

Three months in Ghana

It seemed great and meaningful to spend 3 months in Ghana. Last year I was there for 2 months, and the time was too short for everything I wanted to arrange. I was a bit nervous about it though. I would be alone more often as the schools didn't have holidays and my sisters don't live around the corner. Fortunately, the first month was I together with Stef (my partner and board member). We had to make a lot of decisions for the foundation, which is much easier when you are in Ghana together.

In the long period of 3 months, I have not yet done everything I wanted to do. Not because I didn't have the time, but because my body indicated it needed to slow down a bit. So, it became a period not only of working but also of relaxing and reflecting. I really started 'living' in Ghana. I made new contacts and got to know the roads around Koforidua. With my rented red Toyota Yaris, we visited several places via bumpy roads. A friend asked me, 'Do they drive on the left or right side of the road in Ghana?' It should be right but because there are so many potholes in the road surface, you choose the best route to drive. That can be left or right. And really, you get used to it... ③

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Enjoy reading! Warm greetings, Moniek



Webshop for the Quashie School Project

Finally, there it is, a real webshop!

Selling through the Facebook shop was sometimes very complicated and not everyone has or trusts Facebook. Our products are too good not to sell, so I designed and set up the shop during my stay in Ghana. Various handmade baskets, handprint batik fabrics and cooking bags from Ghana can now be ordered through the <u>Quashie-shop</u>. Of course, we also have our beautiful mandala cards and various small items on sale.

If you would like to pay a live visit to our 'shop', you can make an appointment via email or phone.

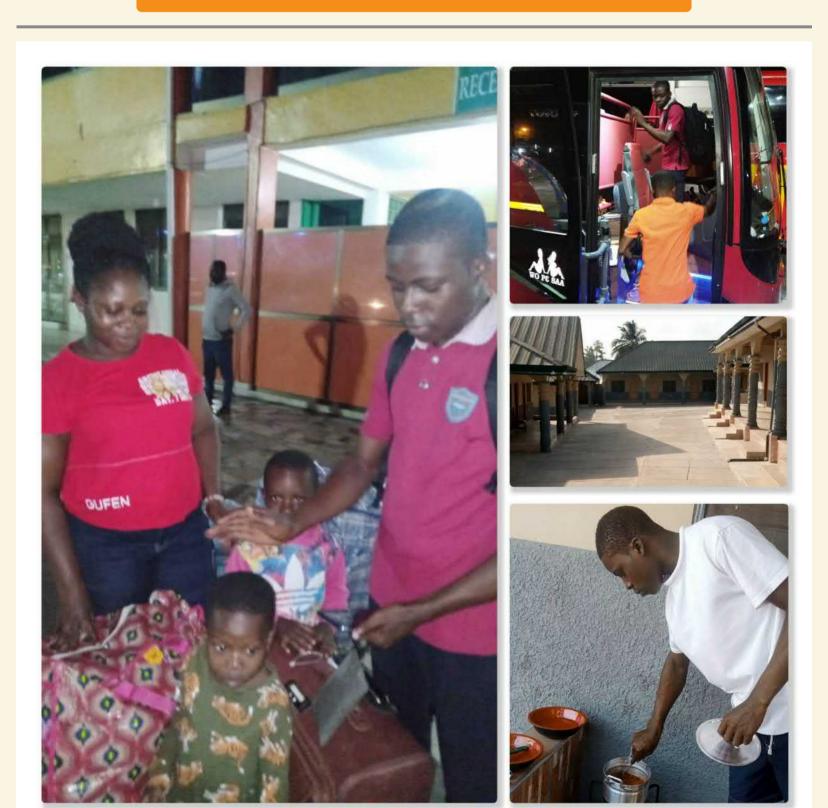
Visit our webshop



Final project Oyoko Health Centre

The digital patient record project for Oyoko Health Centre has been completed. It is very special to have been at all stages of this project. On 31 March, the project was officially concluded with a simple and beautiful ceremony. Many speakers and many words of praise. I think it was special to meet Oyoko's Queen Mother Nana Akoma Serwaa Bonsu (pictured with black and white scarf). She is the 'female chief' and takes care of all women and children in Oyoko. The whole team of Oyoko Health Centre and also the people of Oyoko thank all the donors for what they have done. It is a great gift they have received. You can read and download the entire report with lots of photos via the button below.

Read the entire report project Oyoko Health Centre



New start for Emmanuel

Emmanuel started at the College of Health & Well-being in Kintampo in February, where he is studying oral hygiene. His little brothers Vanderwal and Fifi, and his mother Ama wave him off. The brothers don't like it. They don't know exactly what is going on, but they feel it is not good for them. Big hugs and quick boarding the bus is the best way to dry their tears quickly. In Kintampo, Emmanuel has found a well-organised hostel where he will stay for the next three years. And yes, that of course includes cooking your own meals. Emmanuel can cook wonderfully, and we will have to miss his cooking for 3 years, unfortunately. He feels completely at home. In the beginning it takes some adjusting but he has already found friends among his classmates. Emmanuel will get there, I am sure!



Students Technical University

'These 3 months have been the most inspiring months of my life,' says Albert (pictured right). 'I have entered a different world. Maybe for Owusu (pictured left) it's very normal but really, I don't know what's happening to me. Just the way I am treated, that I am asked what I like to do, and we discuss who does what tasks. Really it is so special to me. You guys treat me like family and that has been from day one, when I came to meet Owusu. I feel so happy and so grateful. Thank you Moniek, I will never never forget this'.

Albert has been a student of the Quashie School Project since this year. Owusu has been a student for some time but the life Albert talks about is still special even for Owusu. In his stories, I often hear about his 'former' life. Being treated humanely, something so normal for me, is not a given here. Children are there to perform tasks, full stop! Can you imagine how many generations there has been 'suppression' of creativity.

My work for the foundation is what Owusu especially notices. I spend hours behind the PC writing and sorting out photos for reports and this newsletter. Sales of products in the Netherlands continue as usual. I write private messages to donors who sponsor a student and during my stay I set up the webshop. 'I thought the money just always came in but now I see how much work you do' says Owusu. When I show him the webshop I get another compliment, 'really, this is great. Even my fellow students studying for this don't get this done. I think it is very clever that you have done this'.

Albert has yet to find his way in Koforidua but Owusu now has a good base here. He gives private lessons to two primary school children, guides his fellow students who have technical questions and repairs phones and computers. In this way, he earns some money to support himself. In turn, I find that admirable.

Would you also like to sponsor one of our students and keep up to date with his development? Click here to get in touch.



Festival of ideas

It's a very inspiring evening! A 'festival of ideas' has been organised at the technical university in Koforidua. The theme is 'creating the next job opportunities for tomorrow's graduates'. Our student Owusu arranged for me to attend. In groups of five, the students present their 'idea'.

There are lots of great ideas such as a platform where:
you can find and order from companies with Ghanaian handicraft products
all pest control companies are listed, and you can make an appointment
students can see where a room is available and book it
students can find internships and so on.

I also see a digital patient system for hospitals and clinics. Hey, where have I heard that before? This day is the first presentation, and the students will continue to develop their idea. In July is the 2nd presentation of the elaborated ideas. The air is vibrating with enthusiasm, and everyone is eager for me to come and watch and listen to their presentation. I am still reminiscing!





A visit to the nautical college

Paakow has left for his mission in Nigeria, something he has been very much looking forward to. This is not part of our school project, so we will miss him for 2 years. Before his departure, he would like to show us the school of his dreams, the 'Regional Maritime University' in Accra/Tema. This university has been around since 1958 and has partnerships with the Gambia, Cameroon, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Paakow is a student who is practical, what he learns must be useful and logical. At this school, he is in for a treat because everything taught is useful and the background of everything is explained. A teacher gives us a tour of all the buildings and departments. Computer lab, room with simulators where you learn to sail, technical departments and a swimming pool with lifeboat where you learn how to behave underwater and during storms or danger. Discipline is high, so a lot is asked of students. Not only Paakow but we too stared our eyes out.

Paakow normally is very talkative and asks a thousand questions when we are on the road with him, but on the way back, in the car he remained dead silent. He was overwhelmed by all he had seen and heard. It made a deep impression on him.



Meeting with Louisa

Louisa started at her favourite Senior High School in Cape Coast last year. First-year students are not allowed visitors. This helps them get used to their school environment.

This year, we can happily meet Louisa. She is very happy to finally see 'daddy Stef' again. Louisa is our youngest student and only girl. Our other students feel connected to her and are also very curious to know how Louisa is doing. She is doing well, only struggling with getting up early. At a Senior High School, the day starts at 4am with self-study. Then everyone has to clean up their own section in the dormitory and make the bed. After showering, there is a communal breakfast. Classes usually start at 7 am to 4 pm. Before and after dinner, there is self-study again.

Louisa has a nice class and good teachers, she lets us know. In this second year, she has become class captain. I hear it from one of her teachers, because she doesn't mention it herself. He also tells us that Louisa is an outstanding student, but she has to keep doing her best to remain outstanding. Sometimes she 'relaxes' too easily, something that is no longer allowed in this 2nd year. So, Louisa will have to go the extra mile, despite her very good results.



Sequel Homeland Oyoko

It has become a pain in the neck, our Homeland Oyoko project. The plan to work with a teacher and students from the university in Kumasi is not working. Our back neighbour keeps saying that a marker of our land is not in the right place and there are a lot of stones on the land, which worries me a lot. I am tempted to sell the land, but....

Our advisor and supporter Isaac knows an architect in our area, we should contact him. No sooner said than done. Architect Amet comes to take a look at our land. 'What a beautiful view he says', but he too sighs 'what a lot of stones'. Only he doesn't let it put him off. Amet takes photos of the stones and soil and a video of the surroundings. 'What do you guys want,' is his sincere question. First, we would like a 3D map of our land, so that we can rearrange our plan. After all, building on a hill in Ghana is different from building in The Netherlands. A follow-up appointment is made to take photos of the land with a drone. These photos will be converted into a 3D model.

Meanwhile, there has been a good conversation with the back neighbour. Our other advisor and supporter Lucy joins David, the neighbour on the left, in a conversation with the back neighbour. David grows maize on our land and keeps an eye on it this way. I don't speak Twi and watch the entertaining scene from a distance. Actually, I do agree with the back neighbour because when I look at the broad lines of the land (through the trees and bushes), there's a weird twist in it. So even though the land is officially measured by a surveyor, we move the pole to the left and everyone is happy, especially the back neighbour.

At the time of writing, Amet is working on the 3D floor plan. There is regular contact, what a relief! Very different from our previous lecturer/architect. However, Amet also turns out to be a teacher and is willing to work with our architecture students, provided they are fully committed. I am hopeful for a good continuation of our Homeland project. Of course, I will keep you updated.





The <u>Quashie-shop</u> sells products through markets and fairs. There is a changing range of Cooking Bags, Ghanaian jewellery, handwoven baskets, artisan batik fabrics and handmade Mandela cards. There are also beautiful products from donors who support the Quashie School Project. All profits will benefit the Quashie School Project.

At the time of writing, these markets are known:

- Friday 19 May <u>Crea&Smulmarkt</u> in
- Bakkeveen
 Saturday 27 May <u>Lekker&Kunstig</u> in Appelscha
- Saturday, June 17 <u>Zeepfabriek Suver</u> in Kollumerzwaag
- Saturday 5 August <u>Markt van Melk en</u> <u>Honing</u> in Zuidlaren

Rather donate than buy products? Click this button and give what your heart desires.



Groundnut soup

Of all the things we have eaten in the past 3 months, groundnut soup was the most favourite. Several variations can be found on the internet, but this recipe is from our students Owusu and Albert.

Ingredients 4 persons

- 1 onion2 cloves of garlic
- 30 g fresh ginger root
- 150 grams of tomato puree
- 200/250 grams of 100% groundnut paste
- 1 chilli
- 1 chicken stock cube
- I chicken store
 11. water
- II. water
 Extra water
- 1 chicken drumstick p.p.
- Salt to the taste
- 2 cups white rice
- 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil

Tip

- 1. Take groundnut paste with
- no additives.2. You can replace the chicken with smoked fish or serve a hard-boiled egg with the groundnut soup.

Preparation

- Bring the drumsticks to a boil in a litre of water (or as much water until they are submerged) with the stock cube. Boil gently for 8/10 minutes and place the closed pan in the cooking bag.
- Bring 2 cups of rice to a boil with 4 cups of salted water and cook for 2 minutes. Place the closed pan in the cooking bag.
- Put the tomato paste and Groundnut paste in a
- bowl, add a cup of water and knead until smooth.
 Put pieces of pealed onion, garlic, pepper and ginger in the blender. Add a little water and blend
- until smooth. If necessary, add a little more water.
 Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a pan, turn down the boat to low and add the opion mixture, stir briefly.
- heat to low and add the onion mixture, stir briefly and then add the groundnut mixture with 2 cups of water. Keep stirring as the mixture comes to a boil. If it is too thick, add some more water. The mixture is good when the oil floats on top. Turn off the heat and wait for the chicken to be done (about an hour in the cooking bag)
- Add the broth with chicken to the groundnut mixture, add salt if necessary and bring to the boil again. Simmer for 5 min and place in the cooking bag.

The soup is ready now but letting it steep for an hour will make it more flavourful. You can choose to boil the rice only now. This is ready within an hour, but can be left in the cooking bag for longer without a problem. In the centre of each plate, scoop a generous portion of rice and 'drape' the groundnut soup around it. Place the drumstick on top of the rice and serve the dish warm to hot.



