, which has both capacity and water purity issues. We normally only use the existing borehole for farm irrigation purposes.

With the current Covid-19 situation, where frequent handwashing is required of staff and residents, a safe, reliable water supply is even more important than usual. We've started work on a project to install a new, solar-powered, borehole and water purification system. This will give us independence from the mains supply and have the added benefit of cleaner water (safe to drink) and significantly reduced annual operating costs.

We have secured some funding for this project but are still searching for more funds. The 'Design, Planning & Procurement' phase is underway. The main stages of the project are as outlined in Table 2.

Hostel Project: We are waiting/hoping for better times to help us get the hostel going again, it was going well until COVID-19. We had nursing students using the hostel in March, but with the closure of all public schools, the Nursing Training College was also closed.

#	Project Stage/Phase	Current Status
1	Design, Planning & Procurement	underway
2	Borehole Site Preparation	site selected
3	Fundraising	ongoing
4	Borehole Drilling + Well Casing Installation	pending
5	Solar Plant Capacity Upgrade (16 extra panels)	pending
6	Installation of Pump & Distribution Pipework	pending
7	Installation of Water Purification Plant	pending
8	System Go-Live	pending
9	Ongoing Operation and Maintenance	pending

Table 2. Borehole Project Phases / Status

Donations: Irish Friends of Ahotokurom became a registered charity in Nov-2017 and was recently granted 'Tax Exemption Status' which means that your donations will now go further.

Irish Friends of Ahotokurom - Bank Details	
Bank	Bank of Ireland
Branch Address	University of Limerick
Sort Code (NSC)	90-59-50
Account No.	6638 9119
IBAN No.	IE31 BOFI 9059 5066 3891 19
BIC No.	IE31 BOFI
Registered Charity No.	2014 4869

If you'd like to donate in the UK, please use this link: <https://www.ahoto.org/support>

