

ANNUAL REPORT- 2023



OUTREACH

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INTRODUCTION

The outreach project was started purposely to identify, register, and support children living with intellectual disabilities using community-based approaches. The project also aims to create public awareness about children's rights and change people's negative perceptions about persons with intellectual disabilities using multi-faceted and multi-disciplinary approaches.

The project's overall objective is to improve the social conditions of children and young adults with intellectual disabilities within the Nkoranza South and North Districts.

The specific objectives are:

- a.To activate community members to accept and respect the rights of children with intellectual disabilities
- b.To erase the negative perceptions people, have about intellectual disability
- c.To encourage community members and parents to take responsibility for their children with intellectual disabilities
- d.To form parents, and support groups and empower them to take good care of their children with intellectual disabilities
- e.To undertake small-scale livelihood projects for young adults with intellectual disabilities.
- f. To advocate for the inclusion of issues concerning children with intellectual disabilities in policy decisions

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details the various activities of the outreach team in the year 2023. The various strands in this report are outlined below:

- ✓ **Home visits**
- ✓ **Antiepileptic drug distribution**
- ✓ **Livelihood support**
- ✓ **Daycare centres**
- ✓ **Physiotherapy**
- ✓ **Public Education**
- ✓ **Consulting and counseling in PCC**
- ✓ **PSHG workshop**
- ✓ **Assistive devices support**
- ✓ **Christmas gifts**
- ✓ **Evaluation report**
- ✓ **Inclusive education workshop**
- ✓ **PSHG meetings**
- ✓ **Proxy birthday celebration in Nkoranza Daycare**
- ✓ **Challenges**
- ✓ **Way forward**

The salient points/highlights contained in the report are:

- ✓ An average of 32 homes was visited in the period.
- ✓ 10,500 tablets of carbamazepine were distributed
- ✓ Five children benefited from the livelihood project

- ✓ Two wheelchairs were given to persons with a physical disability
- ✓ 800 copies of flyers were printed for public education
- ✓ A workshop was organized for our PSHG
- ✓ Sixteen parents visited for advice and physiotherapy
- ✓ Two new children have been admitted into the Nkoranza daycare center.
- ✓ 80 children benefited from our Christmas gifts.
- ✓ A workshop was held for teachers on inclusive education
- ✓ Three PSHG meetings were organized

On the way forward, in 2024, outreach will review some of our interventions and focus largely on public advocacy and awareness. We will also increase our advocacy drive by publicizing our activities on various social media handles.

HOME VISITS



Figure 1 Gabriel with client

The outreach team embarks on regular home visits to check on the health and general conditions of our clients every month. These visits are also used as a means of distributing antiepileptic drugs to our clients with epilepsy and as well as monitoring the progress or otherwise of the various livelihood interventions support to young adults with intellectual and

developmental disabilities.

During the period of reporting, the outreach team visited an average of 37 families/households of children with IDD per month across the project's two major operational administrative districts. We offered pieces of advice to families and urged them to continue to support the children and empower them to take part in household and community activities as much as practicable. The outreach team has noted with delight improved family acceptance and participation among our clients especially those living with the additional condition of epilepsy.

ANTIEPILEPTIC DRUGS



Figure 2 Boyan giving out drugs

One of the far-reaching interventions of the outreach project is the distribution of free antiepileptic drugs to children and young adults with epilepsy from poor and needy families. The intervention ensures a regular supply of drugs to our clients and therefore prevents them from getting into crises. The outreach team has

been supporting families in this regard for the past 6years.

In the period under review, we distributed a total of 10,500 tablets of carbamazepine to our clients. The figure has fallen short compared to the 2022 figure of 13,420. This is due to the decision of the board of PCC to fashion out an exit strategy after six years of this intervention. We have communicated the decision to all our beneficiaries and given them ample time to prepare for the new strategy of letting them pay a token for the drugs.

The outreach team has noted a remarkable improvement in the lives of the children since introducing them to antiepileptic drugs. The conspicuous absence of bruises on their faces and other parts of their bodies lends credence to the fact that the drugs have a positive impact on their lives. We believe therefore that their parents will continue to buy the drugs for them even after our eventual exit in the future.

LIVELIHOOD



Figure 3 Boyan with Kelvin's mother

The livelihood scheme under the outreach project was instituted primarily to support young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities to engage in small-scale income-generating activities as a way of contributing to their families' income. It aims also to make the beneficiaries active and give them a sense of pride. Since the inception of the scheme, many young

adults and families have benefited. The intervention covers a variety of income-generating activities including animal husbandry and petty trading.

During the period of reporting, the team supported five persons with IDD to go into small-scale income-generating activities including fufu mailing and animal keeping. It is gratifying to the team to see some of the positive impacts of these interventions on the lives of some of the beneficiaries. It is equally important also to state that some of the interventions failed to yield the desired results.

The outreach team will monitor and issue another progress report on the livelihood interventions by the middle of 2024.

ASSISTIVE DEVICES



Figure 4 standing frame at Nkwanta DC

Persons with physical disabilities usually need assistive devices to aid them in their mobility to go through their daily activities. It is however not easy for many such individuals to acquire the devices due to the cost. Given this fact, the outreach project has assistive device support as one of the interventions aimed at giving dignity

and relative independence to persons with disabilities. We have supported many persons with wheelchairs and clutches since the beginning of the project.

During the year under review, the outreach team supported two persons with physical disabilities (amputees) with wheelchairs. We also sent some devices including a standing frame to Donkro Nkwanta daycare Center as part of a physiotherapy intervention by Inge.



Figure 6 Albert and Joe Emma at the DC opening



Figure 5 children in Nkoranza DC

DAYCARES

The daycare concept is one of the very glaring manifestations of the outreach project. We are currently running two centers in the Nkoranza South district.

On 26th May 2023, there was a grand ceremony to officially commission the daycare center at Donkro Nkwanta.

During the year under review, five children with IDD's from Kyeradeso were transported to join the daycare at Nkwanta. The children were happy and the parents were delighted at the development. However, we were unable to continue with the daily transport of the children to the center due to the cost of transportation. Given our desire to find alternative solutions to any challenge we encountered in the course of our project implementation, we subsequently secured an empty classroom in Kyeradeso Community Basic School and renovated it to be used as a daycare facility. The necessary arrangements have been made and we hope to start officially in January 2024 when schools resume.

In 2023 as well, one caretaker at the Nkoranza center in addition to Boyan (supervisor) from the outreach team attended a workshop on first aid for the daycare center. The two-day workshop

was organized by the Department of Social Welfare for all daycare centers within the municipality.

Two new children (Anas and Brander) have also been enrolled in the Nkoranza daycare center during the period.

CONSULTATION IN PCC

The outreach team continues to operate a center for advice and support at the premises of PCC. As part of our work, we attend to many parents and caretakers of children with IDD's who are seeking residential care for their children in PCC or looking for one support or the other. We offer pieces of advice to parents and caretakers

of varied issues and sometimes refer them to other institutions for support. In recent times, we have received and attended to increasing numbers due to the physiotherapy unit within PCC. We get referral cases from St. Theresa Hospital. The team also collaborates effectively with Shalom Special School to ensure that children who are qualified to be admitted to the school are referred to the school for assessment and admission. In the year 2023, a total of 25 parents visited PCC for various services including counseling and referral.



Figure 7 Dr. Albert assessing a child with Ebb's Palsy



Figure 8 Physiotherapy in PCC

PHYSIOTHERAPY

The physiotherapists from Techiman (Holy Family Hospital) visit PCC every two weeks to attend to children with physiotherapy needs. They are assisted by Thomas and Twum (caretakers within PCC).

This intervention was initiated to make

physiotherapy services available to children in the Nkoranza South and

North districts as a result of the difficulty many parents were facing in their effort to access physio services for their children. They had challenges concerning cost and proximity to physio services. The intervention has eliminated these factors and invariably made physio services accessible to children with IDD in our operational area.

During the year under review, parents visited PCC with their children to access physio services. The physio center witnessed an increase in the number of new clients referred from St. Theresa Hospital. A total number of sixteen new clients visited the center for physio services during the period. They received various services based on their needs. Some were referred to Techiman for further services.

In June 2023, Inge, a physiotherapist from the Netherlands visited PCC. She attended to some of the clients who visited PCC during the period. She also visited our two daycare centers to assess some of the children with physio needs. She provided orthopedic shoes, braces, and a standing frame for some of the children.

PUBLIC EDUCATION



Figure 9 public education session

Public education is one of the cardinal pillars of the outreach project. Since its inception, the team has continually been educating expectant and nursing mothers about the causes of childhood disabilities through the prenatal and postnatal health system. We have on various occasions used the face-to-face verbal approach. In some instances, we delivered our message through the use of a projector.

During the period under review, the team with prior approval of the board of PCC printed eight hundred (800) copies of flyers to educate pregnant women and nursing mothers about some of the preventable causes of childhood disabilities. We aim to reduce the incidence of childhood disabilities in the long run by making women especially aware of the consequences of certain lifestyle choices on the unborn baby or the infant.

The flyers were vetted and approved by the municipal health directorate of the Ghana Health Service in Nkoranza South. We also received the all-clear from the management of the various health facilities in the municipality.



Figure 10 *advocacy by a parent*

In the period under review also, our parent's support group in Nkoranza with support from the outreach team, held a public advocacy talk in the Sessiman chapter of the Church of Pentecost in Nkoranza. The topic was on causes of intellectual disability and the effects of negative public perception against children and families of children living with disabilities. Though the mothers do not have the benefit

of higher formal education, they have a very good appreciation and command over the topic areas. This advocacy talk was the maiden edition and we wish to continue to offer them the needed support to carry on with this advocacy drive in many public gatherings.

PSHG TRAINING WORKSHOP



Figure 11 projected copy of the

Following the printing of the flyers for education purposes, and our desire to help the Parents Support Group carry out public advocacy and awareness, we organized a training session for our PSHG members to be conversant with the content of the flyer and how they can use it to educate the public in churches and other public gatherings in the future.

The workshop was organized within the premises of PCC. The participants came from Nkoranza, Nkwanta, and Asunkwa where we have functioning PSHGs

The outreach team will continue to empower the members of the PSHGs to carry out public education and influence public perception and attitudes toward children with IDD positively.

We trust that the parents who live with the children and bear the brunt of taking care of them are in a better position to tell their stories and advocate for improved public services to them.



Figure 12 Ernest with Xmas gift

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Christmas is a season of love and sharing. It is a season to reach out to especially the vulnerable and the destitute. In light of that, outreach has been giving out gifts, mostly food items to our clients during the festive seasons since 2020. In the year under review, we gave rice, oil, and sardines to about eighty (80) children and

young adults living with intellectual and developmental disabilities within our area of operation.

The outreach team would like to use this medium also to send seasonal greetings and well-wishes to all our clients and donors. We appreciate your commitment and we look forward to having a successful 2024. Afihyapa ooooo!!!



Figure 13 Cecilia and family

EVALUATION REPORT ON OUTREACH



Figure 14 Hester and Joe

caregivers.

During the review period, Hester Jonkheer, a physiotherapist by profession and a master's student from the University of Maastricht in the Netherlands was in Ghana to undertake a research study on the social inclusion of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities and the role of

After her research work was concluded in May, she submitted an evaluation report on the outreach project. The report touched on various interventions under the outreach project as well as goal-setting planning and reporting and also the content taught at our daycare centers.

She outlined some lapses and suggested solutions to enhance the outreach project as a whole. She met with the board and the outreach team to further discuss her findings about the outreach project. We have since taken steps together with the board to implement some of the recommendations contained in the report. We are grateful as a team for her input and we are ready for independent views and criticisms that will ultimately contribute to making the project better.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION WORKSHOP



Figure 15 Participants at the workshop

On the 27th of January 2023, the outreach team in partnership with the Nkoranza Municipal Education Directorate organized a day's training workshop for thirty (30) teachers and some officers in the municipal office on the inclusive education policy and the need to use the principles of UDL in teaching.

The workshop was facilitated by Gabriel with support from the regional Special Education Coordinator and

the headmaster of Shalom Special School.

The workshop commenced with a presentation on intellectual and developmental disabilities; their causes and examples.

Participants were then taken through the inclusive education policy against exclusion, segregation, and integration.

The participants were also taken through the principles of UDL and accommodation in the mainstream classroom. A practical lesson was delivered by Gabriel depicting multiple means of engagement, multiple means of representation, and multiple means of action and expression.

Participants were urged to brief other teachers in their respective schools to ensure children with disabilities are admitted, retained, and supported to benefit from the teaching and learning processes in the regular classrooms.

PSHG MEETINGS



Figure 16 PSHG meeting in Techiman

During the period of reporting, the outreach team held three separate PSHG meetings for parents in Nkoranza daycare, Donkro Nkwanta, and Techiman South municipality.

The meeting with the parents in Nkoranza South was purposely to discuss the challenges of the daycare center and how to take steps to resolve them.

The meeting with the parents from Techiman South, however, was a follow-up to the earlier visits by some of the executives to Nkoranza to apprise themselves about how the concept works and how it could be replicated in their municipality. We meet with the parents and some executives of the DPOs at the center for the Physically Challenge in Techiman.

We first took the parents through some causes of IDD across the three main stages (pre-natal, peri-natal, and post-natal). We then had a Q&A session with the parents on the subject.

The team had a long deliberation with the mothers on the need for a daycare center and the steps needed to actualize the dream. We discussed the need to get rented accommodation in the interim to be used for the purpose. The executives made a firm commitment to getting a place to start the daycare center.

The idea to have a center in Techiman was later shelved due to some challenges.

VISITORS TO DAYCARE AND PROXY BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION IN NKORANZA DAYCARE

During the period under review, many people from Ghana and outside Ghana visited the daycare centers for various reasons. Sabine Van Erp from the Netherlands was in both daycare centers to review the games and daily routine activities for the children. Also, a team of parents and the pediatrician at the Holy Family Hospital in Techiman visited to understudy the concept and to find out how it can be replicated in Techiman.

Rev. Juliana Oppong of the Assemblies of God church in Techiman together with some members of Rev.



Figure 17 Birthday in Daycare

Oppong's Foundation was at the Nkoranza Daycare center to celebrate the birthday of Mary Owen (resident in the United States) with the children. The children were very happy to dine and drink with their guests from Techiman. It was indeed a momentous occasion as it was the first and only birthday celebration held in the center.

CHALLENGES

The team's major challenge during the review period was our inability to start a new daycare center at Forikrom due to accommodation challenges.

WAY FORWARD

On the way forward, in 2024, outreach will review some of our interventions and focus on public advocacy and awareness. We will also increase our advocacy drive by publicizing our activities on various social media handles.