



PPRC Newsletter
Volume 21 – August 2023

Dear Friends,
Greetings from the Padre Pio Rehabilitation Centre (PPRC) in Elmina, Ghana. I hope this newsletter finds you well. We are pleased to update you on recent events in PPRC. Managing the emotions, grief and practicalities associated with the exit of the DMJ sisters from PPRC on 30th June was challenging, but an orderly transition was achieved.

During these difficult times, we must stay focused on achieving the best possible outcomes for each of our 100+ disadvantaged and vulnerable clients within the constraints of our available resources. We aim to provide them with ongoing sustainable growth and development opportunities to help them find their independence and become their best.

As part of our succession planning, we are building a solid team of young, dynamic professionals to continue providing quality social care services to our clients. We are blessed with the presence of our five competent and committed graduates who have been part of the team for the past two years through their internship and National Service. They are now an integral part of our workforce plans.

The next batch of National Service personnel is due to arrive in October, which will help ensure we have an adequate workforce pipeline.

We continue to strive to meet the expectations and standards of our international sponsors in everything we do, especially in client protection and financial reporting.

We are working hard to ensure the long-term sustainability of PPRC and are focused on being eco-friendly and more self-sufficient regarding income and the resources we consume.

We are grateful to His Grace Archbishop Charles G. Palmer-Buckle for his support and assurance that he is committed to PPRC and sees it as an integral part of the Archdiocese of Cape Coast. We feel supported and remain grateful.

On behalf of PPRC, I want to express our appreciation for the many people who have supported us in these difficult times: all our friends in the UK, Ireland, globally and locally. Without you, we could not continue the work we do.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Mark Mantey, CEO



Greetings from the PPRC Team





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2023, it was 37.7%. Ghana is restructuring its debt as a condition for receiving an IMF bailout. The Ghana Cedi has fallen by ~50% against major currencies, and the price of motor fuel has trebled in the past 18 months. The only good news is that foreign donations now go further than before. Any contributions or fundraising would be greatly appreciated.



Fire Tree in Bloom, Ahotokurom

2. Friends and Supporters

Our friends in the UK and Ireland have recently assured us of their continuing support through these turbulent times. We thank them and all our friends for their support and generosity. We are blessed with donations in cash and in-kind, and we carefully manage all contributions to ensure they are used solely for their intended purpose.

We have no words to express ourselves other than to say thank you 'ye da mo ase'. Remember, without your support, we could not help the most vulnerable in our society.

1. Ghana’s Financial Crisis

Ghana is grappling with its worst economic crisis in a generation. The average inflation rate in the second half of 2022 was 41.3%, and for the first half of





As always, money is tight, and we strive to identify new funding sources. We'd be happy to hear from anyone who could assist us. If you can tell us about the funding application process, we'd gladly follow it. Also, please see our donations and sponsorship section below.

We pray for God's strength and the spirit of collaboration, healing, and oneness. We often use the serenity prayer: God grant us the strength to change the things that can be changed, the patience to accept the things that cannot be changed, and the wisdom to know the difference.

3. Fiona Grace Fundraiser

Fiona was a co-op student in PPRC in 2011. In August 2022, Fiona and her brother Ryan climbed the three highest mountains in Ireland in 24 hours to raise funds for PPRC. The total raised to date is almost €4,000. We are super impressed with Fiona's energy and generosity.



Fiona Grace in Ghana

4. DMJ Sisters

The sad moment arrived on June 30th, when, after more than four decades of tremendous dedication and commitment to vulnerable and disadvantaged people, Sr. Monica and Sr. Pat said goodbye to PPRC. We are blessed that the DMJ sisters have supported and improved so many

lives over the years, and we are confident that the benefits of their efforts will continue to yield good results. We will work hard to maintain the DMJ charism and continue caring for the people 'for whom society says there is no place'. We are sorry to see them go and wish them well in their future ministries.

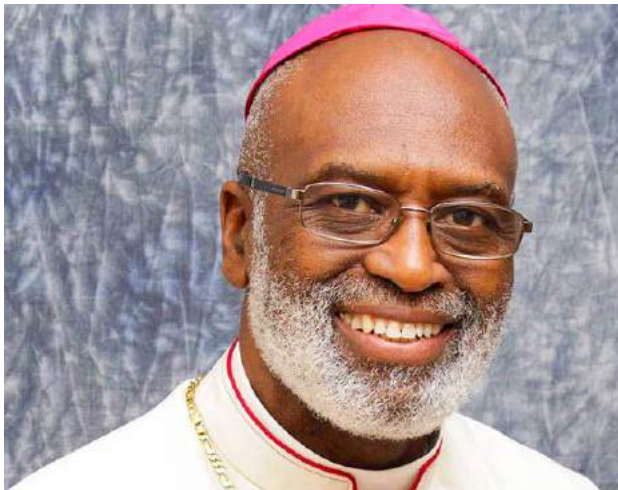


DMJ Sisters Planting Coconut Tree

5. Archbishop Palmer-Buckle

Archbishop Charles G. Palmer-Buckle has told us he is very committed to sustaining and supporting PPRC and sees it as a vital part of the Archdiocese. He sees PPRC as a complex ministry, including Leprosy, Special Needs, Mental Health, and Prisoner Rehabilitation. He stressed the importance of 'Institutional Memory' and an orderly transition as the DMJ sisters leave in June. He is exploring different options for involving another order in PPRC. He has asked Fr Daniel Neyoh, Director of the Archdiocese Health Service, to reside in Ahoto as a spiritual support for PPRC and as a representative of the Archdiocese. He approves and supports PPRC's eco-friendly approach as compatible with Pope Francis's Laudato Si' Action Platform, a "seven-year journey" to help communities become "fully sustainable, in the spirit of integral ecology".





Archbishop Palmer-Buckle

We reassured the Archbishop that we are working through a detailed transition and succession plan, and we agreed to keep him updated on the Friends of Ahotokurom UK funding situation.

6. St. Elizabeth's

Rashida Rabiou was recently appointed as the acting manager, with Portia Afi as the assistant manager of St. Elizabeth's.



Portia – St. Elizabeth's

They are both recent graduates of the University of Education, Winneba. They are settling into their roles and working extremely hard. A daily payment plan has

been introduced to encourage the families to contribute towards running costs.

Plans are underway to replace part of St. Elizabeth's roof because of leaks. We've spent GHS 27,000 on new roofing sheets, and work will start soon. Our staff and clients are looking forward to fewer leaks during heavy downpours.

The playground is being repaired as it was in bad shape. The swings have been replaced, and a new tennis court will be built, making our play therapy more convenient and improving our clients' mental health in the long run. The toilets, cisterns and sinks have been repaired, enhancing our clients' access. A new biodigester has been installed as the old one had blockages and leaks and no longer worked as it should.



Rashida – St. Elizabeth's

As part of our ongoing vocational training project, we are constantly looking for opportunities for our special needs clients to acquire skills to promote their independence and improve their quality of life. Baking has been identified as a vital self-dependency skill as it has the potential to be a good source of income for our clients and their families.





We are seeking financial support to start this project; a medium-sized baking oven and related equipment are among the essential items required.



Greetings from St. Elizabeth's

7. Sheltered Work Program (SWP)

There has been a significant improvement in the skills of the young adults in our Special Needs SWP. They've become more reliable and are mature enough to manage themselves mostly. Their ability to independently complete their tasks is excellent. They've recently been helping on the farm and painting at St. Clare's and St. Elizabeth's. There is an opportunity for Mohammed to gain full-time employment with a poultry farmer at Koful, and we are excited about this. We regularly contact potential employers to find full- or part-time roles for our other clients. Isaac Arthur is doing a great job with the young adults, and he's now responsible for the maintenance of the entire campus.

8. Livelihood Program (LP)

The primary focus of our LP is to develop and support sustainable livelihood projects for leprosy survivors and young adults who graduate from St. Elizabeth's. Our management team held a day-long workshop in Aphoto to objectively review and document progress for the first four projects initiated over the past eight years and identify lessons learned and

opportunities for improvement. The overall progress of the first two projects is very encouraging. Both are at the sustainable stage; the owners are managing well and benefitting from their projects during these challenging times. Gloria's project has allowed her to live her own independent life. She told us: 'I am managing my affairs, my life, and I don't depend on my mother anymore'. Ama told us that her business is worth three times the original investment. The progress of the other two projects is less encouraging, but there is still potential for improvement. The critical lesson learned is that projects that received ongoing family support were successful, while those that didn't were not. This review will help us improve current and future projects. All agreed that the review was worthwhile, and we are committed to doing similar future reviews.



Livelihood Program Review Meeting

9. St. Clare's

We have 17 clients; some have been doing vocational training, producing beadwork items such as bracelets, belts, and bags to give them income. We are delighted with the team spirit and work ethic among the staff. Sandra Amoakoa is the acting manager, supported by Emelia Asmah.





One wing of St. Clare’s has been renovated with funding from the Irish Embassy in Abuja.

Plans are underway for an excellent collaboration with Elmina Polyclinic (EPC), whereby medical team specialists will visit our residents every two weeks. EPC sees St. Clare’s as an annex to their health care delivery system. This arrangement will facilitate medication refills for clients with chronic conditions, strengthen our efforts to provide good medical care for our residents and help reduce our medical expenses.

Sadly, one of our residents, Mr Jonas Darkwa, recently passed away after a short illness. May his soul rest in peace.

clients live with their families. This will give much better outcomes for much less investment when compared with the residential system.



Papa Asare at St. Clare’s



EPC Visit to St. Clare’s

11. Kojo Gabriel

We recently visited Kojo and his family in their village. He has settled into school, living with his grandparents, and is doing well. We are building a one-room extension with a veranda to improve his family’s housing. The DMJ Sisters got funding for the project from the Justice & Peace and Cathedral & St. Clare’s groups, in Middlesbrough Diocese, UK.

10. St. Joseph’s Outreach

We are supporting 26 clients through our outreach services: 19 children directly and seven older adults living independently. Our top priority clients are leprosy-related families, vulnerable families trying to stay together, and disadvantaged single-parent families. We strive to achieve the best possible outcome for each client within the constraints of our available resources. The critical difference between our outreach services and our former residential approach is that now, our



Kojo’s Home / Village





Visit to Kojo's Village



Student Volunteers Painting Twins' House



Work in Progress - Kojo's Family Home

12. The Twins

We had a small ceremony in Asikuma to present the twins with the keys to their new house. The ceremony was attended by PPRC Staff, DMJ Sisters, Fr Daniel, Fr Hayford, the local Parish Priest, and some community elders. The twins are now leading independent lives in keeping with PPRC's policy.

13. The Quads

The Quads have started their final Senior High School (SHS) exams. We're hoping and praying that they get good results.

14. Enyinndakurom

PPRC staff have been doing house-to-house visits with the families in Enyinndakurom. The team believes this



Twins' New House – Handover Ceremony

approach will help them quickly get to know the families and their situations. We will soon have some of our team members living among the people to enable us to provide well-informed and appropriate support services. Our team concluded their recent visit by providing forty food parcels for the residents, who





were also pleased about the visit and the food parcels during these very challenging times. The people expressed gratitude and joy at meeting the young team and assured them of their continued support. We all agree that the livelihood of our people needs to improve.

interested in joining us for their National Service (NS).

Our five current NS employees recently graduated from their degree courses at Winneba University. This was a proud day for everyone. They've been taking on lots of responsibilities and producing great results. We are so blessed to have these young people with us, and we'd have struggled recently without their help.



Enyinnda Outreach Visit



Sod Cutting Ceremony, Enyinnda

A sod-cutting ceremony marked the beginning of an income-generating project with store rental and accommodation. The primary objective is to assist PPRC in generating income to work towards long-term independence from donor funding. The project will also help stop the encroachment of land at Enyinndakurom. We have £20,000 from the Hayward Legacy, and we need to secure special funding through a capital budget proposal to undertake this project.



Interns & National Service (NS) Staff

15. Staff & Teamwork

We said goodbye to a recent batch of Winneba interns (Bernard, Araba, Mavis, Kate, Clinton, and Jephthah). They worked hard while in PPRC, and we are very grateful for their efforts. We recently met with a new batch of Winneba students

Our staff are focused on teamwork and mutual respect for everyone involved. Our mantra is 'We are a Team!' as outlined on the T-shirt recently produced to celebrate this; see photo below.





PPRC Staff T-Shirt

Our current NS personnel will officially complete their service in October, and we plan to hire some of them afterwards. The next six NS postings to PPRC will be in September 2023, significantly boosting our workforce. We are gradually building up a pool of professional staff. This will help us develop a robust and sustainable succession plan for the centre. Dr Mantey was presented with an award by the School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Cape Coast (UCC), for his support of mental health clinical education.



UCC Mental Health Award

Recently, six PPRC staff members passed their driving test and were given their driving licences.



PPRC Staff – New Driving Licences



New Winneba Students



New Winneba Students – Introductions



Five NS/PPRC Winneba Graduates

We welcomed 22 USA students and faculty members in June. The purpose of their visit was to provide them with international service-learning and authentic cultural immersion experiences by interacting with staff and clients at PPRC.



Service-Learning - USA Visitors



Graduation Day Winneba

16. Visitors

In Jan 2023, we started keeping a log of all PPRC visitors to record donations and contact details. To date, 105 people visited PPRC in 2023, comprised of individuals, groups, and students.

The Right Rev Robert Christopher Wright, Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta, USA, and some of his parishioners visited us in Ahoto in May and made a most generous donation towards our daily running costs. They supported us with PPE during the COVID crisis and were in the area as part of their partnership with the Anglican Church in Cape Coast and Elmina. We were surprised and delighted with their visit and their generosity. Such visits are treasured.



Cultural Immersion - USA Visitors

They stayed three weeks, did painting and games at St. Clare's and did artwork, music, and dance at St. Elizabeth's. We look forward to strengthening this relationship.

We hosted four student nurses from the Mental Health Unit, University of Cape Coast, for three weeks of clinical experience. They had a lot to offer and did a great job. They joined our outreach team to visit our clients; they dressed wounds, ironed clothes, and did artwork at St. Elizabeth's.





Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta Visit

17. Organic Farm

Our farm is organic and eco-friendly, and even though the rains were a little delayed, the local KEEA agricultural experts have assured us that there will be enough rain this season. Through the combined efforts of our farmers, the rehab prisoners, Fr. Philip Addo and our dedicated and committed National Service personnel, we cleared the old palm plantation.



Joe Supervising the Clearance

Then, we planted coconuts, maize, peppers, tomatoes, cassava, oranges, and okra. These crops are doing well, and we will soon have a healthy and bountiful harvest. We also made a big batch of charcoal using wood from our campus. This all helps us to move towards sustainability.



Isaac-Arthur, Eric & Stephen – Farming

18. Eco-Friendly Campus

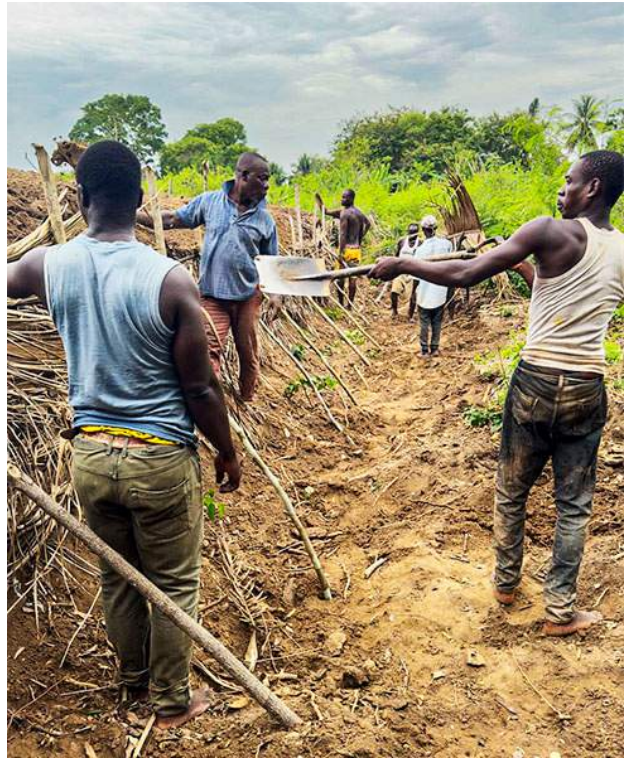
Our campus is looking beautiful with the blessings of the rain. The trees are blossoming, and we are committed to providing a conducive environment for our clients. Our policy is that our entire campus will be a showcase for eco-friendly and organic practices. This means that we must consistently apply a comprehensive set of cultural, biological, eco-friendly, and organic methods that support the natural cycling of on-campus resources, promote ecological balance and conserve biodiversity.

We must also prohibit all non-organic inputs, including synthetic chemicals such as pesticides and fertilisers, sewage sludge, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and non-organic seeds or seedlings.





Joe with Coconut Seedlings



Preparing the Charcoal Pile



Planting Coconuts



Charcoal Pile Smoldering

We recently took measures to reduce the use of plastic bags throughout the campus. Our access roads are deplorable due to the recent heavy rains and have become mostly pools and potholes. We urgently need to do something about this.



Charcoal – Ready for Sale

strong. We have generated >79,000 units (KWh), and our electricity costs are down >90%.

21. Donations & Sponsorship

In our mission, there are always more deserving cases than funds available. We continuously search for new funding sources to avoid over-reliance on our existing generous donors.

If you'd like to donate in the UK, please use this link:

<https://www.ahoto.org/support>.



Local Roads

For other donations, please use the Irish Friends of Ahotokurom (IFoA) account details, as outlined below. IFoA is a registered charity with 'Tax Exemption Status,' which means your donations go even further.

We also have a list of projects that donors can sponsor. If you're interested, please email infoahotokurom@gmail.com for the latest version of the list.

Irish Friends of Ahotokurom (IFoA) - 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

19. Water / Borehole

We are making steady progress with our sustainable water project. We are working on water filtration and purification, the last stage of the project. Once completed, we expect a significant decrease in our water bills.

20. Solar

Our solar project is a good example of a low carbon footprint and passed its fourth anniversary since 'go-live' in March 2019. We're happy to report that it's still going



22. Fr Robert Hagan

On 16 July, Fr. Robert Hagan, a long-time PPRC Board of Advisors member, celebrated his 40th anniversary. We were happy to attend his Thanksgiving mass. However, it was with great sadness that we learned of Fr. Hagan's death on 24 Aug. He was a loyal friend of PPRC and will be sorely missed. May he rest in peace.



Fr. Hagan 40th Anniversary Mass



Fr Hagan with PPRC Staff