

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2006**

**“Peace of Christ-Hand in Hand Community”**

**Nkoranza, GHANA.**

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## 1: Summary:

- The ‘PCC/Hand in Hand Community’ is an inter-religious residential home and rehabilitation center for abandoned and mentally handicapped children. This non-government organization was registered in Ghana in 1992. This year two new children, Aaron and Mabel, joined the community and one child, Francis, died. We now have 41 children and youngsters residing in the community.
- The attached ‘Sheltered workshop’ has been over two years in the running. The sheltered workshop is meant to provide work and vocational training for the mentally handicapped youngsters who live in the Hand in Hand Community as well as for those who live with their families in the surrounding villages. At present 15 youngsters from outside the PCC- Hand in Hand-Community have joined the workshop. Abigail was admitted this year, making the number from outside 15.
- During 2006 the internet-cafe got hold of a new and faster satellite provider. It keeps it’s all important position in town and attracts customers from Nkoranza and beyond. Our guesthouses were more than ever in demand. 376 visitors wrote in the guestbook this year. The number of overnights at the guesthouses approximates 1000. The income generating projects together (guests, cards and supermarket, internet-cafe) generated 23% of the total running cost needed for the year. Much was, in addition, generated from the sale of beautiful products made in the sheltered workshop.
- During this year a record number of 21 volunteers came to assist us, staying from 2 weeks to 6 months. They helped at the sheltered workshop, with various child care programs and at the internet café.
- The staff now consists of a total of 24 persons.
- The neighboring ‘Shalom Special School’ is a school for mentally handicapped children. There are over 90 schoolchildren enrolled. Almost all of our younger residential ‘Hand in Hand’ children attend school there. The school had been initiated by the Peace of Christ/Hand in Hand Community, but has gained independence as a government institution since 1997.

## 2: Information on Ghana:

### - Some aspects of our region:

A national census took place in the year 2000. Our local (Nkoranza) figures are sourced from this census report with adjustment for annual growth percentages.

Nkoranza district has a surface-area of 1200 square kilometers. It shares borders with the districts of Techiman, Atebubu, Kintampo and Ejura. In the year 2005 the population of Nkoranza District was estimated to be 160,000, of which 45,000 inhabitants live in the district town called Nkoranza. This is where we have our residential home and sheltered workplace and where the Shalom Special School is situated.

Nkoranza is a rural district at the heart of Ghana. The main source of income is farming, large scale crop-farming of mostly maize, cassava, yam, watermelon and cashew, as well as subsistence farming for family use.

Unemployment-level is high. (No local percentage known, estimated over 40%)

Nkoranza is one of the 13 districts that together make up the Region called ‘Brong Ahafo’. Brong Ahafo region approximates the size of The Netherlands and counts over 2 million inhabitants.

In the more developed areas of Ghana (nearer Accra) a middle class is beginning to form of professionals, farmers, traders and entrepreneurs. However the greater percentage of Ghana’s rural population, such as the people from Nkoranza and the Brong Ahafo region, still live below poverty level.

- **More general Information on Ghana’s demography as quoted from the Ghana Fact Book (CIA):**
- Population: 21,029,853

- Median age: 20,45 years
- Population growth rate: 1,25% (2005 est.)
- Birthrate: 23,97 births/ 1000 population ( 2005 est.)
- Death rate: 10,84 death/ 1000 population (2005 est.)
- Capital: Accra
- Administrative divisions: 10 regions (Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, Western, Eastern, Greater Accra, Northern, Upper East, Upper West, Central, Volta.)
- Independence: March 6 1957 (from UK)
- Economic overview: Well endowed with natural resources Ghana has roughly twice the per capita output of the poorer countries in West Africa. Even so, Ghana remains heavily dependent on international financial and technical assistance. Gold, timber, and cocoa production are major sources of foreign exchange. The domestic economy continues to revolve around subsistence agriculture, which accounts for 34% of the GDP and employs 60% of the work force, mainly small landholders. Ghana opted for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) program in 2002. priorities include tighter monetary and fiscal policies, accelerated privatization, and improvement of social services. Receipts from the gold sector helped sustain GDP in 2004. Inflation should ease, but remains a major internal problem.
- GDP: purchasing power parity - \$ 48.27 billion (2004 est.)
- GDP real growth rate: 5,4 % (2004 est.)
- GDP per capita: purchasing power parity \$ 2300 (2004 est.)
- GDP- composition by sector: agriculture: 34,3%, industry 24,2%, services: 41,4%.
- Labor force: 10,24 million (2004 est.)
- Labor force by occupation: agriculture 60%, industry 15% services 25% (1999 est.)
- Unemployment rate 20% (1997 est.)
- Population below poverty line: 31,4% (1992 est.)
- Inflation rate consumer prices: 13% (2004 est.)
- Budget: revenue: \$ 2,17 billion, expenditure: \$2,56 billion, incl. cap. Exp. Of NA (2004)
- Agriculture: cocoa, rice, coffee, cassava, peanuts, corn, sheanuts, bananas, timber.
- Industries: mining, lumbering, light manufacturing, aluminum smelting, food processing, cement, small commercial ship building.
- Exchange rates: Cedi per US dollar: 9,004,6(2004), 8,677,4 (2003), 7,932,7 (2002), 7,170,8 (2001) 5,455,1 (2000)

### **3. Purpose of the ‘Hand in Hand Community’:**

In these rural areas intellectually handicapped children are still sometimes referred to as ‘water-children’. Local tradition has it that these children are born as a result of a woman being raped by a water-spirit. Water spirits, real or not, are thus causing havoc in people’s lives and the water children, being half spirits and half human are much feared. In the traditional way the handicapped child is put back along the riverside where these spirits have their abode. At night the spirits then submerge and take the children ‘back home’ to the depth of the river with them.

Luckily these traditional concepts are rapidly changing. In Nkoranza the presence of our many special children has already caused a sustained positive change. In the beginning we had a real problem finding caregivers who could rise above the fears and family pressures of the local community and have enough courage to live with our kids. These early days caregivers came and went in rapid succession. Some stayed only for a few hours. Now, 13 years later, our caregivers form a loving and stable team. Clearly the innocent nature of these special children has helped disarm the troubling traditional belief-system of the Brong-Ahafo (Bono) people. Gradually the mentally handicapped child is not only seen as harmless but as truly very special. Increasingly also churches, schools, the government and many non government initiatives have invested time in educating the Ghanaian community about the nature of mental diseases and intellectual and behavioral handicaps. They have been active

agents in campaigning for a more humane treatment of the intellectually handicapped child.

Apart from the dangerous traditional belief-systems, the parents of course have to cope with the universally experienced feelings of agony when faced with having to raise a handicapped child.

*It is not surprising therefore, that some of these handicapped children are abandoned along the river, or else starved or hidden away in small rooms and sheds, while others are laid abandoned in more public places in the hope that someone may find them and keep them alive.*

It is to children like these, who are abandoned, that we want to offer our warm and loving home.

Most of our children are transferred from two state institutions in the capital: the Osu Children home and the state mental hospital in Accra. This is where most abandoned foundlings are brought if they were lucky enough to survive. These two institutions, ill prepared as they are for the housing of mentally disabled children, formed the end of the line for these kids, as there are no residential homes for mentally handicapped children in Ghana, not until we founded our “Hand in Hand Community”.

Of late we have also received children from orphanages in Tamale, Cape coast and Kumasi. Of the actual origin and natural family of the abandoned child usually nothing is known.

#### **4. PCC-Hand in Hand Community: Short history and sketch of present situation:**

Our community was started by four (3 Ghanaian and 1 Ghanaian-Dutch) health-professionals as far back as 1991. A Christian spirit and a commitment to providing shelter to abandoned children with a mental handicap lay at the basis of this movement.

In 1991 land was provided by the traditional chief and official registration as an NGO (non government organization) took place in Ghana in 1992. The land has sources of natural water and some awesome rock-formations.

One by one simple bungalows were built to house the abandoned and mentally handicapped children that we encountered in state mental hospitals and orphanages under horrendous circumstances. From then onwards gradually more children were transferred to our community and the project developed further. Donations came flowing in. Caregivers were employed and trained to provide a loving home for the children. As accommodation and financial means allowed, more children were transferred to our community. Presently we accommodate 41 residential children and 15 youngster who come from families in surrounding villages to work at the sheltered workshop with us.

Our very first child, Nana Yaw Moses, arrived in December 1992 from the state mental hospital in Accra. He came as a thin, hungry and deeply afflicted autistic boy whose epileptic fits were nearly uncontrollable, also because he refused (and refuses!) oral medication of any kind. Now he is 20 years old. He does not talk and occasionally has a breakthrough fit but he understands English and Twi and is quite at home and relaxed in his own safe place from where he keeps exploring the world, most especially the cooking-pots in the kitchen! Two months later Nyamekye Commando joined us, someone many people still remember because of his insatiable taste for life, people, music and fun! He had Down-syndrome. Nyamekye died in 1996.

Activities temporary slowed down when in 1994 one of the founders, Ineke Bosman, left for further studies to the USA, while Dr Appiedu Mensah left for further specialization and Mr. George Kumih Kyeremeh was transferred by the ministry of health to another region. Temporarily the “Hand in Hand project” was left on the

shoulders of Mr. Andrew Osei Takyi, catechist, aids-counselor and poultry farmer, alone. He looked after the children with the help of two caregivers and continued with further constructions. Ineke returned in 1996 to Ghana and then Andrew and Ineke together started to systematically, one by one, bring the listed children home to this new residential community at Nkoranza. They worked through the list of names of abandoned and mentally handicapped children who were barely surviving in the mental hospital and orphanages where they had earlier encountered them. Every time a room was ready and there was the hope for a sponsor, the two-some traveled to Accra to bring more abandoned children to our community.

In 1997 a proposal for the construction of a special school was agreed upon and temporary school-premises build. The government was willing to take over the management of the school in that same year. Shalom Special School was born. Presently over 90 children, from inside and outside our residential community, are enrolled at the school.

In June 1997 Mr. Bob Maram came from Chicago and a fairytale wedding-feast at the Hand in Hand premises took place between Ineke and Bob. The then 12 handicapped children formed the soul of the wedding-party.

Gradually Bob became the third executive director, in charge of finances. We invited a fourth director, Mr. Samuel Baffo, to be in charge of the income generating projects. Facilities were added, such as the swimming-pool in 1998 and a summer-hut for fun and games in 1999 (now the 4-room large 'House of Games !'). The construction of ten guesthouses, one by one, happened took between 1998 and 2006 in response to the demand of ever more visitors to our community. A telephone-connection was established in 2001 and a mini-supermarket and restaurant for visitors was opened around that time. A cuddle-room was constructed next to the kitchen and has been extended since to a two-room 'siesta-house' with hammocks and all! The idea of a sheltered workshop came up in 2002. Two boys from nearby villages were invited to work on the farm with us. This went so well that in 2003 we asked the Dutch Embassy for a grant with which we constructed the sheltered workplace. The volunteer Ellen arrived from Holland in April 2004 and she initiated and coordinated all activities at the sheltered workshop. The internet-café, built in order to generate income and increase our connection with the outside world also became operational in 2004.

During 2005 and 2006 an extra weaving-hall, summer-hut and a hall to recycle old glass bottles into beautiful beads were added to the sheltered workshop.

Our premises are large. They measure 24 acres of hilly land with a lovely natural setting. The buildings where the children with their caregivers live form a half circle of small cottages. The caregivers live like parents with their children. They sleep together, play together, bathe their children, eat with them and bring them to school. The caregivers each also have other general assignments such as running daycare, shopping and cooking, weeding and farming, supervising the swimming-hour, etc. Emphasis is laid on warmth, fun and love. Parties are small but frequent events. Recently a 'Saturday-disco' has added to the weekly routine for the children and youngsters at the workshop. We loyally adhere to the daily routine so that the kids can feel safe. Highlight of the daily schedule is the 4pm swimming-time where the children bathe, exercise and have fun with the water. This 'pool-happening' is also the beginning of the end of the day. Afterwards kids and caregivers eat together and then retreat to look TV or move to their cottages. At 8 all is quiet and asleep.

At the other side of the semi circle of children-cottages there is a grouping of small round huts, which are very picturesque guesthouses for our visitors. Through our guesthouses we help to generate income for our kids. We also do that by way of selling cards and other items at the kiosk. The satellite internet-cafe in town generates income and is a great service to the community included our visitors. The beautiful products produced at the sheltered workshop are becoming popular among our friends and visitors and sell very well. All this is much needed for the continuation of our project.

Six of our children have Down's syndrome. Nine children are autistic. Three suffer from various rare hereditary congenital diseases (Rett's disease, Recklinghausen's adeno-fibroma and Friedreich's ataxia). Six children have cerebral palsy and the others suffer from non-specific intellectual handicaps, often combined with epilepsy and physical handicaps. The majority of these syndromes are caused by birth-injuries.

### **5. Journal of the year 2006:**

This year our community celebrated its fourteenth birthday.

Another two children joined us this year. Aaron, a small boy with cerebral palsy, joined in February; he was transferred from Osu Children Home. Mabel arrived in August. She is from Nkoranza-town, a girl with Down Syndrome who attends Shalom Special School. Her mother worked at the school as a housemother so as to always have Mabel near to her. Mabel became orphan when her mother suddenly died from a short febrile illness. Her father had passed away earlier. Mabel, her situation being well known to us, was immediately taken up in our residential community when the request from a distant relative reached us. The little Francis died on May 11<sup>th</sup> from a very short illness (cerebral malaria). May he rest in peace.

Our staff position changed: Sala left in order to be an apprentice to a baker. This way she wanted to secure that, wherever she might end up, she would have work to do, and, knowing Sala she would do it well. After that she is 'strongly suggested' by her other to marry as in the culture of that part of Northern Ghana younger sisters cannot marry unless the older ones marry first. Sala resisted to traditional concepts like that but in any case started with an insurance vocational skill in case she would marry and be divorced or put aside as unfortunately still happens frequently. She is smart but we knew that already during the 7 years she worked with us. We miss her tremendously. Dorcas replaced Sala. Dorcas is a secondary school leaver and intends to study law as soon as she has saved enough money for the study. Sophia left after 3 or 4 years of dedicated service. She brought the depressed Mariella up into a much better mental and physical state. Rose a new caregiver employed to replace the ones who left has a very short time with us. She died very soon afterwards in the hospital with typhoid fever. Abiba was employed to replace Linda who more or less vacated her post for unknown reasons. At the last day of the year Ema and James decided to leave to further their education. Their leaving was an unexpected loss and blow to the continuation of the community. Kwaku and Joyce, with the help of childcare, hygiene, food and other small committees continued the intermediate leadership. James was replaced by Patrick. Osei Andrew Takyi left to become an ambassador for the community in town and beyond. He went to Bielefeld for a course in Development.

In February Rev. Fr. Pieter Bootsma SMA, who lives as a retired priest in our community, celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday with us.

A lot of infrastructure was added to our premises: A nicely paved entrance and road all over the compound for walking, exercising and a road to use tricycles and wheelchairs on. (Thanks to 'fietsen voor education'). Guesthouse 5 was renovated and the 'House of Games' was extended to contain four rooms: a cuddle room, a playroom, a classroom and a 'film-house'. An outside bathhouse for the kids was built and the overhead-tank for water was improved and further elevated. A large manhole (Safety tank) was constructed for the toilets of the guesthouses and a new store was built.

The workshop extended with a glass-work-hall and new ovens were built. Master Cedi, famous in Ghana and beyond, came to teach the sheltered workshop staff how to actually make beads out of recycled glass from mostly old bottles.

The guesthouses again attracted more visitors than last year. They are all renovated.

As usual the enthusiasm of our children and caregivers reached its peak during the Christmas events. The number of visitors again peaked over the Christmas. It is clear and awe inspiring that our visitors get touched by the simple and happy spirit of our community. Many return and become volunteers or/and established friends. Our children in all their disarming spontaneity are at the heart of this attractiveness.

## **6. Organization and Management:**

In 1992 our project was registered in Ghana as a ‘non government organization’.

Its aim is to give integral care to abandoned and mentally handicapped children in Ghana. The style of Hand in Hand is open and family like. Children live in small groups of two or three with a caregiver, who acts as the mother and/or father figure for their kids. Attendance to school, rehabilitation, medical care, therapy, joint meals, joint siestas in the cuddle room, and of course music and play are all part of the daily program.

The caregivers who live and work with the children consider their service as voluntary.

However the caregivers receive a monthly allowance as well as free board and lodging together with their children. The caregivers have a leader, Mr. Emmanuel, who is known as the ‘house-prefect’. When Ema left the leadership was shared among Kwaku and Joyce.

Other employees are 2 watchmen, a hostess for the visitors and a part time computer teacher.

**During 2006 the board is formed by six persons: Dr. Ineke Bosman (chairman and founding director), Mr. Andrew Osei Takyi (coordinating director), Mr. Robert Maram (financial director), Mr. Samuel Baffo (director for income generating projects), Mrs. Ellen Seldenthuis (director sheltered workshop and volunteers) and Emanuel (director of child development). At the end of the year the number was reduced to four persons,** as Mr. Andrew Osei Takyi left to be more free for other (Church and family) issues that concern him and to be our ambassador while Ema left at the end of the year to go for further training. This year our volunteer program was expanded. We now absorb four volunteers at the same time, of which two assist in the sheltered workshop and two with the children, e.g. in daycare. Ellen coordinates the volunteer program and is in charge of the sheltered workshop. Ellen supervises five staffs who are activity leaders of the various art and handicraft programs of the workshop. The activity leaders are also caregivers.

The ‘Araba memorial Internet café’ runs as a separate enterprise. There are 3 staffs and a cleaner employed. The guesthouses also run independently. A hostess, Charity, and a cleaner are employed. Charity is also a caregiver. Mr. Baffo is in charge.

In 1997 the development of a special school for the mentally handicapped was initiated by the PCC. This ‘Shalom Special School’ (SHASS) is now a government organization. Headmaster Godfrey Yoppour is in charge.

## **7. Finances:**

**(Ref. Annex 1 for the 2006 financial statements and projected budget for 2007.)**

PCC/Hand in Hand works without government aid. Its running depends almost fully on donations and child sponsorships from outside the country. The total amount for expenditures in 2005 amounted to 564,171,000 Cedis. (approximately 56,000 dollars). This included running cost and constructions. Gradually, however, there is a small but significant shift towards income generated locally in Nkoranza.

This year approximately 74,000,000 Cedis (approximately 7400 dollar) was generated by the department of Income Generating Projects (Mr. Baffo) and already approximately 69,000,000 Cedis (6900 dollar) from the sales of products of the Sheltered Workshop (in its first year of operation!). We are very ecstatically happy with this rising trend!

Mr Robert Maram is financial director in charge of the overall financial responsibility. For our 39 children we need approximately 117 sponsors, as the average sponsorship is shared between three persons. The upkeep of one child amounts to the annual amount of 900 euro. Divided by three persons this becomes a more manageable 300 euro per year or 25 per month. The children at the Sheltered Workshop are needing at total amount of 300 euro per year for their financial sponsorship.

- At the end of 2000 we had 21 children and 45 sponsors.
- At the end of 2001 we had 27 children and 66 sponsors.
- At the end of 2003 we have 29 children and 4 young adults. 73 sponsors.



- At the end of 2005 we have 39 children and 15 young adults. At the workshop 12 of the 15 young adults have no sponsor yet. At the home we still need 13 sponsors who each pay the monthly amount of 25 euro.
- At the end of 2006 we have 41 children and 16 young adults. At the workshop 11 kids have no sponsor yet. At the home we need 4 more sponsors for children.

Interested persons can inquire at the website ([www.operationhandinhand.nl](http://www.operationhandinhand.nl)) where there is a special page about children not yet sponsored. ( 'Vraagje ' May we ask you a question ') Or mail to [handinhand@ghana.com](mailto:handinhand@ghana.com)

<b>Child-sponsors and other benefactors could donate to:</b>
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- |   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>In Ghana: the ADB Bank at Nkoranza. Account no: 5232 c/o 'Peace of Christ Foundation', Hand in Hand Community.</b></li> <li>2. <b>In The Netherlands: To: 'The Bresillac Foundation', Cadier en Keer, Holland. Tel: (31)- 043-407-7373. Bankaccount: ABN-AMRO, No: 40.06.14.030. mention: hand in hand/300.151.</b></li> </ol> |
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Compare budget 2006 and budget 2007 (annex 2):

- We transfer less money overseas, yet the total amount needed is larger. Means: our income generating projects are substantially increasing their output.
- The increase with 2 children was budgeted for in 06 and in 07 we budget for again 4 more children.
- Food is up slightly as expected with more 'mouths to feed', so is personal needs despite the need to be more cost effective there.
- Electricity budget is up steeply as the cost of electricity has substantially increased.
- We need more staff yet the budget 'allowances' did not go up as expected. Reason: some of our 'old workers' left and are replaced by (more) new ones. They start at a beginning scale.

### **8: Evaluation of our plans for 2006:**

- We did extend the workshop as planned.
- We upgraded house 5 and maintained all other houses.
- We had a wonderful gift that allowed us to improve all roads on the compound.
- The tower-house was made into a great house for volunteers.
- We acquired a new car.
- We got registered with Social welfare and updated our registrations as an NOG.
- Yes that too! We had a good physio training team over for 9 months and now our caregivers can continue independently.
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### **9. Plans for the year 2007:**

1. Extend the sheltered workplace with an office, a large room not yet specified how to use it, two covered areas for miscellaneous work and exhibition of products.
2. Continue to upgrade the guesthouses. Build two more round-huts and a hermitage for visitors.
3. Build a house for new children, 2 rooms.
4. Improve the pool which is leaking.
5. Adjust the volunteer programme for 2007.
6. Maintain all existing buildings and improve furnishings rooms of caregivers and children.

## 10: Conclusion and acknowledgments:

We are grateful to our staff and caregivers, our friends sponsors and benefactors. We are proud of our children who realize a contented life on foundations of abandonment and deprivation. This is a small miracle that no one, certainly not a psychologist, nor a psychiatrist, nor we, for that matter, can understand. To see is to believe.

It is clear that all this involves a vision and a commitment that is much larger than that of all of us together. We believe that the breath of God is at the heart of it all. This may also explain the joy and peace that many people, including complete strangers, experience at our premises.

## Annex 1: Financial report 2006:

### Cash Flow Statement 2006 in 000's

(000,0's omitted)

<b>Actual Receipts:</b>	
Transfer from Overseas:	364,236
Guesthouse Income:	130,450
Cards and Calendars:	5,850
Kiosk Income:	6,400
Communication Center Income:	700
Satellite Disc Internet Café:	2,000
Sheltered Workshop Income:	333,182
T-Bill redemptions	31,963
Lilian Fund:	24,000
Local Donations:	79,623
<b>Total:</b>	<b>978,404</b>
Add: Cash balance 31 Dec 2005: 114,734	
Deduct Cash balance 31 Dec 06: 94,569	20,165
	<b>998,569</b>

<b>Actual expenditures:</b>	
Allowances:	162,030
Feeding:	123,094
Repairs:	46,120
Electricity:	50,680
Personal Needs:	31,059
Travel and Transportation:	72,120
Medical:	17,281
Stationary, mail, other	26,392
Fees Chart accountants	22,000
	<b>550,776</b>
Infrastructure and construction:	447,793
<b>Total:</b>	<b>998,569</b>

## Compare Budget 2006:

<b>BUDGET 2006</b>	
(000,s omitted)	
<b>Receipts:</b>	
Transfer from Overseas:	365,000
Local Income Producing Projects:	85,000
Satellite Disc Internet Café:	18,000
Sheltered Workshop Income:	150,000
Lilian Fund:	50,000
Local Donations:	<u>30,000</u>
	<b>698,000</b>
<b>Expenditures:</b>	
Allowances:	150,000
Feeding:	135,000
Repairs:	75,000
Electricity:	25,000
Personal Needs:	30,000
Travel and Transportation:	75,000
Medical:	10,000
Other:	18,000

Constructions and Infrastructure:	<u>180,000</u>
	<b>698,000</b>

## Annex 2: Budget 2007:

<b>Budget 2007</b>			
Allowances:	190,000	Transfer overseas	239,000
Feeding:	140,000	Guest house income	160,000
Repairs:	55,000	Cards calendars	7,000
Electricity:	60,000	Kiosk income	8,000
Personal Needs:	40,000	Communication center	
Travel and Transport:	95,000	Internet café	11,000
Medical:	20,000	Sheltered workshop	400,000
Other:	35,000	Lilian Fund	25,000
accts:	15,000	Local donations	100,000
	650,000		
Infra and construct:	300,000		
<b>total:</b>	<b>950,000</b>		<b>950,000</b>

