

Ashanti Development's first full year of operation as a registered charity was 2006. So many people have contributed to the project in so many ways since then that the organisation has grown faster than we ever dreamed.

Ashanti Development and the people in the villages are eternally grateful for all the help that volunteers, donors, friends and supporters give us. This article aims to provide a round-up of our achievements – and some of our failures too.

Water

Our mission statement is to relieve poverty and promote health and development in and around the Ashanti Region of Ghana by means including the provision of safe and accessible water. So, what have we done by way of water provision?

Right

Drill rig – Praying the borehole will be successful.



Certainly not as well as we'd hoped. We discovered early on that the geological structure was laterite, making borehole drilling difficult. In those days, an average of two in five drillings was successful, but with the help of hydrogeologists like Simon and Vicky, this was improved to four out of five, though with the cost of a drilling at a minimum of £5,000, successful boreholes are still only affordable with the help of big grants.

All in all, we're responsible for clean water in fourteen villages, including successful boreholes at Dida, Abonkuso, Nsuasi and Nkwabrim (Nprim). Later this year, we hope to raise a large grant for a new round of drillings and meanwhile have added gutters, fall-pipes and tanks for rainwater harvesting to many public buildings.

We are also trialling a system of household water filters to be used in villages where at present the only option is dirty river water. Eight families in Dadease are involved. All are said to be doing well, so this may be the best route to go down.

Our latest, best achievement – thanks to a very generous donor - is to have finally provided Gyetiase village with clean water from a borehole at Tadiesa.

Sanitation

We're taking sanitation to include:

- a Baseline Survey, since without it there's no way of telling how many latrines a village needs;
- training and supervising the construction of household latrines;
- training the whole community in health and hygiene;
- strengthening community institutions, so that they can maintain the improvements independently.

On that basis, we've provided sanitation to the villages on the following page.

Village	Water	No. of prov. latrines	Village	Water	No. of prov. latrines
Gyetiase	Yes	83	Duamo	–	9
Tadiesa	Yes	40	Patese, Kokoben & Sesease	–	86
Bimma	Yes	97			
Dida	Yes	73			
Akyease	Yes	55	Atwea	Yes	24
Kruwi	Yes	79	Abasua	–	12
Anansu	Yes	55	Adutwan	Yes	24
Abonkuso	Yes	12	Awanya	–	35 + 42*
Nkwabrim	Yes	76	Mpenya & Dadease	–	33
Amangoase	–	20	Mpantuase	–	30 + 22*
Old Daamang	–	26	Ekuor, Mpempe & Ntnten	–	12
Nsuasu	Yes	–	Abasua	Yes	–
Asuafu	Yes	–	Saviour*	–	15
Ongwase & Pentem*	–	94			
Sub total		11 710	Sub total	3	344
			Total	14	1,054

* Work in progress

Each latrine is probably used by an average of ten people. On this basis, 10,540 more people now have access to sanitation than before.

It would be great to have hard evidence of the improvement to health that results from providing clean water and sanitation, but we haven't yet got enough data. In most villages two or three babies out of ten die of 'convulsions' before the age of two, which probably means they died of water-related disease.

We've built two clinics, one at Gyetiase and the other, funded by our brilliant sister organisation, Ashanti Development Italia which was set up by Antonella, at Adutwam.

The Gyetiase clinic is now 'licensed to commence operations' and excellently equipped for eye care, thanks to Ab Roy and his SpecSavers team. About 4,500 prescription spectacles have been distributed. At the start, we feared people would sell them, but they're greatly valued and much worn. Nearly 120 cataract operations have also been carried out, including operations on children, and Ashkan recently persuaded Heidelberg Engineering to donate us some very advanced retina imaging equipment, which we passed to Komfo Anokye Hospital, as they have a greater patient throughput.

Right

SpecSavers in the Midlands are appealing for secondhand spectacles.



The clinic building at Adutwam is all but finished. It has a couple of volunteers' rooms attached, so if you meet someone from Ashanti who speaks with an Italian accent, they're likely to have picked it up from the Adutwam volunteers!

For general health, Gyetiase is less active because of the proximity of Mampong Hospital and Nsuta Clinic, and will concentrate on chronic illnesses. We also want to give extra training and support to the District system of village healthworkers, and to encourage family planning.

More generally, we've bought some 800 people national health insurance for five years, and provide or fund free school meals to the kindergartens at Gyetiase and Bimma. We've brought umpteen babies back to good health with the help of Chris and Helen's 'weanimix' (which includes ground nuts ground at the Tadiesa gari mill) and run an effective hardship fund for the destitute, originally set up by Joan and Barrie.

Education

Improvements in the quality of teaching are hard to measure. We've sent a lot of professional teachers to Ashanti over the years, and a few years ago Kathy ran an extremely successful summer school for teachers and children. Numerous English-speaking volunteers have visited for short periods, helping improve the children's ability to speak English and therefore their chances of becoming literate.

Dave, a long-term volunteer teacher-trainer now in Ashanti, spent his first term with the Gyetiase Junior High School, including teachers from nearby villages for term two. Now he is working closely with the District, taking in teachers from an ever wider catchment area. We're looking for other teacher-trainers to come and give him a hand.

As for twinning, Lisa, Dawn and Davide have all done great jobs, and fourteen schools are now twinned with British or Italian schools. The District very kindly seconded Esther Donkor to us to keep the Ashanti end up to the mark, and the project is going really well.

Right
Kindergarten children

On the school building side, we've provided kindergartens at Bimma and Kruwi and a primary school at Gyetiase. We've also built school latrines, of various shapes and sizes, at Gyetiase and Dida, provided a lot of teaching equipment and several playgrounds, and set up a computer room at Gyetiase.

6/10



Income Support

Our Microcredit schemes, where business training and small loans are provided to groups of poor women, are very successful. They now cover eleven villages and include two outreach schemes, one in the Volta Region and the other near Kumasi. They are run for us by volunteer Ishy MacKinnon.

It is difficult to measure the impact of these schemes, particularly as the women tend to exaggerate or tell you what they think you want to hear, but we note that sooner or later every loan is repaid with interest. Also, the women love the project and we rarely visit a new village without being asked to start a microcredit scheme there.

Some women do amazingly well. We recently gave a special loan to buy a fridge to a very successful woman in Bimma, who specialises in making fish soup and marketing it round the villages.

We've also lent the village of Adutwam money to buy a corn mill (magnacredit?)

7/10

We've provided various villages with three gari mills, a palm oil press, a corn mill and vegetable grater. Our first attempt to set up a farm support system at Gyetiase and Tadiesa failed, but now, under Nicholas Aboagye's watchful eye, we've got a very successful scheme running at Bimma. It provides some financial support but also agricultural training.



Develop A Village

This scheme has brought enormous benefits to the area. Donors are first asked to fund household latrines for their village at a cost of £1,000 to £62,000 depending on the size of the population. Thereafter, they can give as much or as little help as they want.

The concept has become a very popular, with sixteen villages sponsored so far and new groups collecting money to sponsor more. Donors are encouraged to visit their villages as often as they can, to make friends with the people and see at first hand the improvements they're bringing to their lives.

Year	Income £	Admin Costs £	
2012	110,000 est		£98,241 was received in the UK, the rest in Ghana.
2011	80,781	625	
2010	52,772	811	
2009	71,392	1,836	A large amount of income for these three years was provided by a single donor.
2008	256,104	641	
2007	94,028		
2006	24,738	122	
2005	20,868		We were called 'The Gyetiase Water Appeal', and weren't a registered charity.
2004	24,540		

Ashanti Development (UK) has a sister organisation in Bologna, Italy and employs seventeen staff in its Ashanti Headquarters in Gyetiase.

Right

Bonkron Village is constantly asking us to find them a sponsor.



Looking Ahead

Nicholas will come back to the UK at the end of this year to do a PhD. He says that in one capacity or other he will always stay with Ashanti Development, whether full or part time, whether living in Gyetiase or elsewhere. We are very privileged to have him.

We're on the point of signing up a replacement for him when he leaves for the UK. When he has finished his PhD, we hope the two will work together.

We are hoping to set up three income-generating activities in Ashanti in the near future.

- Thanks to Ab Roy's generosity we are now able to glaze our own prescription spectacles in Ashanti. We hope to employ an optometrist in the clinic, and then to make up the spectacle prescriptions so they can be sold at a low price to the patient. (We'll provide secondhand spectacles to those who can't afford to pay anything.)
- We plan to build a fee-paying technical college in Gyetiase, to teach subjects like dress-making, catering and hairdressing, and possibly building and engineering skills later. This too should generate money.
- We are looking for grants to build a museum/community centre in Gyetiase. For a long time Martha has worried about what will happen in the villages when electricity, television, mobile phones and the ability to travel become commonplace. Different communities tend to come from far away, and have their own distinctive cultures, customs, languages and legends. We will aim to preserve these in the museum, together with articles that Martha has been collecting for some time now.

These three initiatives should, in a roundabout way, mean that Ashanti Development acquires some measure of sustainability in Ghana, and can continue to exist without calling for too much money from the UK. However project money will always be needed from outside Ghana, and we hope that the multiple links that now exist between Europe and the villages, possibly coupled with Develop A Village schemes, will fill this gap.

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Our newest volunteer, Kwame, who lives in London, is helping develop an umbrella organisation to provide help and advice for small, Ghana-based charities. They will be invited to a volunteers' meeting and party toward the end of the year, which will replace the meeting normally held before the Gala.

10/10

Any ideas for a place to hold it would be gratefully received.

The Ashanti Development Annual Sponsored Walk

This year it will start at 2pm on Saturday 7 September from:

St Pancras Old Church
Pancras Road
London NW1 1UL

The nearest tube is King's Cross St Pancras, and the 214 and 46 buses stop nearby.

If you'd like to join in and register, please contact:

Albert Antwi Albert
antwi@camden.gov.uk
tel: 0207 242 3752
or 07958 594 447

He will send you a sponsorship form.

GAdventures website

Thanks to everyone who voted for Ashanti Development's big idea on the GAdventures website. We got 151 votes, which is an amazing total considering how late in the day we were to join in the competition.

Help Sought for Jewellery Selling

Dawn Williamson, her friends and family, are sponsoring the village of Dadease. They wrote about the experience in Ashanti News 19. One of their initiatives is to show the Dadease women how to make jewellery to be sold in the UK.

Do you have a local church, school, Fairtrade shop or stall that might help by selling a few pieces?