



INTERNATIONAL FUND RAISING

TREATS in the South of France

LOCKDOWN FEEDING PROJECTS

Emergency Assistance during Covid

GRADUATION

The 7th annual Graduation report

Come on in for much more...

DEAR SUPPORTERS... 2020 WHAT A YEAR!

You do not need me to tell you that 2020 has been a dreadful year for everyone around the world. TEABAG has had to adapt to the rapidly changing situations as they arise and the Trustees have been meeting, via Zoom, every two weeks to plan our responses to the problems caused by the pandemic.

Generally, the government in Ghana has handled the threats of Corona Virus very well. As soon as the lockdown started in March, they closed the airport and all land borders. According to official figures, the country has suffered a total of 50,874 cases resulting in 323 deaths (figures up to 23 November 2020). The wearing of face masks is compulsory at all times: outside, in the workplace and in all shops. Every shop supplies hand-washing facilities and will not allow anyone to enter unless they wash their hands and wear a mask. Places of worship, hotels, restaurants, beaches, and cinemas were all closed. Public gatherings were banned, and funerals restricted to 25 mourners. All schools, colleges and universities were closed with limited exceptions for students sittings exams.

These sensible and successful measures to control the spread of the virus have caused great hardship to the population. Food prices have risen enormously – often five or six times their original level. Fresh food and vegetables have been difficult to obtain at all. People's savings were soon exhausted, and starvation became a reality for many families in the lower income bracket.

The government schools in our villages were closed in March 2020 and it is hoped that they will reopen in January 2021. This has resulted in TEABAG being unable to provide all our regular support schemes for the schools. I did manage to see most of the sponsored children in February and photograph them receiving their Christmas cards and gifts, however, we have not provided new uniforms, shoes and school supplies this year. Please read further information concerning your donation under the Schoolchildren Sponsorship Scheme in the letter sent to all supporters.

In this edition of the newsletter, we cover the exceptional steps that we have taken during 2020 to help village children, our college students and the elderly of our main village.

As always, we thank you for continuing to support our work as we enter the 20th year as the charity with the silly name!



Roger Gillman
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RECRUITMENT OF NEW STAFF MEMBERS

Our vocational college teaching staff are mostly provided by the Ghanaian Government. However, TEABAG supplements the teaching staff with some directly employed teachers. We also have mandatory national service personnel posted to serve for a period of one academic year. These bright younger people bring fresh energy and enthusiasm to our college during their 12 month posting.

In January 2020, TEABAG appointed three extra highly qualified teachers to boost our teaching capacity and skills. These additions to our teaching strength has proved to be very fruitful. Not only have the vacant positions been filled, but the new tutors have also brought new ideas and skills to our teaching team. We welcome Jonathan, Theo and Stephen to the TEABAG family.



Jonathan Pegu, Theo Buckman & Stephen Appiah Jnr

TEABAG INTERNATIONAL FUND RAISING

During lockdown, two of our overseas supporters organised some online wellness sessions. The inspiration, organisation and planning was the idea of Sophie in Germany and Lauriane in France. The sessions included yoga exercises and other fun activities under the group name of TREATS.

Once restrictions were eased in the South of France, the team were able to hold a 'Wellness Festival' in a friend's beautiful gardens on the Mediterranean coast. The team are planning further activities to support our charity once the current social distancing restrictions are lifted.

The funds raised have already been allocated to purchase various school equipment and supplies to be used across the three villages. We are also investigating buying some projectors to be used as teaching aids at the schools when they reopen, hopefully, in January. Many thanks to all who took part and gave generously.





THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Financial Support for Students

TEABAG primarily supports education and would not usually send money directly to students. However, due to the unprecedented circumstances this year, our college was closed and students returned home to families' whose income had ceased. A large number of our students and their families were living in severe hardship and desperate for food so we arranged a mobile money transfer for all 146 students enrolled at the Mankoadze Vocational College so they could buy basic foodstuffs.

I must commend TEABAG's Mercy Gillman and her team for their hard work they are doing in reaching out to the students with the funds. I have received several calls from both parents and students expressing their gratitude to TEABAG for this support. I want to say the village, parents and students are sincerely grateful. Our relation with the community has been boosted.

*I think this intervention is not just timely and good but also Godly and happy to have given a helping hand.
Special thanks to you all for this generosity.*

*Kind regards
Castro Amoah
Headteacher, Mankoadze Vocational College*

Community Feeding Project

With the on onset of Covid 19, Ghana like other countries was not spared of this pandemic. On the 5th February Ghana had it first confirmed case of covid infection. The infection rate started increasing at an alarming rate even though it was relatively moderate. This necessitated a lockdown of the regional capital cities. The effect of the lockdown was a very high rural urban drift, most of the people in the cities moved to the rural. High rural urban drift coupled with panic buying led to the sky rocketing of the prices of basic food stuffs making it extremely difficult for the rural poor to feed.



Mr Tilman Ripple and his wife Bettina presented an industrial gas hob to the caterers to support the feeding project.

As lockdown was imposed, people living in the village could not travel to earn money or buy food in neighbouring towns to bring back and sell. There was also an issue of lack of food available, and a lack of money.



Teabag at this point made a much needed intervention to feed the most vulnerable in the Mankoadze community - The village feeding programme. It was run by staff at Mankoadze Vocational College and the Mankoadze Health Centre, as well as college students when they returned. We put together a team of opinion leaders, nurses and caterers to provide free meals those who were hard hit by the economic hardships caused the pandemic. A total of 1200 old men and women, children, pregnant and nursing mothers were provided with cooked meals. Either individual portions were prepared (Banku and fish or rice with stew and chicken) or ingredients were packaged up for them to cook meals serving three people and delivered around the village directly to people's homes. This was done at different times during the lockdown to provide sustenance for the very less privilege.

Feeding Program At The College

Feeding in the college to me is one of the most important if not the best intervention which has been introduced. It goes a long way to supporting and sustaining us. Worrying about what to eat especially at the middle and ending part of the term is now a thing of the past.

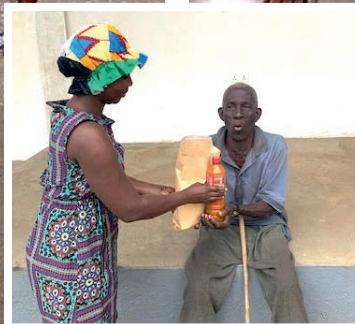
The introduction of the school feeding has really alleviated some burden from me and my parents as well. It started progressively. We were initially fed twice a week, thrice a week and now all the days of the week. The amazing thing is that some of the students cook the food for us. This gives them the opportunity to exhibit their practical skills especially the catering students. A well planned menu is prepared by the students under the supervision of the catering and hospitality tutors.

I really want to use this opportunity to thank TEABAG for such an initiative. I believe the starting of the school farm and bakery house will help to even make it even better.

This is an intervention that other colleges do not have. I count myself privileged to be a student at Mankoadze. I would not hesitate to recommend the college to friends and family who wish to gain employable skills. The feeding component alone could greatly influence their decision to join us.

Thank you very much

Justice Aidoo
Form 2



GRADUATE BUSINESS PROGRAM

Joe Sparks

In February just before 'you know what' dominated our lives, I had the pleasure of joining many of the other Trustees on a trip to Ghana. Looking back, our timing couldn't have been better. It was so useful to have a group of trustees together, we were able to really think about impact and how we can gather momentum with projects.

After we watched the graduation of our students, conversations in the following days focussed on student outcomes. We know that the college provides fantastic training and experience for the students, but like any school, we don't have much control over what happens next. I began to discuss the possibility of starting a business start up program. As the world changed over the following weeks and months I became even more determined that our leaving students had something to go to after they leave. With the appointment of Theo, our new business studies teacher I knew that this would be possible. Theo, Castro and I discussed the options, I shared our ideas with Anne and Chris and we began work on what is now the Graduate Business Program.

15 graduate students successfully applied for the course. They work together, prepare meals and share food together and develop their business plans together. They have become quite the team of entrepreneurs. They learn about time management, business strategies, customer care, and much more. Together, they have gained practical experience running local projects in the village alongside starting their own businesses. In December, they will leave to start up their own businesses. These will be a combination of individual and group work. Funding for this project is raised by the Green Room Market garden project. Students in the The Green Room School, UK, grow, harvest and sell vegetables in order for their friends in Ghana to start their own businesses. Our hope is that in the future, Green Room students will be able to visit Ghana and see the businesses they help fund.

Special thanks must go to both Theo Buckman and Richard Annan who have ensured that the project is successful. Theo has been exceptional teaching the students, building a team mentality and perhaps most importantly, managing expectations with regards to their businesses. It's important to all involved that the opportunities we provide are realistic and relevant to the students so that they can build sustainable business ventures. Richard has given up his time to help provide mentorship for the students alongside valuable skills and knowledge on how to start and run business in Ghana.

My hope is that next year and beyond, students in their final year will be able to have practical business experience in order for them to be successful when they leave the college.





TEABAG PAYS EXAM REGISTRATION FEES

TEABAG, as part of their benevolent activities, fully paid the exam registration fees for all students taking part in the NABPTEx intermediate examination. The intermediate examination is conducted every year for final year students which is aimed at assessing the students on the subject they have been taught. It is one of the major external examinations for the students. Most students find it difficult to partake in such exams because of financial constraint. They end up dropping out of school or graduating without a certificate.

The payment of the registration fees went a long way of alleviating hardship on parents and positioning the students to have a sound mind for effective learning and maximum output.

Students of Mankoadze College, both old and new would like to extend their profound gratitude to TEABAG

Students of Mankoadze College, both old and new would like to extend their profound gratitude to TEABAG for such a great intervention. We the students will repay this by learning very hard and producing a very excellent result at the end of our academic years. More students would be encouraged to enrol in the school as there is a hope of succeeding in their life endeavours.

The Students, 2020



VILLAGES HEALTH CLINICS

The Clinics and health outposts in the villages provide the only access that local families have to health care. We are fortunate in having a wonderful head nurse in Mary Amoah, who is also a fully qualified mid-wife. TEABAG and individuals who travel to Ghana with us, have always helped the clinics as they play such a vital role in the well-being of these isolated and impoverished communities.

The hand knitted blankets and donated baby clothes have become a feature of our work with the clinics and are distributed by the mid-wife as an incentive for the ladies of the village to give birth in the clinic rather than at home.

We provide water, medical equipment and supplies to the clinics. Recently, one of our supporters donated to have the Mankoadze clinic decorated. The photos show 'before' and 'after'.



EGGAR'S SCHOOL CONTINUES TO SUPPORT TEABAG

In 2019, 24 students from Eggar's School in Hampshire visited our project in Ghana, forming a long-lasting partnership with the TEABAG Vocational College and the village schools. Eggar's had planned another school trip to our village but the pandemic resulted in these plans being postponed until 2022. The students from Hampshire have maintained contact with their new friends in Ghana and are actively informed of our progress and developments. In October last year the students held a 'non-uniform' day and raised £562. They are planning a similar event in February 2021.

Eggar's Headmaster, Mr Patrick Sullivan, is now a Trustee of TEABAG and is taking a leading role in the TEABAG Teacher's Association which aims to develop and enhance the professional training of the teachers in three villages and at the vocational college.



GRADUATION AND EXHIBITION

Our seventh annual graduation and exhibition took place on the 1st of February 2020. The event was marked by speeches by various dignitaries, cultural display, cadet parade and awarding of certificates to graduates who excelled in their various departments. Six trustees were able to attend; Roger & Mercy Gillman, Tom Yendell, Chris Moller, Anne Sparrowhawk and Joe Sparks. Also in attendance were parents, community members, the district chief executive and district director of education.

The second part of the event was an exhibitions by the various departments. The departments showcased finished products and also organized live projects so that parents, friends and other guests got a fair idea of the training that students undergo for the three year period.

Another exciting part of the program is the modeling of various clothing sewn by the students. One of the trustees, Tom Yendell happily joined the modeling to show his clothing that was sewn by one graduate.

***To crown the event,
Mr. Chris Moller
commissioned our
newly installed
solar facility.***





CONSTRUCTION OF NEW BOYS HOSTEL

Since the onset of the college 11 years ago, our infrastructure has seen significant improvement every year. We started with an abandoned fisheries building that was renovated and converted into accommodation for students and teachers. With the increase in our numbers the need for space and improved living condition become paramount.

In 2017, an 80 bed capacity hostel was constructed for the girls. This eased the congestion at the old hostel. In November 2019 a new building to house all the boys and two staff members was commenced. The Covid outbreak and the lockdown stalled the progress a bit as the most of the builders who were from the building department had to go home. We, however, managed to get to the roofing level and are most likely to complete in the first quarter of 2021. Many thanks to TEABAG



TEABAG TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

TEABAG Teachers' Association (TTA) is a new initiative that has been set up to support teachers in Mankoadze Vocational College and the kindergarten, primary and secondary schools in Mankoadze, Abrekum and Onyadze. The TTA is independent of the structure of each school/college and is designed to support the teachers in their professional development, in turn improving the education of the children. It provides an independent support platform for teachers to share ideas, develop their career and raise standards of teaching and teacher wellbeing.



The Education And Book Appeal: Ghana
Teachers' Association



Evelyn Sapak

Evelyn Sapak, teacher at Mankoadze kindergarten, has been appointed as the administrator and Jonathan Pegu, teacher at Mankoadze Vocational College, is the chairman. We are preparing to launch the TTA early in 2021 after schools resume in January.

The TEABAG Teachers' Association will also be responsible for organising the schools' membership with PIXL International, an educational organisation that works with schools across the world to raise education standards and give students a better future and brighter hope.



TEABAG SPONSORSHIP

Unfortunately due to the schools being closed since March we have not been able to allocate the sponsorship funds to support the education of any children. All funds will be allocated to furthering the development of the three village schools we look after in Mankoadze, Abrekum and Onyadze. However, if you have sponsored a child this year through our TEABAG sponsorship programme and would prefer to receive your money back please contact us and we will be able to arrange a refund - Contact us at: info@teabagcharity.org

Thank you to everyone that has donated

TEABAG would like to express sincere thanks to everyone that has donated this year. We appreciate each and every donation and every penny makes a difference. 100% of all funds raised go directly to the cause.



As the schools will be returning in January, if you'd like to continue your sponsorship please see below....

How You Can Help and How to Donate...

If you fancy taking a trip to Ghana, we have an information sheet ready to email to you that will answer many of the questions you may have. We would love to have people with teaching experience but we will make good use of you whatever skill set you can bring to us. Drop us an email - info@teabagcharity.org - or give us a call to receive your copy.

Sponsor a child

Sponsor a child to go to school. This costs £20 per year, £15 of this is spent on uniform, shoes, exam and sports costs. The remaining £5 is given to the family in local currency at Christmas. Please contact Roger Gillman for more information.



Donate money at our website - www.teabagcharity.org - by clicking on the **Virgin Money Giving** icon.



When you purchase items on **Amazon**, sign in via **Amazon Smile**, your shopping experience and costs are exactly the same but you can nominate TEABAG as your charity to receive a percentage of your spend.



Our account number is also published here. If you deposit into the account, please let us know if you are donating to any particular appeal ie: sponsorship, feeding program, general funds. Finally, a big **"THANK YOU"** to all our wonderful supporters.



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