



# Nyarkoa Foundation

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Welcome to the eighth 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. We also work closely with AMEFS Eng. Ltd., a Ghanaian firm that sells and repairs hand-pumps. They also train the women in the pump caretakers program which is discussed below.

The symbol in the banner above is called 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.

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS THIS YEAR**

### **Pump Caretakers Training Program**

In our last newsletter (which can be downloaded from our website at <[www.nyarkoa.org](http://www.nyarkoa.org)>) we described a program that began in October, 2013 to train 2 women from each of the 14 villages where we had repaired or

replaced hand pumps on borehole wells to maintain their village pumps. The training was done in a 3-day workshop that was organized by REDEP and taught mainly by personal from AMEFS. The program is based on the idea that women need to be involved in managing water supply in rural villages if clean water is to be available on a sustainable basis.

The women were taught the basics of pump maintenance, and they assembled and disassembled pumps. They learned the costs of the pumps, spare parts and labor to make repairs, so they understand the need for their communities to save. They also received instruction on the health benefits of using clean well water instead of water from surface sources.

In most programs to provide clean water to rural communities, the sponsors leave when the work is done. That lack of follow up is probably responsible for the fact that, at any time, at least 50% of the hand pumps in sub-Saharan Africa are not working. To counter this we provide continuing support for the women we train. We visit their villages about every 3 months to support their work, help with minor repairs, give refresher training and learn whether the information that the trainees brought back with them has had any influence.

We have now made 6 tours to visit all the villages. We have a checklist of observations to make and questions to

ask and we use the results to compile a record of changes in behavior and attitude that may have resulted from the training.

As reported in the last newsletter, the results of the first 3 tours were generally positive, and the results of the 3 additional tours since then continue the trend. Many of the items on the checklists were answered positively in the same way at all the villages. The pump areas were generally clean and well drained, the pumps are checked often, loose bolts are tightened to prevent wear, and children are not allowed to play at the pumps anymore. More communities have started collecting money for taking water from the wells and are saving it for future needs. They are now more willing to show us their bankbooks than was the case in the past. Responses to questions about the value of clean water for health show that there is also more awareness of that issue.

We also think that women are becoming more interested in what we are trying to do. The picture below shows a group of women gathered at a village pump site where a visiting REDEP staff member is speaking about the program.



**Listening to REDEP**

We believe that our efforts are bringing positive results, but we need to continue to visit the villages regularly and enforce the improving status of the women we have trained as local experts on pumps, water, and health issues.

There are still a few villages where we don't see progress. The problems seem to be related to traditional matters, lack of leadership, or disagreements between groups within the communities. REDEP is aware of the situations and its staff is working to help solve the problems.

The pump at one of the villages visited on a tour needed to be repaired. That gave the women we had trained a chance to show others what they had learned. They first removed the top section of the pump, which is laying on the pad in the picture below. They then repaired and reassembled the pump and the next picture below shows that it worked.



**Working on a broken pump**

Note that technicians from AMEFS Eng. were on the tour to give advice as the work was done.

### **Three New Villages Added This Year**

This year we added three new villages to our program for a total of 17. People

from those villages learned about our program and approached us asking for



**A working pump after the repair**

help. When we began our work in Ghana we had to visit the villages and explain that we would fix their broken pump if they agreed to pay for the water and save the money for future pump repairs. That was not what people were used to doing, and some were (and still are) reluctant to do that. So when people from new villages approach us for help with their pump problems, knowing that we expect them to pay for water, we think that indicates spreading acceptance of what we are doing.

The pumps in two of the new villages were worn and not working, so they were replaced. The pump at the third village had also been down for some time and the people had collected money to have it repaired. However, the repair was not done properly, so they came to REDEP for help and the pump was repaired.

The new villages add about 1200 to 1500 people to the number residents of the villages we have helped. The total should now be about 4,500 to 5,000 people. We have also improved the water systems in two high schools each

with 1500 students plus staff, and two health clinics that serve people from many communities. Thus, the number of people we have helped to gain access to reliable sources of clean water is probably about double the number in the villages alone.

### **Remedial Pump Repair**

There were also three villages where we had previously repaired pumps but the work was not good. We have since replaced the technician who did the work, but the Foundation was obligated to correct those problems and that was done in June 2015 by AMEFS Eng Ltd.

### **FUTURE PLANS**

#### **Regular visits to villages to continue**

We plan to keep making the quarterly visits to the villages for some time. That was planned from the start of the program, and the women tell us that they want the visits to continue. The visits are important to maintaining the momentum we believe we have now. Also, women do sometimes leave the villages (two trainees left one village this Spring to return to school) or decide that they can no longer do the work. In that case, new women need to be trained to replace them and we are beginning to plan for a second workshop. It will be similar to the one in 2013 and will train new pump caretakers and give refresher training to those who are still active. That will be valuable for all, because we have learned about the problems that the trainees face when they return home and can help prepare them to be more effective communicators of the messages about health and clean water that we are

promoting. REDEP and AMEFS Eng. will prepare for that workshop.

Regular visits allow us to build trust with the people, identify problems in the communities and solve them with education or negotiate solutions.

Each sequence of visits requires most of 6 days spread over two consecutive weekends. That represents a significant part of our budget and will probably limit our ability to do large projects such as the health clinics and high schools that we have done previously.

### **New Villages**

Another village asking for assistance with their water problems recently approached REDEP, and we will add them to the program. They will also be added to the schedule of regular visits in the future, along with the three villages added in the Spring of 2015. That will bring the total to 18 villages.

### **Community-Led Total Sanitation**

The background for the Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) program was described in our last newsletter. Briefly, CLTS is an educational program that is designed to encourage people in rural communities to address sanitation issues and end the practice of open defecation. CLTS training involves persuading the people to solve the problem themselves, using their own resources. They can choose to build community facilities, individual family latrines, or possibly other arrangements. This is in keeping with the idea that whatever solutions they decide on will be their responsibility to maintain in the future.

REDEP has had training in how to initiate a CLTS program and we plan to start it as a pilot project in two or three villages this year. CLTS programs require frequent visits and this has been a problem with similar efforts in other areas. However, our tours to support the pump caretakers already bring us to the villages frequently, so a CLTS program should fit well with our current project schedule.

### **Rainwater collection systems for schools**

In the last newsletter we noted that we were looking for small projects to do to help elementary and junior high schools improve their water supplies by collecting rainwater. All that is required are corrugated roofs with gutters on the eaves to collect the water, and a tank for storage. We had hoped to start some such projects, but time and funding constraints did not allow us to do so last year so we will try again in the coming year.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Foundation's accomplishments depend on the contributions of our donors. Funds received are spent only on projects in Ghana, since the Directors pay all administrative and travel costs.

Donations can be sent to:

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