

NEXUS

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*Ordinary people can make an
extraordinary difference*

SO MANY CHILDREN: BONGBINI SCHOOL, GHANA

BY MARGARET BENNETT



The harmattan, a cool, dry, dust-filled wind, blows across the North East region of Ghana depositing a thick layer of dust from the Sahara.

During the dry season bare, gnarly baobabs and dormant shea trees dot the barren landscape, home to the Mamprusis, who depend on subsistence farming for their livelihood.

Bongbini School, 10 km west of Gambaga, the capital of East Mamprusi Municipality, is very much alive with the constant activity of several hundred eager students.

One hundred and twenty-five energetic kindergarten children, give or take a few owing to the challenge of counting the little bobbing heads, are crowded into one

classroom with two exhausted teachers who have no resources except their own voices and a black chalkboard painted onto the cement wall. In spite of the challenges associated

with attempting to teach such a large group of little ones, they are professional and in control. It's doubtful that either one

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ever has a chance to sit in the single plastic chair in the corner of the room!



Gnarly baobabs and dormant shea trees dot the barren landscape.

Led by their teachers, the children enthusiastically sing for us. They obviously love being in school and adore their teachers (my new heroines, accomplishing the unimaginable!).

This large group has displaced a Grade One class, which has been temporarily packed into the small office of the head teacher, Adishetu Adam. Ms. Adam's room, devoid of furniture, and about half the size of the classroom they normally occupy, is stifling and dark. Windows and a single door on just one side of the room don't permit any breezes to flow through. These children, about 40 of them, sit on the crumbling cement floor with their notebooks in front of them. Their teacher, a smiling, personable young man, invites them to sing for us, so they rise and perform with gusto. One little boy hops up and down in a hole in the cement, his bare feet raising a cloud of choking dust.



Learning on the floor

Ms. Adam gently touches my arm and quietly expresses her concerns to me. She pleads for financial help to construct a new kindergarten building with three classrooms for the pre-K and K classes, to alleviate the overcrowding in the six existing classrooms, located in two blocks. I find her request more than reasonable. As a teacher myself, I can't imagine how difficult it would be to manage even a fraction of that group in a single room. In fact, she contacts me again by phone before we leave Ghana, begging me not to forget the extreme needs of Bongbini School. How I admire these dedicated and optimistic educators who are giving their all to offer a quality education to the young people in North East Ghana, hopeful that they can be instrumental in creating a better future for their charges, and for their country!

I'm excited that ROHFC has agreed to construct three new classrooms in two phases, *as funds are raised*, to accommodate all these enthusiastic young learners. In fact, since 2022 this tight-knit community, the Parent Teacher Association and BONSU, Bongbini Old Students Union, have already acquired 789 cement blocks, 1000 kg of cement and one truckload of river sand, preparatory to the commencement of construction. They want to use high quality materials rather than the considerably cheaper mud brick (atakpame) to create a structure that will last. They have pledged all the unskilled labour that will be required to realize the architect's blueprints and are committed to create the best possible learning environment for their little ones from the Bongbini and nearby Naminyala communities. ✉



“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”

– Frederick Douglass

Aeta Agriculture and Economic Assistance, Philippines

by George Bunz with information provided by the PREDA Foundation

A comment that volunteers sometimes hear when visiting communities abroad is “Rainbow of Hope for Children Society (ROHFC) reaches communities where governments and large NGOs fail to tread”. ROHFC touches the lives of the neglected. The Aeta (pronounced eye-ta) people in the Philippines are among the most neglected. They are the direct descendants of the first inhabitants. These original Filipino people have survived for millennia on the northern island of the tropical archipelago and are a gentle, peace-loving people who still possess unparalleled experience in jungle survival and knowledge of medicinal plants, herbs, bark and root crops. For centuries, the indigenous Aeta people have been oppressed and marginalized. Poverty, malnutrition, racism, lack of education, and logging and mining having destroyed their ancestral homeland are all too common problems that intertwine making the social reality of Aeta complicated.

Most of the wildlife they depended on has disappeared or has been reduced in number, so that they have lost their traditional means of survival. Notwithstanding, they learned to plant and nurture the logged-over land, growing sweet mango and other crops like banana, avocado and jackfruit. In most of the Aeta communities, access to basic facilities such as water, sanitation and hygiene is still a major concern, as many of the villages are far-flung communities where government support and local infrastructure development is zero to minimal. This is where ROHFC, in partnership with PREDA Foundation in the Philippines, is making an impact.

We are addressing the need for water, sanitation, hygiene and increased income for hundreds of Aeta families. By supporting organic farming practices and expanding access to markets for organic products, the Aeta communities are helping to protect and preserve the environment, considered sacred and their lifeblood. The direct beneficiaries of the program are sixteen organic mango-growing Aeta communities with 491 member-farmers, for a combined total of about 1,000 family members. These Aeta communities are located in Zambales and Bataan provinces and are existing community partners of PREDA Foundation, a project partner of ROHFC since 2002.

To achieve the immediate needs of the Aeta families, ROHFC together with the PREDA Foundation and grassroots Aeta leaders are:



Installing a water line to an Aeta community

1. Installing a water and sanitation system in two Aeta communities where these services are badly needed. The project will maximize the water supply coming from a nearby mountain stream, diverting the stream so the water is delivered and accessed communally. Alongside the installation of WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) facilities, the end-users are receiving workshops on the importance of maintaining proper hygiene and sanitation as a way to combat diseases especially among children.
2. Protecting, preserving and developing the natural environment of the Aeta people by establishing a mango nursery in one of the existing PREDA Foundation partner communities that has experience in maintaining a tree nursery, to ensure that proper care and maintenance is provided to the trees.
3. Providing seeds/saplings to augment organic harvest (banana, rambutan, calamansi, jackfruit and other root crops). Since mango harvesting happens only once per year, the earning from their mango produce cannot really suffice for the needs of Aeta families for the whole year. Thus, it is more ideal if other organic fruits can be marketed and seeds/saplings/shoots propagated continuously by using only good seeds from their harvest instead of buying seeds from agriculture stores every cropping season.

4. Conducting reforestation activities such as annual planting of fruit bearing tree saplings and some forest tree saplings in the ancestral lands of the Aeta indigenous people as part of the project’s commitment to environmental protection. In the years to come, these trees will serve as additional source of livelihood for the Aeta people.

In the few months that this project is been implemented, we are impressed with the industry of the

Aeta families who have already diverted the mountain stream and installed WASH equipment for drinking and irrigation, and have planted a variety of organic fruit tree seedlings. ROHFC supporters who would like to help continue our work with the Aeta families in the Philippines can designate their contributions to “Aeta Community Assistance”. [CR](#)



Clean water from a mountain stream reaches an Aeta community

Our New Board Member –Leah Solheim, Saskatoon



Born and raised in Saskatoon, I currently work as a Corporate Strategy Advisor with the Saskatoon Police Service and am grateful to be able to contribute to ROHFC’s exciting projects around the world. I have diverse professional experience including owning a small pizzeria, teaching English and working as a communications and artisan crafts coordinator for the Centre for Exchange and Solidarity (CIS) during the 6 years that I lived in El Salvador. The CIS is a Salvadoran non-profit organization that receives support from ROHFC for scholarship programming and the Paso Puente Dignified Homes Project. Other programs at the CIS include improving access to clean water, supporting small women's businesses as well as, language schools, election observation, and projects focusing on human rights or other emergencies. Living and working in El Salvador was an incredible experience and I look forward to learning from and contributing to the other projects ROHFC is involved in. [CR](#)

Tanzania—Tabora School for the Deaf Vocational School

Last winter ROHFC funded a project to provide carpentry and sewing equipment, and a computer lab to the school so the older students could learn some marketable skills and go out into the world to earn a living. There have been many secondary benefits that have come about as a result of this project. For example, in the sewing program, the students who graduated all made some new clothing for themselves for their graduation ceremony.



The students have also set up a shop where they make clothing and sell it so they are learning manufacturing and marketing as well as sewing. The profit from this will be given back to the graduating students in the form of a new sewing machine that they can take with them back to their home community and set up their own little business with the experience they gained from operating the shop at the school.

In the computer class students have learned Microsoft Word, are now learning Microsoft Publisher, and will soon start Excel training. Father Fabian, manager of the school, has gotten the community involved and now they say the school is “our school.” One of the graduates wants to come back to the school and help out for six months without pay in gratitude for the things she was able to learn. It seems like the new technology has given them a giant leap forward. There is increasing demand on the computer lab and some students are bringing USB drives and downloading e-books that they can read on the computers.

As we spoke it became clear that they do not have enough computers. The students are eager to learn and we will consider a project to help them expand their labs and workplaces. ☞

Ghana—Community Library Project Nwodua

They have completed the first phase of the project which is building the foundation. The mobile library is growing strong and there are about 200 children enrolled from surrounding communities. Board member Janaya Gerwing spent four months in Ghana and together with another board Member Raymond Abdulai Alhassan oversaw most of the completion of Phase One. We also hosted Four Medical Students from University of Saskatchewan from the Making the Links Program.



Finally, there was a community durbar (a community gathering), where we donated more books to the mobile library component of the project and brought together chiefs, community leaders, students and teachers to discuss the role of the community library in promoting literacy. ☞

Brazil—Education for Good Living Project, Grota da Alegria



One hundred children from the ages of six to ten years old, and twenty from eleven to fourteen, participated in the project which aims to improve the literacy rates in the area.

The project focuses on meaningful literacy such as mathematical operation related to real life situations such as cooking or food preparation. The mothers are involved too so they can continue working on this at home. The children also participate in carnivals, holiday activities, and trips to museums and parks to broaden their experiences. ☞

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



RAINBOW OF HOPE FOR CHILDREN SOCIETY

Annual Report
June 2023

Greetings to All!

I wish to warmly greet all of you and welcome the support you have so graciously given to the Rainbow of Hope for Children (ROHFC). I was just reviewing some of the projects where our Directors have seen a serious need for assistance and have taken up the torch to help the people overcome these obstacles. Whether it be as seemingly simple (to us) as developing a water source, or providing a shelter that will train women in ways to develop an income to feed, clothe and shelter their families, or to assist students to be able to continue trying to get a decent education.

Health, Education, and Family Security are very important objectives for ROHFC when a project is considered for support and funding. We follow the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals along with the ROHFC objectives as part of the criteria when the project is being developed. These provide benchmark measurements for ROHFC to determine the value and benefit of a project to the people we serve, and for the use of the donations we receive to carry out these projects.

There are many projects that ROHFC is involved with and when our Directors see the need and step in to determine the scope of the project and the process, the people are so grateful for something that is seemingly so small in scale but which provides such a positive impact on their lives.

When I look at the list of projects ROHFC is currently supporting, I see that we have involvement in 10 countries from South and Central America, to Africa, to Indonesia and more. The Directors have 18 different projects under their leadership and are working diligently to ensure that these projects have a successful conclusion in a timely manner. It is so rewarding when we learn of a student becoming a doctor and then giving back to his people in return, or that a school has good, safe classrooms to learn in, or even a good source of water for the students. That is what it is all about. ROHFC is not as large a charity as some others, but we do have a mighty impact for many people!!

Thank you for continuing to believe in the ROHFC and supporting our goals. Your support is valued and appreciated.

Charlie Matt

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charlie Matt".

President

*"If you're in the luckiest one percent of humanity,
you owe it to the rest of humanity to think about the other 99 percent."*

—Warren Buffett



INSIDE RAINBOW OF HOPE FOR CHILDREN

RAINBOW OF HOPE FOR CHILDREN SOCIETY

Statement of Revenue and Expenditures

Year Ended March 31, 2023

	2023	2022
Revenue		
Donations	\$ 170,888	\$ 216,512
Project monitoring	47,843	-
Recovery of administration expenditures	12,190	12,287
Interest	5,482	3,578
	236,403	232,377
Transfer from (to) deferred contributions	39,618	(65,359)
Income after deferred contribution transfers	276,021	167,018
Expenditures		
Project		
Project monitoring	47,843	-
Brazil	45,278	22,028
El Salvador	30,073	17,310
Ghana	21,270	54,043
Indonesia	22,516	1,016
Jamaica	14,221	694
Kenya	10,838	17,498
Nepal	4,697	28,940
Peru	41	41
Philippines	9,087	87
Tanzania	55,777	1,207
	261,641	142,864
General administration		
Professional fees	2,860	4,280
Supplies	5,036	4,171
Insurance	2,771	2,620
Public engagement and advertising	4,694	1,520
Interest and bank charges	889	940
	16,250	13,531
	277,891	156,395
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures for the year	\$ (1,870)	\$ 10,623

The Rainbow of Hope For Children Society (ROHFC) attempts to maintain as low as possible operational costs. All ROHFC Board members are unpaid volunteers who donate their time and expertise towards these projects. There is no paid staff.

PROGRAMS OF THE RAINBOW OF HOPE FOR CHILDREN SOCIETY

Your support is requested and appreciated for the following projects:

Program Description	Funding Goals	Program Description	Funding Goals
Nwodua Library, Ghana	\$42,000	Grota da Alegria Education, Brazil	\$15,000
Tabora School for the Deaf, Vocational Training Equipment, Tanzania	\$9,000	Kinyambu & Area- Classrooms for Children with Disabilities, Kenya	\$35,000
Matumaini Classrooms for Albino Children Safety, Tanzania	\$50,000	Aeta Indigenous Communities Development Assistance, Philippines	\$3,000
Bongbini School	\$46,000	CIS Scholarships, El Salvador	\$15,000
PAMBE Health, Nutrition, and Sanitation, Ghana	\$8,000	Fundahmer Women's Training Center, El Salvador	\$3,500
School of Family Agriculture, Bahia, Brazil	\$21,000	Mt. Moriah School, Jamaica	\$10,000
Eye Health Care, Reducing Avoidable Blindness, Indonesia	\$15,000	Mandeville Housing and School of Technology Upgrades, Jamaica	\$15,000
Paso Puente Dignified Housing, El Salvador	\$8,000	PAMBE Future Projects, Ghana	\$10,000
Bantambaari Water Harvest Project, Ghana	12,000	Ambrosina Young Women's Education, Brazil	\$19,500
Emergency & Disaster Relief Fund	\$10,000		

RAINBOW OF HOPE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OF ALL OUR DONORS, and

- Several Rotary Clubs, the Knights of Columbus, the Edmonton Community Foundation, the Holy Family Columbus Club, and the Al Gerwing Charitable Foundation.
- George and Louise Bunz, Wainwright, AB., who prepared the NEXUS Mail-out.
- The Peter Van Winssen Professional Corporation, Wainwright, Alta. for donating the cost of the NEXUS mail-out.

We thank you for offering a gift to any one of these projects and we are pleased to acknowledge your donation with an income tax deductible receipt. Send your donation to:

Rainbow of Hope for Children Society
P.O. Box 2883
Wainwright, AB T9W 1S7

Registered Charity No: 889160172-RR0001
www.rainbowofhopeforchildren.ca

• **Please make cheques payable to the full name of the organization:**
Rainbow of Hope for Children Society

- When making a donation using a credit card be sure to include the 3-digit security code on the back of your card. That number is required by the credit card companies.
- Donations of securities have a significant tax advantage. To donate shares please contact our Treasurer at:
rohfc2018@outlook.com or 780-968-3952



We can now accept donations by e-transfer and we use auto deposit. No passwords required. They can be sent to:

ROHFC Accounting—rohfc2018@outlook.com

**You must include your contact info in the e-transfer message box so that we can send you a donation receipt.

Please also include the specific project you wish to support so that we can dedicate these donations towards it.

Questions—Contact Cheryl, 780-968-3952



*This Christmas the gift you give
can change the world.*

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