

PROGRESS

The quarterly newsletter from Doctors Worldwide - Autumn 2007

Children collecting water in Northern Ghana



GHANA PROJECT READY TO GO

Dr I Najmi relates a brief account of his experiences on his needs assessment trip to Ghana.



Map credit: www.theodora.com/maps

I have travelled enough to know that the only true way of revealing a place is to spend time there. So watching 'Blood Diamond' and reading a guidebook did not prepare me for Africa.

This is not the first time DWW had set foot in Ghana, Preliminary ground work had already been done a few months earlier, with an em-

phasis on the areas in Northern Ghana. The purpose of our trip was to consolidate the ideas and projects in the making.

These included evaluating the feasibility of a training to build local capacity in the Tamale Teaching Hospital as well as the surrounding satellite community clinics.



Another key objective was to assess appropriate strategies for a clean and safe water provision programme in areas lacking clean drinking water.

During our stay we delivered a short trauma management course, which was gratefully received by our Ghanaian colleagues. Seeing as this was the main hospital in North Tamale and as such received secondary and tertiary referrals from all of the north province, including a number of serious to fatal road traffic accidents a week, I was shocked to see that the emergency department had empty oxygen cylinders, a few venflons, one chest drain kit and very rudimentary equipment.

We also travelled out to several communities which were only easily accessed by 4x4 vehicles. Water is a scarce and precious commodity in these areas. Whole communities would relocate to be near to a high yield water hole, which on many occasion seemed to be no more than water collected by rainfall dams. On closer inspection of the drums being carried by children, we would find them full of a light brown murky looking fluid which was used for drinking. With the water problem comes the issue of water borne infections, it humbled me to think that the quality of drinking water in our toilets is much better than what these people have available. It

did not come as much of a surprise that guinea worm is endemic in the region.

It is obvious that any help here in any of the areas mentioned will always be very gratefully received and absorbed like a drop in the hot sand. It is also true that Africa will also be Africa, and these problems have endured for generations, but the compelling reason I went there was simply because I believe in the saying “ ...And if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind”.

Apart from the clinical side we spent a lot of time fact-finding, which involved meeting officials and dignitaries. We even got to meet the King of the Dagbon People in North Tamale who was the most content person I met there, which is a surprise considering he has 38 wives!

Ghana is a great place to volunteer. If you do go there, check out Mole National Park.

On a final note, the guidebooks were right about the people in Ghana in being the friendliest in Africa. I was impressed by their gentle nature and the fact that they spoke English was a great help to us as we travelled around the region.

Soon after this journey, Ghana was one of many countries affected by flooding this autumn. Doctors Worldwide contributed to the relief effort in Ghana through its local partner Northern Ghana Aid (NOGAID).

Through these efforts food and medicines were distributed directly to affected communities, benefitting in the region of 1400 families. In addition, donated funds were used to purchase health insurance (which is a new government scheme in Ghana to provide for health care) for a year for 200 women and children.

This response was only made possible by generous donations amounting to more than \$40000 from Doctors Worldwide.

Volunteers needed for Ghana

Over the last six months, Doctors Worldwide has been working with a local NGO in Ghana (NOGAID) to establish a programme for volunteers in Northern Ghana.

We are now in a position to accept applications from volunteers who may be interested in working in Ghana during 2008, commencing in January.

The project will be based in the northern city of Tamale, and work will be centred at the Tamale Teaching Hospital as well as clinics in surrounding area. This is a long term development project with scope for expansion as further needs and opportunities are identified. DWW will provide accommodation, food and local transport.

Person Specification

No previous volunteer experience is required, although preference will be given to those who have had previous experience abroad and/or have attended one of our courses.

Essential:

Speak English

Be able to commit a minimum of two weeks.

Background Experience:

If at specialist level (inc. GPs/family health practitioners), we would expect you to fulfill a role more geared to teaching and training as well as clinical duties and looking at infrastructure/system support.

If at trainee level, we would expect more in terms of clinical duties as well as fact-finding. Depending on experience, teaching roles may be deemed more appropriate.

Nursing colleagues are welcomed, where senior and junior nurses would respectively adopt similar roles as those mentioned above.

To register your interest, please forward and up-to-date copy of your CV along with your dates of travel to

info@doctorsworldwide.org.

In addition, if not done so already, submit your volunteer form at the link below.

<http://www.doctorsworldwide.org/volunteer.shtml>

Please note that applications for travel in January and February should reach us by 14th December 2007 so that we can arrange for local registration in Ghana.

Following on through next year, applications must be received no later than 6 weeks prior to the proposed date of travel.

For brief info about the project, visit

<http://www.doctorsworldwide.org/projects/ghana/index.shtml>

further updates will follow.

All volunteers will receive a project manual detailing information about the project and local circumstances.

We look forward to hearing from you soon, and encourage your participation in this exciting new project. Please circulate this email through your networks.

Please contact us if you need further information.

Dr Kani Torun

CEO

Doctors Worldwide



The Ennerdale Valley Trek

A special thank you to all those who took part and supported us during the summer trek through the stunning Ennerdale valley in The Lake District. This is the second year which we have run this trek, which was organised and led by Steven Longden. We were blessed once again with wonderful weather, good company and



A sincere thank you to those who participated in challenges this year, raising more than £5500

earthquake relief efforts in Pakistan, decided to take on the challenge of Kilimanjaro. To his

a wholesome cooked meal at the end of a long days walk to the youth hostel. This year we raised £4400 pounds, which will be divided up between Doctors Worldwide and The Black-sail Youth Hostel, where we spent the night.

We hope to be able to maintain this walk as an annual fixture, so look out for next year's trek.

For more information on Ennerdale Valley which is being carefully managed to ensure it's wild beauty, visit www.wildennerdale.co.uk.

The Kilimanjaro Climb

Dr Asif Rao, one of our more adventurous volunteers, having not had enough of mountains during his time assisting in the



credit, not only did he get to the summit of the Africa's highest peak, but raised more than £1500 for Doctors Worldwide in the process.

Awareness Evenings

In an effort to better engage with our volunteers as well as to encourage new participants, we are planning a series of awareness evenings. The format will be fairly relaxed to give the opportunity to ask plenty of questions and to network. The evening will involve a short presentation about Doctors Worldwide, a volunteer account and of course, dinner. We initially intend to hold the evenings in Manchester, Bradford and London. However, if there are current volunteers who would like to arrange further evenings in other cities, please let us know. Places will be limited, and a nominal fee will be charged to cover costs of the meal (no more than £10). Provisional dates are as listed at the bottom of the page, with venues to be confirmed. Please register your interest early in order to ensure that these evenings go ahead. Email najeeb@doctorsworldwide.org to register.

We are always in need of expanding our volunteer base across medical, dental, nursing and allied health specialties, as well as raising more funds in order to facilitate more projects by creating more awareness of the work we do. If you feel you could help in this matter, please contact us with your ideas, whether it be arranging medical meetings, fundraising dinners or networking events. In addition, if you have experience in international health and relief work, we would value your efforts in developing new projects and standard operating protocols.

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You will be surprised at how much can be achieved with a little more commitment, and if you can't commit the time, the 'little more' will cost you approximately £5 a month, depending on how much you value your time!

Go on, fill in the form, tick the gift aid box, and if you pay more than 40% tax on your earnings, you can even claim back on your donations from the taxman!

It truly is a win-win situation.

| EVENTS | FEB 2 | FEB 9 | FEB 16 |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|  | DWW Awareness Evening Leeds/Bradford | DWW Awareness Evening Manchester | DWW Awareness Evening London |

