



# Nyarkoa Foundation

Fall, 2018

PO Box 80993, Fairbanks, AK 99708

<Nyarkoa.org>

Number 11

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the eleventh newsletter of the Nyarkoa Foundation, a non-profit corporation whose mission is to help bring sustainable water supplies to villages in rural Ghana. The Foundation works by funding projects through the Rural Education and Development Programme (REDEP) a non-profit, non-government organization in Ghana that shares our objectives. AMEFS Eng. Ltd., a Ghanaian firm works with us to repair and install hand pumps. We have programs to teach people how to keep hand pumps working and improve sanitation practices in their communities. There are about 5000 people in the communities we work with.

The symbol in the banner above is an "Adinkra" symbol. It is one of many ideographs (pictures that represent ideas) that are used by the Akan, the largest ethnic group in Ghana, in their art and everyday items. Its name in the Akan language means "chain" or "link of a chain." It symbolizes brotherhood and cooperation between people. We have adopted this symbol as the logo of the Nyarkoa Foundation because those ideas represent our views and objectives.

## A PUMP PROBLEM FIXED

Many villages in rural sub-Saharan Africa rely on hand-pumps on wells for their water supply. The pumps break down with use, and in many cases,

residents either do not have the resources to fix them or do not know who to turn to for help. That can result in long periods of reliance on water sources of poor quality.

In August 2018, REDEP learned of a village where the pump had been broken for a year, and their water source was the puddle shown in the picture below.



**Former water source**

REDEP had planned to do pump repairs in other villages in the following month but were able to stop in this village and make the necessary repairs.



**Pump repair in progress.**

The work was done and the pump was quickly put to use.



**The pump is back in operation.**

Finally, buckets were filled and people carried clean water home.



**Carrying water home from the pump.**

This was a lucky event because REDEP learned of a problem and was able to respond quickly. We try to show people how to prevent pumps from breaking down and tell them what to do when a pump needs repair so they don't have to wait a year for help.

### **PUMP TECHNICIAN WORKSHOPS**

Women are responsible for family water supply and can spend many hours each day collecting water and carrying it home. In the story above, the pump was

close by and there was no need to carry the water a long distance.

We believe that since women are responsible for the family water supply, they should have the knowledge to maintain the pumps in their villages and the authority to help set the rules for the operation of the pump. Also, they should help establish a culture of paying for water with the money to be saved to make future pump repairs.

To prepare women for those roles, in October 2013, we held our first 3-day workshop to train women from the villages in our water program to maintain pumps. Details are given in Newsletters 7 and 8 that can be downloaded at <[nyarkoa.org](http://nyarkoa.org)>. Since then, we have added new villages to our program, and some of the original trainees been replaced. As a result, we decided to hold another 3-day workshop in February 2018 to train pump technicians for the new villages.

People from 14 of the 18 communities in our water program attended the workshop. The format combined lectures and discussion sessions in which the participants learned about the critical parts of the type of pump used in their respective communities.



**Discussion session**



They also gained hands-on experience by removing a broken pump from a well, dismantling and repairing it, and then reinstalling it.



**Repairing a broken pump**



**Repair completed**



**Trainees, staff and instructors**

The workshop was aimed primarily at women, but a few men also attended. Having men interested in helping with community water issues is a positive step and may lead to greater involvement of the entire communities in water issues.

Additional pictures and a schedule of the workshop activities are being added to our web page at <[nyarkoa.org](http://nyarkoa.org)>.

### **QUARTERLY VILLAGE VISITS**

After the first training workshop in 2013 we began regular quarterly visits to the villages in our program. The purpose is to keep emphasizing the importance to individual and community health of drinking good water following the correct procedures to care for their pumps. At each village, we have a checklist of observations to be made and questions to be asked that allow us to follow changes in attitudes and practices, so that we now have a record extending back to 2013. As we have noted in earlier newsletters we have found that the pumps were being maintained and that saving rates in many of the villages have improved. Those trends are continuing to the present. Note that the improved saving is largely the result of teaching the trainees about the actual costs of pump parts and repair and the need for the communities to take responsibility for keeping their pumps operating.

### **COMMUNITY SANITATION PROGRAM**

Our program to improve community sanitation mainly involves encouraging the construction of family latrines to replace the practice of open defecation.

While many villages have separate community latrines for men and women, these are often not well cared for so people continue the practice of open defecation.

There are currently four villages in our CLTS program; two that began in 2017, and two more were added in 2018. The program requires an introductory training session for each village, where the instruction emphasizes the importance of good community sanitation practices and personal hygiene. Construction of family latrines is stressed and individuals from the community are encouraged to take leadership roles in the program.

The ultimate goal is for the communities to completely end the practice of open defecation, but that will take time. At present, REDEP makes monthly visits to the villages to encourage progress and to reinforce what they have learned. Those visits are important, but they are time-consuming and will ultimately limit the number of communities that we can bring into the program. Thus, we need to develop community leaders. We are also encouraging the villages to establish goals and track progress themselves so less of REDEP's time is required.



**Instruction session**

The villages added in 2017 have made good progress. Two family latrines were

completed last year in those villages and eight more are under construction. Two latrines are under construction in one of the villages added in 2018.



**Start of a family latrine**

People in the villages seem to like this program because it gives them the knowledge and encouragement to solve a problem that they were aware of and needs to be addressed. We anticipate that they will continue to make progress as they become more confident in their ability to run the program themselves.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Foundation's work depends on the generous contributions of our donors. Funds donated to the Foundation are spent only on the projects in Ghana; the Directors pay all travel and administrative costs.

Donations can be sent to the Nyarkoa Foundation:

c/o Lewis Shapiro  
P.O. Box 80993  
Fairbanks, AK 99708

or:

c/o Barry Shapiro  
333 E. 43<sup>rd</sup> St Apt 505  
New York, NY 10017