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Ashanti News

Can you walk, or sponsor a walker, to help Ashanti? Millie Vincent (age 12) is organising a sponsored walk for us on October 14. Details are in the attached letter and on our website.

A grant of £100,000 a year for two years has been given us by the Fileder Foundation, to be spent on clean water and training in health, hygiene and latrine construction in the Sekyere West District of Ashanti. This follows Ove Arup's offer to lend us a hydrogeologist and a geochemist to recommend how best to provide each of the 220 villages with water. They have already completed their desk research, and will make a site visit later this month.

Fileder's amazingly generous grant and Ove Arup's help and enthusiasm should transform the lives of thousands of people. Clean water is a prerequisite for development but, because of the nature of the terrain, we could see no reasonable way to provide it to most of Sekyere West's villages. As it is, a major obstacle has been removed.

The drought in Ghana continues, wreaking havoc both with the water supplies of the whole area and with our budgets. We are very grateful to John Humphrys and his Kitchen Table Charities Trust for giving us £6,000 when the rising cost of cement - an indirect consequence of drought - halted work on the clinic/hostel at Gyetiase. We are also grateful for his forbearance when, for the same reason, we were unable to finance one latrine per household as we had planned to do with an earlier KTCT grant; and to the Fileder Foundation for kindly providing us with another grant to finish the job.

Meanwhile, David Williamson will go to Ghana in November to see if he can spend some of the Fileder grant to stabilise the local mains water supply.

Clinic/Hostel

The **clinic/hostel** mentioned above, is now finished. It has room for 32 beds and if necessary we can construct a second floor on top later. We will use it to train health workers for nearby villages (local people don't have enough education to qualify for government training schemes), to distribute anti-retroviral drugs, for general health care and to house the volunteer medical staff and schoolteachers we send out from time to time. We are still hoping to persuade the Ghanaian health authorities to provide us with a state registered nurse.

We initially paid local labour to do the unskilled building work, as we wanted to put money into the local economy. However halfway through the chief and elders decided that since the clinic was for the village, the villagers should do the work free of charge. In June, when building was in full swing, they arranged for up to two hundred volunteers a day to work on the site and the job was finished when seemed to have hardly begun.

Dr Claire Walford, who became a trustee last November, then persuaded UCLH to let us have second-hand medical equipment for the clinic from the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital, which is due to close within the next 12-18 months. We are extremely grateful to UCLH for this.

More Health Issues

Patients identified by Dr Ashkan Khalili, another new trustee, will soon be able to obtain **cataract operations** for only £15, thanks to a brilliant arrangement he has set up with

Agogo Hospital, Ashanti Region. The Hospital will operate on patients he refers provided they are registered under the Ghanaian National Health system, and SpecSavers is appealing to its 142 London branches for donations towards the registration fee. Meanwhile, VisionAid has given us 600 pairs of graded secondhand spectacles.

Five sufferers from severe **musculo-skeletal pain** were examined in June by Flick Feeny, a physiotherapist and specialist in development. They were Ashanti women living in London who had spent their early lives carrying water on their heads. One in particular was in severe pain most of the time, and was incontinent.

Unfortunately, Flick found that each patient needed different treatment as each had adapted to weight-carrying in a different way. We've been unable to track down any information about this condition and don't know how best to treat multiple patients, and so are publicising Flick's findings on a website used by medical professionals in the developing world.

Other Projects



- Pupils of Rhyll Primary School in Camden have made an enormous collection of secondhand schoolbooks for Gyetiase primary school and one of the teachers plans to spend her summer holidays next year teaching in Gyetiase.
- The Development Planning Unit of University College London is continuing its study of the Ashanti Region and culture, and advises us on particular problems as they arise. Some of the MSc students hope to visit Ashanti in November.
- We hope we have persuaded Jennifer and Isebail, two microcredit specialists, to spend time in Gyetiase Village early next year, setting up a microcredit scheme to lend small sums to women borrowers.
- Because of budget problems described above, we've made no progress with organising work on the 100 acres of new land given us by the Chief of Tadiesa Village. But later this month we will arrange for the land to be cleared and the villagers to start farming.
- Every household in Gyetiase now has its own latrine.

Patsy Hickman bravely commissioned this life-size sculpture of an Ashanti woman (left) from our woodcarving school in Gyetiase. The photo doesn't do it justice and she says she's very pleased with it.



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Donations

If you'd like to make a donation, please make your cheque payable to 'Ashanti Development' and return it to 21 Downing Court, Grenville Street, London WC1N 1LX. We'll be happy to send you a Standing Order form.

Please 'Gift Aid' your donation if you can, by filling in and returning the following form. Provided you pay at least as much Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax as the tax we reclaim on your donations in the appropriate tax year, we can then reclaim 28p in each £1 you donate

Gift Aid Declaration

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I want Ashanti Development to treat my donations as Gift Aid donations until I notify otherwise. This applies to all donations I have made since 6 April 2000 and those I make from now on.

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